

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

The study of the doctrinal problem of man's death in the CTC which is formulated as '*the total death of man*' for mankind as a whole, its relationship to the integrity of the Toraja Church, its theoretical and practical significance for the members, and its relation to other recent confessions, conceptions and statements of death, can be summarized in the following points. These points are also supported by the general philosophical and theological literature from classic to modern views on death.

First of all, as far as I know, only the CTC formulated the total death of man in dissimilarity (dialectically) with the resurrection of man totally as one of the main themes of Christian theology in a book of confession. Therefore, it is a logical response of members to ask questions or even to reject such questionable statements made by the CTC. They ask questions but in reality, the majority of members do not know the reason why they reject the formulation 'the total death of man'. They have no argument but merely say that it is impossible that the soul could die. They state that, in any case, the soul is more virtuous than the body. They hold this view partly

because of Calvin's doctrine of man and u- u -

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deeply ruoted in the minds of the inembers of the Toraja Church. Moreover, there are various legends about the inmortality of the soul in Torajan traditional culture which are apparently similar with the metaphysical understanding of death, that death is the separation of the soul from the body, whereas the Bible says: "The wages of sin is death" (Roin. 6:23). This is unquestionably a more philosophical than•theological approach. For this reason I am very interested to work out such a problem.

Secondly, if we ask the question: who is more amazing, Socrates or Jesus? The Christians' spontaneous answer is, without doubt, Jesus! But frankly, Socrates' view on the belief of the inmortality of the soul, in reality, is more popular among Christians than the biblical view on the creation of man where man is a single entity created by God, even though some people have never heard of Socrates. Based on these issues, a review of literature dealing with research in phi losophical and theological discourse of man and death, must unavoidably include anthropological debate. A delineation of anthropological frameworks is necessary to rnake a comparison with the CTC's anthropological thought while preserving the CTC's, apologetically.

This study was undertaken with the main intention oE ascertaining whether the total death of man is a special issue for the CTC or whether it could be formulated in other

church confessions. However, this is unlikely because there are many theologies of death even as there are many philosophies of death, with the exception of churches which share the same theological thought as the CTC.

The theological framework and the appropriate method of exegesis of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. The Bible is the main source being the book of the history of God's saving activity, which calls man to believe. Therefore, the belief in the sovereignty of God is the decisive factor in talking about the total death of man.
2. The moderate attitude was used correlatively in talking about the issue of the relationship between man and God in the sense of man as a whole body from the visible aspect and soul from the invisible aspect. Man is totally created and merely a creation whereas God is the Creator. The moderate position was also used to make balances between the text pole and the context pole, between emphasis on emotion and emphasis on intellect, between the Conservatives (right-wing) and the Progressives (left-wing).
3. A narrative approach as the contemporary method of exegesis was used to interpret everything about man, that of his life, death, resurrection, and eternal life in the framework of the history of God's saving activity.

Analysis of the exegeses or interpretations of death revealed the following conclusions:

- L All interpretations of death consist of a division of the biblical anthropological view and refer to the belief in the sovereignty of God and the belief in man created by God. All Christian interpretations which agree that man is created by God as a whole, a single entity are supported by this study. The soul or spirit is not immortal, but is just as an expression of man as a whole from the invisible aspect, instead of the body from the visible aspect.
2. My research hypothesis states that it is unlikely that those who analyze man dichotomously will ever agree with the total death of man. So that it is clear, the stronger one's belief in man as a whole, the more likely one's belief in man's death totally, and so too vice versa.
3. The significance of the CTC in formulating man's death totally points directly and dialectically to man's resurrection totally. All happen symbolically. There is a great problem for Christians who believe in the total death of man but think only of man's dying empirically.

B. Implications

The theological framework of this study is not

applicable only for theological and biblical research but also tenable for empirical investigation. It would be more useful for the empirical investigation to investigate the members' view of death directly among the members of the Toraja Church, rather than merely supporting by the CTC apologetically as this study does. But this study could be recognized as the first step for further empirical study, at least for my practical ministry.

It is clear that this study does not indicate that to formulate the statement of '*the total death of nian*' in the book of confession such the CTC, is the best confession, but rather to suggest that it is too risky for Christian

theology not to consider such a unique biblical thought.

C. Recommendations

It is unlikely that such this study will ever be considered as complete. However, as a result of this study and the conclusions presented, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is a need for the book of the CTC to make further clarification especially to define '*what is nian*', '*the total death of nian*', '*the resurrection of man totally*' and '*eternal life*'.
2. There is a need for the Toraja Church to re-define its theological position in the spectrum of modern theology. This is especially true today because in

addition to modernism, there is a further tendency to
struggle with culture.

3. There is a need for investigation from the Toraja
Church into some theological terms, in addition to
death, but there are some more analogous terms of
theological usage concerning in the traditional
Torajan culture formulations.
4. There is a need for a future study of the Christian
perspective on death according to each theological
position.