

MORAVIAN MOMENT #87

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity”

The Moravian Church shares a common body of doctrine with other Evangelical Protestant Churches. It has refused over the years to become engaged in lengthy debates over the fine points of theology, holding that it is not our business to try to determine authoritatively matters that the scriptures have left undetermined. The Church has therefore coined the motto: *In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things charity (love)*. This motto has been used to summarize the Moravian attitude on doctrine. This immediately raises the question, what are the essentials?

First and foremost, the Moravian Church regards as the Chief doctrine of the Christian faith, the firm conviction that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). The person of Jesus Christ and his redeeming love is the central point of our church’s preaching of salvation.

Following this central doctrine of redemption through Christ, the scriptures present eight main subjects which the Moravian Church holds to our knowledge of salvation (Source: *Becoming a member of the Moravian Church* by John Groenfeldt). The doctrines are:

1. The doctrine of the universal depravity of human nature; that, since the fall, there is no health in man, and that he has no power to save himself. John 3:6; Rom. 3:23; 7:18; Rom 1: 18-32; 3: 9-18; Eph. 2: 8-13.
2. The doctrine of the love of God the Father to fallen humanity; that he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1:3-4; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9.
3. The doctrine of the real godhead and the real humanity of Jesus Christ. In other words, he is both God and man. Scripture declares that the word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:1-14; Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2: 14-17; Col. 1:17-19.
4. The doctrine of our reconciliation with God and our justification before him through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Rom. 3: 24-25; 5:1; 1Pet. 1:18-19.
5. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the working of his grace; that without him we are unable to know the truth; that it is he who leads us to Christ, by working in us the knowledge of sin, and faith in Jesus, and that he gives us the witness that we are children of God. John 16: 8-11; 1 Cor. 12:3; Rom. 8:16.
6. The doctrine of good works as the fruit of the Spirit. Rom. 6: 11-14; James 2:17.
7. The doctrine of the fellowship of believers with one another. John 17:21; Eph. 4:4.
8. The doctrine of the second coming of the Lord in glory and of the resurrection of the dead unto life, or unto judgment. John 6:40; 11:25-26; 1Thess. 4:14-17.

These are the doctrines that the Moravian Church holds to be the *essentials*.

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