

APPENDIX C

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONFESSION PROPOSED IN 2012/2013

1. The Human Predicament

1.7 To the false gods named in the last sentence of this Clause add after "power": "worldly success, fame".

Rationale: Success and fame are two false gods that the eminent psychiatrist Erich Fromm identifies as particularly worshipped by many modern people.

4. God the Holy Spirit, Life-giver and Sanctifier

Rearrange the content of the first three Clauses in this Article into five as follows:

4.1 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and is one with God as a human spirit is one with a human being. The Spirit is the living, creative, personal and immediate presence and power of the transcendent God that extends into the world and is at work in it and in us. The Spirit is thus fully God in basic contrast to every other existing or supposed spirit, whether ancestral or supernatural.

4.2 The Holy Spirit is likewise the Spirit of Christ, his living presence and power. Through Christ God poured out the Spirit at Pentecost.

4.3 The Spirit was active in creation and is active in the new creation. The Spirit is the Giver of life and of new life. God comes to us and works in us always by the Spirit.

4.4 The Spirit inspired the writings of the Old and New Testaments and enables the Word to take root in our hearts. Through the Word and the sacraments the Spirit brings home to us the judgement and grace of God, enables us to recognize and accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, moves us to commit ourselves to him and comes to dwell in us. The Spirit unites us to Christ and to one another in his Body, gives us new birth, sets us free from bondage to sin, and assures us that we are now children of God.

4.5 The Spirit resides in everyone who has faith in Christ, and Scripture calls us to be constantly filled with the Spirit.

Rationale: The arrangement is a bit more logical.

1. Revelation, Scripture, Preaching and Personal Witness

6.4 Amend the last sentence in the Clause from "As such it [Scripture] is the Word of God written and the final rule of faith and life" to: "In that sense it is the Word of God written and the final rule of faith and life."

6.6 Amend the last sentence from "The Bible is a dead letter if the Spirit does not make it the living Word of God for us" to: "The Bible is a dead letter if the Spirit does not enable it to speak to us with the voice of Christ, the living Word of God."

Rationale: Clauses 6.3 and 6.4 identify Jesus Christ as "the living Word of God". The amendment makes for congruence.

2. The Sacraments

7.4 Add to the last sentence the underlined words, "He [Christ] is personally present in the sacraments; his Word and Spirit are the source of all their power."

Rationale: "The word is added to the element, and it becomes a sacrament, indeed, a

kind of visible word in itself" (Augustine: Ev. Joh. 80.3) Cf. Martin Luther: Small Catechism, 4.1,3, 5.3f., Calvin's Inst. IV.xiv.3ff. "The sacraments take their power [virtus] from the Word, when it is preached intelligibly. Without this, they are unworthy to be called sacraments" (J. Calvin: Theological Treatises, p.16. Cf. p.203-206, and his Tracts and Treatises, vol. II, p.304).

7.7 Change the Clause slightly, to include the underlined words: "Through the sacraments Christ acts to convey and effect God's promises to sinners, confirm our salvation and strengthen our faith. Thus the sacraments are means of God's grace; only in the second place do they express our response to God's grace and attest our faith."

9. The Lord's Supper

9.3 At the end of the clause, after the sentence "Through this sacrament [the Lord's Supper] Christ empowers us to overcome the temptations we face in this age, renews us to share his mission in the world and gives us a foretaste of the messianic banquet in the age to come" add: "It is therefore to be celebrated with hope and joy."*

* Cf. Lk.22:16, Ac.2:46.

12. Revelation and Culture

12.2 Insert the following at the beginning of the Clause: "We should therefore recognize the dignity and appreciate the positive values of one another's different cultures. At the same time, however, human culture tends...."

12.3 Delete the words "including our own" from the end of the first sentence, so that it reads: "The good news opposes the materialism, consumerism, racism, militarism and sexual licence that are rampant in many cultures."

Rationale: The original wording was meant to refer to all our cultures in southern Africa, but could be misunderstood to be written from a western point of view.

14. The Victorious Rule ("Kingdom") of God

14.2 After the two sentences "God's victorious rule broke into history already in Jesus' life and ministry. By his healings, miracles and forgiveness of sin and above all by his resurrection, exaltation and outpouring of the Spirit, Christ inaugurated God's rule in anticipation of its final victory" insert: "God's rule is thus identified not with the reign of Caesar but with the person whom Caesar's agents scourged, mocked and crucified." (The word "Thus" with which the following sentence begins should then be deleted.)

Rationale: The Confession should include a statement about the relation between God's rule and Caesar's.

14.3 At the end of the clause, after the sentence "But those who believe in him are already delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to being under his reign" add: "Thus through the gospel the Holy Spirit makes the coming rule of God a present reality in the world."

14.4 In the last sentence in the clause insert the underlined words: "Instead it comes and will come as God's free gift, as a new creation through Jesus Christ, by God's grace, initiative and sovereign power alone."

15. Grace, Justification, Regeneration and Faith

15.3 Change the last sentence from "...the Spirit...sanctifies us, cleansing away all our sins with the blood of Christ" to: "...the Spirit...sanctifies us, cleansing us of all our sins with the blood of Christ."

Rationale: This is a slightly better, more existential wording.

15.6 At the end of the second of the following two sentences add the underlined words: "Faith does not mean the absence of all doubt, but remains standing in the

face of doubt. For though faith cannot sustain itself, the Word and the Spirit continually uphold faith in the face of doubt."

15.9 *Add a new Clause reading: "Faith consists not only in believing with the heart but also in bearing witness with the mouth. No faith is firm which does not bear witness."*

Rationale: See Rom.10:10. These words are slightly paraphrased from Philip Melancton, as quoted in J. Pelikan: The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol.4, Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700) (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), p.3. Cf. also the Scots Confession, Art.1: "We confess and believe."

16. Grace, Gratitude and Ongoing Sanctification

16.1 *Add the underlined word to the sentence "For us too it [grace] is costly in that it demands repentance, obedience and, in the face of opposition and persecution, faithfulness.*

16.2 *Change the second sentence, "We are saved to live for God and live out the love of Christ in the world" to: "We are saved to live for God, which means to live out the love of Christ in the world."*

Rationale: The amendment makes clear that "(to) live out the love of Christ in the world" is an infinitive, not an indicative and that living out the love of Christ is the same as living for God.

16.3 *In the middle of the clause, before the sentence "True faith thus always issues in action, or works" insert: "For faith is real only in obedient discipleship."*

16.3 *Change the second sentence, "The Spirit moves us to respond to God's grace not only with faith but with love and glad obedience that seeks to serve God in both our private lives and our public life" to: "The Spirit moves us to respond to God's grace not only with faith but with love and glad obedience that seeks to serve God both in our private lives and in public life."*

Rationale: This is merely to obviate a possible misinterpretation.

21. Marriage, Sex and Children

In the second sentence of what is now Art. 21.8 (see the Proceedings and Decisions 2012, p.426, no.11, and p.470, n.11) add the underlined words:

"Couples should conceive only children whom they will together love and cherish and can care for adequately. Couples with means should also consider fostering or adopting orphans, irrespective of race or class."

Rationale: The amendments make the intended meaning clearer.

22. The Church

22.1 *At the end of the clause, which begins "The Church is a divinely instituted community, founded upon Jesus Christ," add: "It exists for the sake of God's coming rule and is therefore called to live in hope and in obedience to that rule."*

Rationale: The Confession should relate the Church to God's coming rule, or Kingdom.

24. The Keys and Church Discipline

24.2 *Change the second sentence from "They [the keys] mean the authority to declare to all sinners who repent and humbly confess their sins that they are forgiven through the shedding of Christ's blood, provided that they make any appropriate restitution" to: "They [the keys] constitute the authority to declare to all sinners who repent and humbly confess their sins that they are forgiven through the shedding of Christ's blood, provided that they make any appropriate restitution to anyone they*

have sinned against."

Rationale: The addition guards against misinterpretation of what "restitution" means.

24.8 *Change the second and third sentences, "But such discipline remains a necessary means of grace. Preaching needs it, lest it be left abstract and ineffectual, and it is an integral part of pastoral care. Without it, church members are more liable to fall into sin and doctrinal confusion..." to: "But such discipline remains a necessary means of grace and an integral part of pastoral care. Without it preaching is in danger of being abstract and ineffectual. Church members are also more liable to fall into sin and doctrinal confusion..."*

Rationale: This is a bit neater and less ambiguous.

25. Church and State

25.2 *Remove some sentences from this long Clause and reduce it to: "Christ commissions the Church to preach the good news and proclaim God's will for every sphere of life. Thus, though Church and State are distinct from each other and the Church's task is never primarily political, it is always also political. The Church should itself set an example, as a model community, for a better social order; only then can its witness be taken seriously."*

Rationale: The sentences removed belong better in 25.7. See below.

25.4 *Change the second sentence from "The Government transgresses its calling if it seeks to...take over any of its [the Church's] tasks" to: "The Government transgresses its calling if it seeks to...take over any of its mandate."*

Rationale: This makes clear that the statement is not about tasks the Church itself may choose but its basic calling in the world.

25.5. *Before the first sentence, "As the servant of Jesus Christ the Church betrays its calling if it either seeks any political power or becomes a servant or mouthpiece of the Government or of the rich and powerful," insert "On the other hand..." and after the sentence insert: "It must never uncritically ally itself with any ruler or be co-opted by the Government. It should never give religious legitimation to any head of State as specifically elected by God. It must also reject the notion of a 'Christian State'*

Rationale: This addition is prompted by the way in which Churches gave religious legitimation to Adolf Hitler when he came to power in 1933, to Dr D.F. Malan when he came to power in 1947, to Dr H. Verwoerd and Mr B.J. Vorster, and by the way in which the Evangelical Church in the Ivory Coast gave disastrous legitimation to President Laurent Gbagbo against his political opponents in 2010-2011.

25.6 *Move this Clause, "We are to recognize the authority of the Government within its own sphere..." etc. (without changing it) to immediately follow Clause 25.3, which is about the mandate with which God has instituted the civil Government.*

Rationale: This is a more logical place for it, as both these Clauses are about the authority of the Government.

25.7 *Conflate the sentences removed from Clause 25.2 with 25.7, rearrange 25.7 and divide it into four Clauses as follows:*

25.7 *Because the Church knows that ultimate sovereignty and glory belong to God alone as ruler over all, it must bear witness to the limits of the Government's rights and authority. Whenever any human law, policy or command clashes with God's law, we must obey God rather than any human authority. Indeed because sin and self-seeking corrupt every society and every human Government, Christ calls the Church to be a sentinel and prophetically confront both, whenever necessary. Thus the Church is to take a lead in standing for justice and opposing all that is wrong in society. It must oppose all discrimination in civil law and policy, censure all corruption and unmask all harmful ideologies and false propaganda. It must confront all elitism,*

oppression and injustice with the radical demands that the vision of God's coming victory over all evil make on us now.

25.8 The Church must speak to the State in the name of justice and the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all human beings. It must therefore speak particularly on behalf of the weak, the vulnerable, the poor, the threatened, the oppressed, the outcasts, the voiceless* Truth must speak boldly to power for justice to prevail.

* Prov. 31:8.

25.9 The Church must also oppose as demonic any lust the State has for power and glory. It must oppose all nationalism and insist that the State pursue right, not might.

25.10 Whenever the State overreaches its mandate and whenever any person, group or class suffers social or political injustice, the Church is to protest not only in words but if possible in action. It is also to aid the victims. Christians are to co-operate with others in seeking what is best for the civil community. The Church must always be ready to be the Church under the Cross in resisting an unjust or oppressive State. Such resistance recalls a regime to its true vocation under God.

Rationale: The arrangement is more logical. The additional sentences in 25.8 seek to clarify how the Church must speak to the secularized State, in terms of justice etc.