

## Epitome and Solid Declaration in Formula Concord of Lutheran Church and the Existence in HKBP Confession of Faith

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**Abstract:** After the death of Martin Luther (1546), the debates and doctrinal disputes developed among the followers of Luther. On the one side there are those who claim to be genuine Luther followers and on the other side there are groups who want to develop the unity of the Protestants. In 1580 the Formula Concord was published to answer and mediate disputes between Luther's followers. The Formula Concord has two parts: the Summary (Epitome) which is a brief summary of the articles debated by the theologians supporting the Augsburg Confession proposed and adopted Christianly; The Solid Declaration is a general, pure, true and certain explanation and restatement of several articles of the Augsburg Confession on matters that have been disputed among theologians for some time, decided and established according to the Word of God. The Huria Kristen Batak Protestant Church (HKBP) as a church, member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) had a Confession (Confession of Faith) in 1951 and 1996. This article is a qualitative research study that compared the Formula Concord with the HKBP's Confession of Faith Years 1951 and 1996. The HKBP's Confession of Faith does not conflict with the Lutheran Agreement Formula.

**Keywords:** Martin Luther, Formula Concord, Epitome, Solid Declaration, HKBP, HKBP's Confession of Faith Years 1951 and 1996.

### INTRODUCTION

Bente said: Book of Concord, or Concordia and well known as the book of body of Lutheran doctrine recognized as a symbol of the Lutheran Church. Therefore, the Concord Book is a symbol of Christianity, so they are known as Christians. Since Christianity is primarily a belief in the truth of the Bible, its symbol is a profession of Christian doctrine. The Church, therefore, from the very beginning defined and regarded its symbols as the rule of faith or the rule of truth.<sup>1</sup>

The publication of the Lutheran Confession of Faith in the Concord Book also experienced a process that was not easy. After the Council of Trent 1545 – 1563, which declared the condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church (GKR) for the Reformation and all its figures and adherents, Luther's followers experienced a lot of persecution and entered dark times, especially after Luther died on February 18, 1546. Among them itself there were various crises: there were among the princes who were previously supporters, but defected to the emperor's side, alias GKR, there were disputes between fellow Lutheran followers and between them and Calvinists, regarding the teachings and practices of the church and so on. But thankfully, gradually an agreement was

reached between them which was then set forth in the 1577 Concord Formula document.<sup>2</sup>

This Formula Concord consists of 12 chapters: Inherited Sin, Free Will, Truth of Faith Before God, Good Works, Torah and Gospel, The Third Function of the Torah, Holy Communion, Personality of Christ, Christ's Descent into Hell, adiaphoric ecclesiastical ceremonies, foreknowledge of the divine selection of those to be saved and attitudes toward groups that do not accept the Augsburg Confession: Anabaptists, Anti-Trinitarians and so on.<sup>3</sup>

The aforementioned documents: the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalkalden Articles, and the Formulas of the Concord, were later compiled with Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms in the Concord Book. This book, which was published on June 25, 1580 (exactly 50 years after the surrender of the Augsburg Confession to the German emperor), became a kind of canon (teaching standard) for the Lutheran churches, which since the end of the 16th century had been increasingly transformed into an established church. This book reflects an ecumenical character, and because of

<sup>1</sup> Bente F. Gerhard, *Historical Introduction To The Lutheran Confession*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jan S. Aritonang, *Berbagai Aliran di dalam Dan Di Sekitar Gereja*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 44.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore G. Tappert (Penerj., Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 600-602.

that, according to Jan S. Aritonang, the Concord Book can be a major contribution to the ecumenical movement and needs to be studied by non-Lutheran churches to enrich their understanding of faith.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, the Concord Book contains the Credo of the Lutheran Churches. What was recognized by Christianity after the Reformation, grew and developed. The study of formulating what is recognized is very important for the Church, because the Church must say: "We confess, believe and teach". What is recognized and believed must be clearly formulated so that it can be taught in schools, at home and even in the midst of congregations. The formulation of what is believed and acknowledged takes a very long time, because there are always differences of opinion as to whether what is recognized and believed is in accordance with the Bible. Then, if there is an agreement on one point of faith that is understood together to be recognized and believed, then that will bring peace and harmony to the people.

### **Epitome and Solid Declaration in Formula Concord**

#### **Epitome in Formula Concord**

After Luther died (1546) various disputes arose about the teachings among his followers. There are those who want to hold on to the teachings taught by Luther. Then they called themselves as true Lutherans (Gnesio-Lutheran). But there are also those who want to restore the unity of the Protestants which has been lost due to the fighting around the Holy Communion. Then Melancthon, a man who really likes peace, tries to eliminate the differences among Protestants. But true Lutherans disapproved of the efforts of Melancthon and his followers. This Melancthon party finally called themselves the "Philippines" after their first name. They were accused of betraying Lutheran truth and secretly turning to Calvin's views. Thus, followers of Melancthon are also called 'crypto-Calvinists'.<sup>5</sup>

The main points of debate among Luther (actually existed at the time Luther was still alive) namely regarding only grace and sole fide which emphasizes whether the authorized person is obliged to produce good deeds. Melancthon, among others, thinks so, but there are other

theologians who think that every deliberate effort to live a holy life endangers salvation because it brings people back to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church about the need to do charity. Another point of contention is about predestination (Calvin's view is rejected), then the question is whether Christ descended into Hades actively (Calvin's opinion) or because God sent him down (passively, Lutheran's opinion). Attempts to resolve the dispute among Lutherans eventually resulted in the Formula of Agreement in 1577. This formula, which uses several other formulas as sources, manages to combine Gnesian-Lutheranism and Philippism, but at the same time defines the boundary between Lutheranism and Calvinism.<sup>6</sup> The thought that by their own efforts they will get forgiveness of sins. With good deeds, it is enough to save them from the punishment due to sins that have been committed. This understanding is of course contrary to the Word of God. Forgiveness of sins is only received in faith in Jesus Christ. This understanding is held by Luther. The goodness and piety of one's life cannot save him. Forgiveness of sins according to Luther is only done by Christ, and forgiveness is only a gift. That's why Luther firmly rejected indulgences, forgiveness of sins.<sup>7</sup> The Formula of Agreement is a statement which is a teaching that purifies the teachings of God's Word.

This formula, which uses complex theological language, marks the transition from the Reformation to the Lutheran orthodox era. Then began to collect writings that were considered sources to resolve disputes among Lutherans. Several collections were made, but finally, in 1580, that is, 50 years after the Augsburg Confession, a collection was published which has since been considered the standard Confessional collection book for Lutheranism, namely the Concord Book.<sup>8</sup> This book begins with the three ecumenical symbols, then contains the Augsburg confession with Melancthon's Apology, the Schmalkalden articles (the confession of faith that Luther wrote for the union of Protestant countries),

<sup>4</sup> Jan S. Aritonang, *Berbagai Aliran di dalam Dan Di Sekitar Gereja*. 45

<sup>5</sup> Christian de Jonge, *Gereja Mencari Jawab Kapita Selektanya* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), 88.

<sup>6</sup> F.D. Wellem, *Kamus Sejarah Gereja*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2018), 370-371.

<sup>7</sup> Pintor Marihot Sitanggang, *Sola Gratia; Rekonsiliasi Sang Rekonsiliator*, (Bandung: Widina Bhakti Persada, 2021), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Christian de Jonge, *Gereja Mencari Jawab Kapita Selektanya* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), 89.

a Melancthon essay on the power of the pope.<sup>9</sup> After that there is the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism of Martin Luther. Then this Concord Book ends with the last confessional document, viz Form of Concord (Formula Concord).

Not all writings collected in the Concord Book are accepted in all Lutheran Churches. In general, the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechisms apply. Lutheran World Federation based itself on the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism. On the other hand, it must be said that the developments described above, although not generally accepted among Lutheranism in terms of teaching and even in church administration, there are actually differences between one Lutheran church and another. To get an agreement with the Lutheran followers who were at odds with this, in 1568 a theological solution was sought and the regional businessmen generously supported the plan with moral and material support. The first formulation proposed was the five chapters of James Andreae's "Confessions and Brief Explanations", which was expanded in 1573 in his book *Six Christian Sermons*. One re-melting of its contents in the following year gave birth to the "Swabian Accords". Then this text was reworked by Martin Chemnitz based on suggestions from theological faculty, conferences and individual theologians, then produced the "Lower Saxon Swabian Agreement (Concord)" (1575). In the following year Lukas Osiander and Balthasar Bidembach were appointed to devise another proposal, which was called the "Maulbronn Formula". With the revelation of "Crypto Calvinist" on area Saxon, Elector August joined the unification movement; in the late spring of 1576, by inviting a conference of theologians at Torgau that the Swabian-Saxon agreement and the Maulbronn Formula were combined into the so-called *Torgau book* which Andreae summed up in the Epitome.<sup>10</sup>

Formula Concord in Part I: Summary (Epitome) is a brief summary of the contentious articles by the theologians supporting the Augsburg Confession that were proposed and established Christianly. Firmly and clearly in this Epitome it is stated that Lutherans confess that the prophetic and apostolic

writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rules and norms by which all teachings and teachers must be judged and measured.

Then in this Epitome it is also explained that the writings of earlier and modern teachers, regardless of their names, should not be placed on a par with the Scriptures. That Lutheran followers recognize unanimously and unanimously, namely the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasius Creed. By holding on to this confession, Lutheran followers reject all heresies and teachings that enter the church that are contrary to these confessions. Likewise with divisions over matters of faith, Lutheran followers agree to fight against wrong worship practices, idol worship, papal superstitions and other sects. The Augsburg Confession submitted simultaneously to Emperor Charles V at Augsburg at the general congress of 1530 was adopted as the first and did not change together with the articles of apology drawn up at Smalcalden in 1537.

Then the Lutheran followers agreed that salvation is also the right of all people including the laity, so the small and large Catechism of Martin Luther was approved. Even the two books have been printed in the book "Layman's Bible" which contains everything that is important, which is discussed in depth in the Scriptures and a Christian must know for his safety. So all teachings must be in accordance with the standards mentioned above. If it turns out to be contrary, it must be rejected and condemned. Thus, the Old and New Testament Scriptures remain the judges, rules, and standards as the only touchstone (diving stone) against all teachings and must be understood and tested as good or evil, right or wrong.<sup>11</sup> Thus other symbols and other writings are not judged as Scriptures, but only as testimonies and explanations of faith and of course any contradictory teachings will be rejected and even condemned.

#### **Solid Declaration in Formula Concord**

Since the Epitome, namely the Formula Concord I, was sent to all places interested in reviewing it, books Torgau this was reworked again at Bergen Abbey, into the Complete Declaration (Solid Declaration), or Part II of the Formula of Agreement, called the Bergen Book (1577). Over the following three years, 8,188 theologians, pastors and teachers in the regions took part in signing the Complete Statement (Solid

<sup>9</sup> A. Keddy Kristiyanto OFM, cs., *Martin Luther - Musa di Jerman*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia & 2017), 198-200.

<sup>10</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, Penerj., (Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran.*, 649-650.

<sup>11</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, Penerj., (Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran.*, 651.

Declaration) That. Finally, on June 15, 1580, fifty years after the reading of the Augsburg Confession before Karen V, Concord Book which is complete circulating for sale. Part II i.e. Complete Declaration (Solid Declaration) is a general, pure, true and definite explanation and restatement of several articles of the Augsburg Confession concerning matters which have been disputed among theologians for some time, decided and established in accordance with the word of God and the treatises of the formulation of Christian teachings.<sup>12</sup>

The challenge faced by Luther was the emergence of Christian teachings which became very vague, far from the word of God, specifically regarding the teachings of the papacy. Then inside Solid Declaration that understanding was corrected only by the Word of God, then Martin Luther perfected it so that papal errors, deviations and idolatry were denounced. Luther followers steadfastly support the Christian Confession and the Augsburg Confession which are truly based on scripture and faithful to simple, clear and genuine words. For followers of Luther, the Augsburg Confession is a symbol of true Christianity and should be accepted by true Christians as a companion to the Word of God. The contentious passages will be explained on the basis of God's word so that discerning Christians can see which ideas in the disputed passages agree with God's Word and the Augsburg Confession. Thus, Christians will be able to defend and protect themselves against errors and falsehoods that attack their faith.<sup>13</sup>

Formulation of the Complete Declaration of Agreement (Solid Declaration) it contains a concise formula, principles, rules and principles to show how all teachings are to be judged according to the Word of God. Thus, the Confession does not aim to abolish Scripture. The hope is that every people, everywhere are collectively loyal to the pure teachings of the Word of God as explained by Martin Luther during his lifetime, namely.<sup>14</sup>

1. Luther's followers pledged and were faithful to the Bible as the pure and true source by which all teachers and teachings should be judged and evaluated.

<sup>12</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, Penerj., (Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran.*, 703.

<sup>13</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, Penerj., (Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran.*, 706.

<sup>14</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, Penerj., (Ed.), *Buku Konkord: Konfesi Gereja Lutheran.*, 707-709..

2. The Word of God is the most high and noble of all the various opinions. The Word of God is the only one capable of countering all deviations and teachings of deceivers. So Luther's followers promised and were faithful to the Word of God which was contained in three general Creeds, the Apostles' Creed, Nicea, and Athanasius as a noble - solid - Christian confession of faith and based on the Word of God - in which all the heretical teachings that existed at that time has arisen in the Christian church to be clearly and emphatically rejected.
3. In order to combat the deviations perpetrated by the papacy, Lutherans pledged allegiance to the first Augsburg Confession, which has not been changed as a symbol of the present, not because this confession was prepared by Lutheran theologians, but because it was adopted and compiled properly and firmly on the basis of word of God. It is this symbol that distinguishes the reformed Lutheran church from the pope's church and from other accursed sects and teachings.
4. Simultaneously expressing the attachment of Lutheran followers to defending true teachings in accordance with the Augsburg Confession and regarding the Apology that has been prepared to properly describe the true and true meaning of the Augsburg Confession with the aim of maintaining true teachings based on the scriptures.
5. Recognizing and approving the articles prepared by the Lutherans in the great assembly of theologians at Smalkalden. In these chapters the teaching of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, some chapters are explained further on the basis of God's Word. All in order to fight the errors and ungodliness of the papacy.
6. Because these important matters also include the interests of ordinary and lay people, where as Christians must know their eternal salvation and the difference between true and false teachings, Luther's followers jointly declare their attachment to the Small Catechism and the Big Catechism of Martin Luther , for general acceptance and use in churches, schools, and in the households of parishioners who support the Augsburg Confession. Luther's followers have also observed that the Small and Large Catechisms have provided conclusions on Christian teachings based on



the Word of God for ordinary people, in the most precise and simple form.

### **Themes of Theology in the Epitome and Solid Declaration of Formula Concord That Exists in HKBP Confession of Faith**

#### **HKBP's Confession of Faith**<sup>15</sup>

The HKBP Church has a Confession of Faith known as the 1951 and 1996 HKBP Confessions of Faith. In the introduction, it was explained that since long ago the church had been dealing with heretical teachings. There has been an ecumenical church confession in order to fight these heretical teachings. Likewise, until the Reformation era, we were faced with teachings that deviated from the Bible. That is why a new confession emerged in order to ward off and fight the heretical teachings that emerged at that time. The new acknowledgments are present in responding to the challenges and struggles faced according to the context. So, any recognition that preceded it should not be abandoned, deleted or even ignored. Every church must be able to compile relevant confessions according to the ever-changing context in which the church is located. Therefore, the church must continue to struggle with the context in which the church is located, and must have the courage to refresh their confessions according to the context they are facing.

HKBP's application to become a member of LWF caused a flood of unrest and protests. Dutch and German Zending circles as well International Mission Council worrying that the oneness of Indonesian churches (of which the majority are Reformed Calvinists) will be threatened with failure if the HKBP, which is the largest church in Indonesia, joins with the Lutheran churches. According to them, HKBP is actually not a Lutheran church, so it is not natural to be a member of LWF.<sup>16</sup>

The HKBP struggles whether to recognize the Augsburg Confession as a condition for being accepted as a member of the LWF. Because in June 1950 a meeting was held to see if the Augsburg Confession was in accordance with the context of the Batak church (HKBP) at that time. It turned out that after discussing it, there were no teachings that conflicted with the teachings in

force at HKBP, but according to the participants, this acknowledgment was unsatisfactory. Because they felt that the confession would not benefit HKBP, the conference participants wanted to know whether acceptance as a member of the LWF depended on the formulation of a confession. So Ephorus Justin Sihombing replied that it would also be better if HKBP made a confession, apart from acknowledging as a member of the LWF. The purpose of his words is clear, namely to the situation within the HKBP itself. Finally, the confession committee which had been formed by the 1948 Synod was given a new and more concrete task, namely to compile a confession as a basis explaining HKBP's stance on LWF.<sup>17</sup>

This is what became the background for HKBP to form their confession. At first, Justin Sihombing had submitted a concept he had made himself, then the committee worked on it together. The Confession designed by Justin Sihombing started from the Augsburg Confession and he took over its structure. Even though Justin also made changes, Justin Sihombing in the confession he compiled did not reject the Augsburg Confession, but processed it so that it reflected the prevailing teachings in the HKBP.

#### **God in Formula Concord and in the 1951 and 1996 HKBP Confession.**

The existence of God in the confession of God in the Concord follows the decision of the Council of Nicea. The Council of Nicea in 325 was convened at the invitation of the emperor Constantine the Great, who had just given freedom to the church. The aim of this Council was to resolve a dispute which threatened the oneness of the church. The issue in dispute is the issue of the divinity of Christ. Was Christ fully divine like God the Father or not? In connection with this question, the relationship between God and Christ is discussed. Later, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and God and Christ was added, so that this conflict is also called the dispute over the Trinity.

In accordance with the decision of the Council of Nicea, God's Existence in the Concord Formula contains an explanation of one Divine nature, namely God with three persons in one nature. The three essences are neither higher nor lower than the other, but are equal in power and co-eternal. All three are the eternal nature of God that cannot

<sup>15</sup> HKBP, *Konfesi HKBP - Panindangion Haporseaon HKBP – Confession of Faith*, (Pearaja: Kantor Pusat HKBP, 2021), 45.

<sup>16</sup> J.P.D. Groen, *Terpanggil Untuk Mengakui Iman; Pembimbing Ke Dalam Dokumen-dokumen Pengakuan Gerja*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 258.

<sup>17</sup> J.P.D. Groen, *Terpanggil Untuk Mengakui Iman; Pembimbing Ke Dalam Dokumen-dokumen Pengakuan Gerja*, 260.

be divided. This understanding of Allah's Existence at the same time contradicts Arius' view who said that the Son was created and substance or its 'substance' is different from the Father.

With this statement, the Formula Concord firmly rejects all heretical teachings that are contrary to this article. The heretical teachings referred to besides those of Arius are the heretical teachings of the Manichaeans, namely religion based on Persian dualism combined with elements of Christian belief and other elements. This religion was founded by Mani in the 3rd century and is named after its founder. These Manichaeans claimed that there were two Gods, one good and one evil. Likewise the Valentinians, the Gnostics of the 2nd century who took their name from Valentinus. The Eunomians were followers of Eunomius, a leftist Arianist in the 4th century. Follow also from the Muslims where the Reformers called Islamic teachings as anti-Trinitas, and the heretical teachings of the Samosatan namely the followers of Paul from Samosata in the 3rd century who taught that Jesus was a man who was specially gifted with the Spirit.

God's understanding as outlined in the Formula Concord firmly maintains the purity of the teachings of the scriptures and rejects teachings and opinions that are contrary to the scriptures. God is understood as the Creator and Sustainer of all visible and invisible things, in which there are three persons in one essence who have the same power. The existence of God is again emphasized through the Apologia in connection with the rejection of the Augsburg Confession, namely two days after the reading of this confession, there was a rejection from the Romans. They compiled an answer to the rejection of the document from the Lutheran group. This task was handed over to a commission consisting of theologians led by the Pope's envoy. This statement of refusal is called the "Roman Confutation" or rebuttal.

Thus, in the Smalkalden chapters where the first part of the chapter discusses the chapters concerning the Most Great Divine, namely:

[1] That the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three persons who differ in one essence and divine nature, are one God, who created the heavens and the earth, and so on.

[2] That the Father is not begotten by anyone, the Son is begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit is caused by (proceeded) the Father and the Son.

[3.] That only the Son became flesh, and the Father and the Holy Spirit were not.

[4] That the Son became man in this way: He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of a man, and was born of the pure, holy, and virgin Mary. Then He suffered, died, was buried, descended into hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven; and He is seated at the right hand of God, will come to judge the living and the dead, and so on; as taught in the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasius Creed, and the Small Catechism that is generally used to educate children.

So, from the above understanding, which is the result of the acknowledgment set forth in the Concord Formula, God's existence is at the same time against the anti-Trinity group. Namely those who maintain that the three (God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are not the same in substance and ability and that only God the Father is the real God, and the real one.

The Formula Concord unequivocally rejects teachings that contradict the Existence of God as eternal and from Him the Father, Son and Holy Spirit originate from one indistinguishable Essence. Thus, the Concord Formula answered the challenge of the church at that time, which was faced with heretical opinions and teachings about God that were contrary to the Word of God.<sup>18</sup> What about the Protestant Batak Christian Huria (HKBP)? God's existence in the Concord Formula when confronted with the 1951 and 1996 HKBP Confessions certainly cannot be separated from the context in which the HKBP is located. Just like the Concord Book, HKBP's Creed also born from the theological struggles dealing with heretical teachers. Regarding this matter, in the introduction to the 1951 and 1996 HKBP Confessions, several teachings that were developing at that time were explained which could disturb and even mislead the church.<sup>19</sup>

HKBP in its 1951 Confession wrote its Confession regarding God, namely Article 1 Concerning God:

We believe and witness:

<sup>18</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas "*Summa Theologiae, A Concise Translation*", Timothy McDermott (ed), (USA: Christian Classics, 1989), 72-74

<sup>19</sup> J.R. Hutauruk, Lahir, *Berakar dan Bertumbuh di dalam Kristus, Sejarah 150 Tahun Huria Kristen Batak (HKBP 7 Oktober 1861 – 7 Oktober 2011, (Pearaja Tarutung: Kantor Pusat HKBP, 2011), 177.*

God is One, without beginning and without end, Almighty, Immutable, Faithful, Omniscient, Unpredictable, Great Judge, Most Merciful, Most Kind. It is the completion of heaven and earth, Most Holy, Most Merciful.

Deuteronomy 6:4; Exodus 3: 14a; Genesis 17:1; Psalm 105:8; I Cor. 1:9; 2 Tess. 3:3; Luke 1: 37; Romans 11:33; Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11; I Cor. 1:30; Psalm 103:8; 24:1; Jes. 6:3; Joh. 3:16; I Tim. 6: 15-16.

With this teaching we reject and fight against the habit of calling Allah: Grandmother (Ompung) and those who see that God is only Gracious. The same goes for people who hope that blessings and mercy come from the spirits of their ancestors, as is customary among unbelievers. The same goes for people who research days that bring blessings, who negotiate their fortunes with the shaman or hope for blessings from the location of the lines on their hands. We also reject teachings that state God's power above His holiness and love.

Regarding Article 1, it places more emphasis on the existence of God as the powerful and source of blessings to human life. This understanding was born in order to fight heresy that HKBP faced by saying that blessings and grace come from ancestors. The existence of God in the 1951 HKBP Confession specifically in Article 1 rejects cultural understanding (Batak tribe) which still understands that the spirits of their ancestors are a source of blessings, also rejects understanding originating from customs/culture which emphasizes that there are good days and there are bad days. which is not good, as well as about the period, which can be seen and known through fortunes that can be negotiated with the dukun. This understanding is rejected because the teachings of the ancestors are not higher than the omnipotence of God.

Then in article II of the HKBP Confession it is entitled: About the One God. HKBP through its Confession understands that:

We Believe and Witness:

God God is One, and in that He is a Trinity, namely: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Yoh. 5:19; 14:11; 1:1; 15, 26; 2 Kor. 13:13; Mat. 28:19

God the Father who gave birth to God the Son from Himself from the beginning to eternity, meaning that just as the Father has no beginning and no end, so is the case with the Son. And

likewise the Holy Spirit has no beginning and no end. It is that which comes from God the Father and God the Son. Yoh. 15:26.

With this teaching we reject and fight against the notion that God is only one with the understanding that God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are less than God the Father.

We are also against the teachings that say that the Triune God is God the Father, His Son Jesus. Christ and the Mother of the Holy Spirit.

The existence of God according to the HKBP Confession does not contradict the Lutheran understanding as stated in the Formula Concord. HKBP understands that the Lord God is One, He is a Trinity, namely: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God the Father and the Son are the same, He cannot be distinguished. Likewise with the Holy Spirit, just as the Father has no beginning and no end. HKBP admits that the Holy Spirit also comes from God the Father and God the Son.

Both the HKBP confession of faith and the Lutheran confession of faith in the Formula Concord together acknowledge the Trinity of God, in which the Son and the Spirit originate from God. The three Persons, namely the Father, Son and Spirit, originate from One Nature, cannot be differentiated, neither higher nor lower. The Three Persons originate from one Nature, namely God.

The HKBP's Confession of God is the same as the Concord Formula in which there is the main idea of faith and then followed by the word "reject" teachings that are contrary to that confession of faith. Indeed, in the Concord formula, the flow that was opposed and the views that were rejected by the Lutherans at that time were the Arius, while the HKBP in their Confession was not dealing with Arius followers. HKBP further stated in the 1951 Confession Article 3 concerning: "The Work and Personality of God the Three One Father". There it is clearly described the work and personality of God according to their respective duties. However, the three Persons, still understood as One, cannot be separated and are not higher than the others. God as the Father who makes, maintains and rules over everything visible and invisible, and God the Son, namely Jesus Christ who became human, is also the True God and so it is with God that the Holy Spirit comes from God. If the three Persons, their duties and work are broken down, but His presence remains One, One, and cannot be differentiated.

### Jesus Christ in Formula Concord and in the 1951 and 1996 HKBP Confession

After the apostolic era there were theological differences in the basic understanding of Christology. The theological differences ultimately had a negative impact on the unity of the Roman Empire at that time, so that the emperor was always interested in holding a theological-christological discussion to unite a common understanding of Jesus' readiness. Because there were various elements of Christology, in order to maintain the unity and unity of the Roman empire, the emperor always influenced so that the formulation of the Christian faith could unite groups of different opinions. As a result, the formulation of the confession of faith, especially in terms of the basic understanding of Christology, is always conformist in nature, with the intention that all views can be summarized in the formulation of the confession. That is what happened at the ecumenical councils in 325 at Nicea, 381 at Constantinople, 450 at Chalcedon, and others.<sup>20</sup>

The main core of the Christological discussions at these ecumenical councils is about Ontological Christology, namely finding out the relationship between the essence of Jesus' humanity and divinity with God. In this discussion of ontological Christology, the nature of God and Jesus is always positioned as a conscientious object, which is actually very impossible to do in biblical Christian theology. As a result, the councils that were held never found formulations that could be accepted by all the warring parties. The church at this time inherited the view and understanding of the Christological faith as a dogmatic document of the church. The church has also inherited various formulas for confessions of faith resulting from the formulations of the ecumenical councils. In the formulation of the ecumenical creeds, such as the Apostolic Creed, Nicene Constantinople Creed, Chalcedonian Creed, Athanasian Creed, a complete understanding of God the Trinity has been included.

The Lutheran Confession or Concord Formula makes Jesus Christ one of the Formulas of Agreement in chapter eight with the title "The Person of Christ. This formulation emerged and was motivated by the disputes that arose among Augsburg Confession theologians regarding the person of Christ. His origins actually came from the Sacramentary class. Luther survived with the

understanding that Christ is truly present through His flesh and blood in the Holy Communion. While the Zwingli group opposed it by saying that the body of Christ could not be a true and genuine human body if it was at the same time present in heaven and the Holy Communion on earth, because such majesty belongs to God alone and the body of Christ could not possibly do so.

Martin Luther rejected and blamed Zwingli's opinion through his writings and polemics regarding the Holy Communion. After Luther's death, some Augsburg theologians were not so willing to engage themselves in general and specifically with the Sacramentaries in the question of the Lord's Supper, adopting and using the same basic arguments about the person of Christ as those used by the Sacramentaries to dismiss the importance of the loss of Christ's body and blood in their lives. Holy communion.<sup>21</sup> Luther maintains that the bread and wine really contain the body and blood of Christ. Christ Himself is in both substances, not only spiritually, but also physically. Pen quarrels between the two leaders of the Reformation culminated in 1527. Eventually, a large part of South Germany embraced the Zwingli Banquet under the influence of Swiss propaganda. Zwingli saw the Lord's Supper as a meal of brotherhood and commemoration of the Christian community, by which the congregation is again made aware of its property and duties. That is how the Holy Communion is degraded and deprived of its true content and meaning, because it is no longer God's gift, but rather the intention and actions of humans are prioritized. While Luther still stood on the word of God: "this is my body".<sup>22</sup>

In order to explain this dispute in a Christian way according to the Word of God, Luther's teachings, beliefs and confessions were set forth in the Formula Concord:<sup>23</sup>

1. The presence of Christ as a Son is not to make Christ into two persons or two Christs, but to make Christ Jesus in one person who is also true and eternal. Although Jesus was begotten by the Father, so Jesus is a real man, but Jesus is also a real God.

<sup>21</sup> F.D. Wellem, *Kamus Sejarah Gereja*, (Jakarta: BPK-Gunung Mulia, 1994), 406

<sup>22</sup> H. Berkhof & I.H. Enklaar, *Sejarah Gereja*, (Jakarta: BPK – Gunung Mulia, 1950), 141-145.

<sup>23</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Sejarah Pemikiran Reformasi*, (Jakarta: BPK – Gunung Mulia, 2006), 224-229.

<sup>20</sup> Darwin Lumbantobing, *Teologi di Pasar Bebas*, (Pematangsiantar: L-SAPA, 2007), 142-143.



2. These two natures in the person of Christ cannot be separated from each other, mixed with one another, or exchanged for one for the other, but each nature and being remains in the person of Christ throughout all time.
3. Christ is not two different persons, but a single person, even though the two different realities, each with its nature and nature, are found not to mix in Him.
4. The human nature received by Christ not only possesses and retains the essence of His essential state, but in addition, through the fusion of the person with divinity and then through appointment and exaltation, He is raised up as the right hand of glory, power and authority under every name given not only at this time, but also in the future.

In accordance with the above understanding, the Formula Concord at the same time fights heretical teachings that say that Jesus Christ is only a human being who is inhabited by the Word of God just like the prophets in the Old Testament. Likewise the Nestorius group, who lived in the 15th century who taught that the two natures of Christ were separate from one another, were rejected. Likewise, Zwingli's teachings and opinions regarding Holy Communion were rejected. Against this understanding, through the Formula Concord, it is hoped that the Christian church maintains a simple faith in understanding that: "the divine and human natures in the person of Christ are combined in such a way that these essences have a relationship between one another in one substance into another." a person.

The HKBP Confession understands that in Christ Jesus, there are two natures, namely: His Deity and His Humanity. Christ is the True God and the True Man. As a human, He suffered, experienced tribulation during the reign of Pontius Pilate, but He is also the Son of God and even God himself who died, descended into hell and rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven to rule over all things, until one day he will return to this world to judge the living and the dead.<sup>24</sup>

So with this acknowledgment, HKBP firmly rejects and opposes the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church which says:

1. That Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus, who is called holy, defends us to God.

2. Pastors have the power to sacrifice the flesh of Christ in the mass.
3. The Pope in Rome is Christ's representative on earth. And reject the teaching that says that Jesus is equated with the prophets in this world.

The HKBP Confession and the Formula Concord jointly acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was truly human and truly God. The understanding of Jesus as being similar and parallel to the prophets in this world is rejected by the Formula Concord as well as the HKBP Confession.

According to the Formula Concord or according to Luther's teachings, Holy Communion is called Consubstantiate (say when meaning together): the bread and wine are not changed into the body and blood of Christ (trans-substansiasi). But the body and blood of Christ inhabit the bread and wine themselves so that there are two substances or substances that are equally contained in the bread and wine. With this understanding, Luther's teaching understands that in the Holy Communion, Christ is really present without changing the substance of the bread and wine but He is present when the Holy Communion is performed.

In the Report of the Theological Commission at the 2019 HKBP Pastor meeting it was said: HKBP understands that Holy Communion is understood as 'parish' to receive the real body and blood of Christ. Jesus did not change the nature of the bread and wine to become his own body and blood, nor did Jesus' body and blood stick to the bread and wine, but that through the Holy Communion we receive the body and blood of Jesus into our physical bodies. This means that the Holy Communion is a means of receiving the body and blood of Christ. Through the Holy Communion, man is convinced that he is growing into one body with Christ.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, it is said that the meaning of the Holy Communion in the HKBP Church is to eat bread, with which bread (*parhites*) we receive the flesh and Jesus Christ our Lord and drink wine, with which wine we receive the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may obtain forgiveness of sins, life and peace (1 Cor. 11: 17-34); Matthew 26; Mark 14, Luke. 22). Thus the Holy Communion is only a tool or media. In *HKBP's*

<sup>24</sup> J. Warneck, *Kamus Batak toba Indonesia*, (Medan: Penerbit Bina Media, 2001), 133.

<sup>25</sup> HKBP, *Laporan Komisi Teologi Pada Rapat Pendeta HKBP 21-25 Oktober 2019 Seminarium Sipoholon*, (Pematang Siantar: Percetakan HKBP, 2019), 242-243.

1996 *Confession of Faith*, associated later as equipment for the 1951 HKBP Confession.

Actually, the Concord Book also contains the three ecumenical confessions mentioned above. The placement of these three ecumenical confessions at the front of the Concord Book certainly means that what has been agreed upon in the Lutheran creed is also in accordance with and does not conflict with the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. Thus, it was the same with the 1951 HKBP Confession, which was also a continuation of the three ecumenical confessions of faith, which had been generally accepted and recognized by the church at that time. So the position of the 1951 HKBP Confession is parallel and equal to the position of the Concord Book.<sup>26</sup>

With the explanation mentioned above, the 1951 HKBP Confession as a continuation of the three ecumenical confessions of faith can even be understood in a position trans-confessional. This means that the 1951 HKBP Confession should not be understood as a confession of faith that stands alone without influence from previous church life experiences. Because HKBP's experience is the same as that of other churches, even the experience of the ancient Church when dealing with various teachings and beliefs. Then respond, express and give testimony of faith and carry out theological-dogmatic actions, which are in accordance with belief and belief in Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore the 1951 HKBP Confession must also be seen as a church confession that is not tied to any of the existing denominational confessions. In terms of the composition of the language formula and body structure of the 1951 HKBP Confession, it does follow the Concord Book. In each chapter there is a basic formulation of the confession of faith (statement) acknowledged, then followed by an explanation of the main explanation of the rejected confession of faith. However, each point of confession does not depend on the contents of the Formula Concord, but is adjusted to the context of life faced by HKBP as found in the life of Batak Tapanuli Christians. So, the content and contents of the 1951 HKBP Confession do not adopt and do not imitate the contents of the Concord Book.

<sup>26</sup> Darwin Lumbantobing, *HKBP Do HKBP, HKBP Is HKBP, Penggalan Teologis Dalam Sejarah, Tradisi dan Dogma HKBP*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 42.

<sup>27</sup> Darwin Lumbantobing, *HKBP Do HKBP, HKBP Is HKBP, Penggalan Teologis Dalam Sejarah, Tradisi dan Dogma HKBP*, 42-43.

However, it cannot be denied that there are certain articles of Christian faith in the 1951 HKBP Confession that are exactly the same as the Concord Book. Of course this cannot be avoided, because all the main points of the Christian faith can be the same, but the context of confession and the response to that confession must be different.

## CONCLUSION

The Concord Book contains documents that explained by Christians from the fourth to the 16th centuries AD what they believed and taught based on the Scriptures which include, three creeds that date back to the ancient church. It later contained the Reformed writings known as the Augsburg Confession, the Apologies of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula Concord namely, Epitome and Solid Declaration. Agreement Formula: Summary (Epitome) is the result of an agreement with Lutheran followers who are in disagreement about the Confession of Faith contained in the Augsburg Confession. While the Agreement Formula: Complete Declaration (Solid Declaration) is an explanation and restatement that is general, pure, true and certain about several articles of the Augsburg Confession regarding matters that have been disputed among theologians for some time, decided and determined according to the word of God and the treatise of the formulation of Christian teachings.

The 1951 HKBP Confession is a confession of HKBP Faith which is different from the Concord Book. Synodically, HKBP knows almost nothing about the Augsburg Confession except for the Martin Luther Catechism. The Concord, which is a Lutheran Confession, became known to HKBP after it was translated into Indonesian in 1980. This means that the 1951 HKBP Confession did not imitate or even follow the Formula Concord. Thus the 1951 HKBP Confession is not the same in context and content. However, nothing in the content or content of the 1951 HKBP Confession contradicts Luther's teachings as stated in the Formula Concord (Book of Concord). The HKBP confession is a concrete fact of theological courage in the context in which the church is located.

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