

AD FONTES

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Cor Unum: What We Believe & Practice.

“Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.” Psalm 119:89

The Nicene Creed 325 AD -

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].
With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

Definition of Chalcedon 451 AD -

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul (meaning human soul) and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness.

We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten -- in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality (*hypostasis*). They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word (*Logos*) of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers (*the Nicene Creed*) has handed down to us.

Modern Theological Practice 2007 AD –

Section 1: The Scriptures

We believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the

original writings, and the supreme and final authority in doctrine and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21; John 17:17).

Section 2: The Godhead

We believe in one God eternally existing in three equal persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who have the same nature and attributes but who are distinct in office and activity (Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

Section 3: The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe that He accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that our redemption and salvation is guaranteed by His literal physical resurrection from the dead (John 1:1, 14, 18; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24-26; 4:25).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted to the right hand of God, where as High Priest He fulfills the ministry of intercession and advocacy for His people (Hebrews 1:3; 3:1; 7:23-25; I John 2:1-2).

Section 4: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is a person who restrains evil in the world and convicts men of sin. He also regenerates those who receive Christ as Savior, baptizes them into the Church, the Body of Christ, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts on each one and fills those yielded to Him (John 16:7-11; John 3:8; I Corinthians 12:4-11,13; John 14:16-17; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

We believe that some gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and miraculous healings, were given as authenticating signs in the early church and were temporary (I Corinthians 14:22-24; Hebrews 2:4). We believe, however, that God answers prayer for the sick in accordance with His will (I John 5:14-15; James 5:15-16).

Section 5: Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that angels are spiritual beings who were created as sinless personalities and that they occupied different orders and ranks. They presently exist in both fallen and unfallen states, the former including Satan and his angels (Hebrews 1:13-14; II Peter 2:4; Revelation 7:12).

We believe that Satan, by his own choice the enemy of God and the people of God, is the originator of sin, that he led our first parents into sin and now rules as the god of this world. We believe that he was judged at the cross and that ultimately he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 3:1-19; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

Section 6: Creation

We believe all things in heaven and earth were created by God and exist by His power (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16-17).

We believe that man was created innocent and in the image and likeness of God but that he sinned bringing both physical and spiritual death to himself and his posterity. We believe that man has inherited a sinful nature, is alienated from God, and is in need of salvation (Genesis 1:27; 2:17; 3:19; Ephesians 2:1-3).

Section 7: Salvation

We believe that salvation is a sovereignly bestowed gift of God's mercy and is received by man through personal faith in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin. We believe that man is justified by grace through faith apart from works (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10). We believe that all true believers, once saved, are kept secure in Christ forever (Romans 8:1, 28-39; John 10:27-30).

Section 8: Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting apart unto God, is positional, progressive, and ultimate. Overall, salvation is a work of God (monergism) from beginning to end. Positionally, it is already complete since the believer is in Christ and is set apart unto God as Christ is set apart unto God. Since he retains his sinful nature, however, there is need for progressive sanctification whereby the Christian grows in grace by the power of the Spirit. Ultimately, the child of God will be set apart from sin in his practice because of his position in Christ when he is taken to be with Christ and shall be like Him (John 17:17; II Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 5:25-27; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14).

Section 9: The Church

We believe that the Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism, made up of all born-again persons of this present age. We believe that the Church began at Pentecost and that a believer is placed into the Church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Church is distinct from Israel (Ephesians 1:22-23; I Corinthians 12-13; 10:32).

We believe that the local church is an assembly of professed believers in Jesus Christ who are voluntarily joined together in one locality for the purposes of worship, study of the Word of God, observance of the ordinances, Christian fellowship, and to be equipped for Christian service (Acts 2:42-47; I Corinthians 1:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13).

Section 10: The Sacraments/Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christ instituted the sacraments/ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper which are to be observed by believers until He returns (Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

We believe that by water baptism a believer is publicly identified with his Savior; that the mode should be a matter of the individual's choice; that infants of believing parents may be baptized to the Lord, and then be trained in the faith by the community and their parents giving witness to their faith granted by God alone.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ's death, our faith engaging these elements to be strengthened, the elements being symbols of His body and blood. We believe that every Christian has a right to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper but that participation must always be preceded by solemn self-examination and afterwards by great thanksgiving.

Section 11: The Second Coming Of Christ

We believe in the personal, imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Church to be followed by the tribulation on earth which will culminate in the return of Christ to earth to set up His millennial kingdom (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Philippians 3:20; Matthew 24:15-31; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 20:1-6).

Section 12: The Eternal State

We believe that the souls of believers in Jesus Christ do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming for the Church, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in constant misery in Hades until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15).