

I embrace classical Christian thought, especially as expressed in the Reformed Tradition. I subscribe and cherish the traditional creeds of the church, especially the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Symbol of Chalcedon, the Heidelberg, the Westminster, etc. I believe that these confessional statements faithfully express the truth of God as found in the Holy Scriptures. I would briefly summarize that faith, which I affirm, as follows:

I believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the uniquely authoritative Word of God, infallible in what they teach, and the final standard for all matters pertaining to life, faith, and ethics, whether private or public. I believe the Bible is the written revelation of God's truth, not merely a witness to a revelational event. I believe the Bible sets forth in objective and propositional manner the truth of God, and that I am bound to believe and obey God in the manner by which it instructs me.

I believe in one God, who is eternal, unchanging, all-powerful, all knowing. I believe that God is holy, and that holiness conditions all else that may be said of Him. Thus God's love is holy love, God's wrath is holy wrath, God's justice is holy justice, etc. In the language of Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4, God is holy, holy, holy.

I believe that God is one in essence, but three in person, revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal in glory, power, personality, and eternity.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God, who is equal in deity with the Father. I believe that the eternal Son of God entered history, and was born of the virgin Mary, becoming human, and by the anointing of God's Spirit, fulfilled the mission of the Messiah who had been predicted throughout the Old Testament. I believe that Jesus Christ is truly man (*vera homo*) and truly God (*vera deus*), two natures in one person, and that these natures are joined in one person without mixture or confusion, or separation or division, each nature retaining its own attributes. I believe that Jesus lived a life of blameless righteousness, obeying perfectly the Father's law and will, and thus he merited eternal life and blessing based on his actual virtue. I believe that in the mystery of the atonement, Christ imputed to every one who has or will believe in him his righteousness and his merit, and at the same time, that the sin and guilt of those same persons was imputed to Christ, so that it may properly be said that he became "sin" and that he became a "curse" for us. I believe that God poured out on his beloved Son the wrath that was actually deserved by those for whom he died, and thereby satisfied the demands of justice eternally for His "sheep." I believe that the sufficiency of that atonement was vindicated on the third day when God raised His Son from the dead. I believe that Christ was seen by reliable eyewitnesses in history, and that their testimony is true. I believe that forty days after his resurrection, Christ ascended to the right hand of God, where he was coronated King of Kings, Lord of Lord, the ruler of the kings of the earth, and that at that moment "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and he will reign forever." I believe that Christ will reign until he has put every enemy under his feet, the last of which is death. I believe that the kingdom of Christ grows in history like a mustard seed, and permeates the institutions of humanity

and individual people as leaven permeates a lump of dough. I believe that at some unknown time in the future Christ will return to a victorious church, and at that time he will judge the living and dead. I believe that all who are not covered by the atonement of Christ will be judged guilty by Him, and be lost forever under the wrath of God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who was sent by Christ to the church on the day of Pentecost. I believe that the Holy Spirit is the same as the Spirit of YHWH referred to repeatedly in the Old Testament, but whereas the Spirit anointed only a select few in the pre-Christian era, He now anoints all true believers, equipping them for the task of bearing witness to the truth of Christ. I believe that the Holy Spirit is the Paraclete (advocate) promised by Christ in the upper room, and that the Spirit was sent to the church by the Father and the Son, and that the Spirit now convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. I believe that the Holy Spirit regenerates and sanctifies the people of God, and that without His indwelling presence, we would be utterly unable to perform the least good work.

I believe that the human race was created in the image of God, and was commanded to fill and have dominion over the earth to the glory of God. I believe that the human race was plunged into sin by our corporate disobedience through our representative in the Garden of Eden, Adam. I believe that the fall was a great fall, and that without grace, humanity is hopelessly lost, and corrupted to the core. I believe that “while we were yet dead,” Christ made us alive through the Holy Spirit, that this is the new birth, or regeneration, and that regeneration precedes faith. I believe that we are justified by faith alone, but not by “a lonely faith,” that is, I believe that works of obedience to Christ will immediately and inevitably follow in the wake of authentic faith, and that faith without works is dead, that is, no faith at all. I believe that sanctification is a gradual growth in holiness and maturity in Christ, and requires the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit working cooperatively with the means of grace in the Christian’s life. I believe that Christians are to make diligent use of the means of grace, and that sanctification will certainly take place thereby. I believe that the means of grace include submission to the preaching of the Word, participation in the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism, attending to prayer, witnessing to our faith, studying the scriptures, etc. I believe that the end of sanctification is glorification, and that those “whom he justified, he glorified,” that is, that none once justified will ever be lost, but will certainly persevere in faith to the end.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. I believe in the communion of the saints. I believe that the church is God’s primary institution for spreading the good news of Christ, and bringing men and women to fellowship with God and with each other. I believe that the church has a mandate from her Lord to make disciples of the nations. I believe that “making disciples” involves more than individual discipleship, but also extends to the public square, and includes matters political, social, educational, economic, artistic, and aesthetic. I believe, therefore, that the church should be about the business of both preaching the gospel, and also using every legitimate means to influence society and culture in the direction of authentically Christian values. I do not believe that coercive force represents a legitimate means of so doing.

I believe that Christians are called to a life of holiness in word and deed, and that there certainly is an ethic set forth in the scriptures that Christians are bound to obey. I believe that the biblical ethic covers matters of personal morality, integrity, industry, and charity. I believe that any "Christianity" that denies that these are essential and mandatory is no Christianity at all.

I believe that human history will someday end, and Christ will return to perfect the new heavens and earth, thus completing a redemptive process commenced at the time of his atoning death, resurrection and ascension. I believe in Heaven and Hell. I believe in angels and demons. I believe that Satan is defeated and bound, that he has lost his place in heaven, that he is destined for the Lake of Fire.

I believe that Christians will share eternity with Christ in unspeakable bliss and constant worship, and that these great benefits are given by God's mere good pleasure, and not based on any merit in us of any kind.