

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OASIS Class:

“Testimony: Vocabulary of Faith”

[4-11-2021

Our Reformed confessions bear witness to the Scripture’s testimony. The Reformed tradition helps us interpret Scripture and provides us with both historic and contemporary ways of understanding who God is. The authority of the confessions is always subject to their consistency with Scripture.

Nicene Creed

» The Nicene Creed has three sections detailing what Christians believe about God. God the Father is described as “Almighty” and “maker of heaven and earth.” Jesus is the “only Son,” “begotten, not made.” Jesus is not subordinate to God the Father. The Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” The one-in-three nature of God is described in this ancient creed. The triune nature of God reveals God’s ongoing relationship to the world. Each section explicates how God is made known to us through how God acts and how God communicates those actions.

Scots Confession

» Chapter 1 of the Scots Confession emphasizes that our worship is directed toward God and God only. God is “eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible,” and no other is worthy of our worship, trust or allegiance. Our worship of God furthers our relationship with and understanding of God. The statement *lex orandi, lex credendi*, or “the law of prayer is the law of belief,” is one way of saying that our worship is inextricable from our beliefs; one shapes the other.

Westminster Confession

» Chapter 2 of the Westminster Confession uses the word “most” repeatedly when describing God. God is over the top, beyond our imagination, in need of nothing from us, but always wanting to be in relationship with us. We are invited to imagine all the positive adjectives in the world for God and then multiply their goodness by a hundred, a thousand, a million — and still we would not get close to God’s gloriousness. God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good. Better than we could ever hope or imagine.

A Brief Statement of Faith

» The contemporary confession “A Brief Statement of Faith” is also structured around the three persons of the Trinity. It is book-ended with the affirmation that we belong to God and that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The emphasis is on God’s creation of us and God’s commitment to us, no matter what. The confession repeats the refrain “We trust in. ...” Our faith calls us to trust the God who makes and sustains us regardless of our circumstances or that of the world. While God is always

doing a new thing and change is constant, God's faithfulness and character are unchanging and sure.

Group 1

The Nicene Creed

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.

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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

Group 2

The Scots Confession

Chapter 1 [God]

We confess and acknowledge one God alone, to whom alone we must cleave, whom alone we must serve, whom only we must worship, and in whom alone we put our trust. Who is eternal, infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, invisible; one in substance and yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By whom we confess and believe all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, to have been created, to be retained in their being, and to be ruled and guided by his inscrutable providence for such end as his eternal wisdom, goodness, and justice have appointed, and to the manifestation of his own glory.

Group 3

The Westminster Confession

Chapter 2 [Of God, and of the Holy Trinity]

1. There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: he is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Group 4

A Brief Statement of Faith

THE STATEMENT:

- 1 In life and in death we belong to God.
- 2 Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 3 the love of God,
- 4 and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
- 5 we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
- 6 whom alone we worship and serve.

- 7 We trust in Jesus Christ,
- 8 fully human, fully God.
- 9 Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
- 10 preaching good news to the poor
- 11 and release to the captives,
- 12 teaching by word and deed
- 13 and blessing the children,
- 14 healing the sick
- 15 and binding up the brokenhearted,
- 16 eating with outcasts,
- 17 forgiving sinners,
- 18 and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
- 19 Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
- 20 Jesus was crucified,
- 21 suffering the depths of human pain
- 22 and giving his life for the sins of the world.
- 23 God raised this Jesus from the dead,
- 24 vindicating his sinless life,
- 25 breaking the power of sin and evil,
- 26 delivering us from death to life eternal.
- 27 We trust in God,
- 28 whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
- 29 In sovereign love God created the world good
- 30 and makes everyone equally in God's image,
- 31 male and female, of every race and people,
- 32 to live as one community.
- 33 But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
- 34 Ignoring God's commandments,
- 35 we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
- 36 accept lies as truth,
- 37 exploit neighbor and nature,
- 38 and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
- 39 we deserve God's condemnation.
- 40 Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

41 In everlasting love,
42 the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
43 to bless all families of the earth.
44 Hearing their cry,
45 God delivered the children of Israel
46 from the house of bondage.
47 Loving us still,
48 God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
49 Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
50 like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
51 God is faithful still.

52 We trust in God the Holy Spirit
53 everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
54 The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
55 sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
56 and binds us together with all believers
57 in the one body of Christ, the Church.
58 The same Spirit
59 who inspired the prophets and apostles
60 rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
61 engages us through the Word proclaimed,
62 claims us in the waters of baptism,
63 feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
64 and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

65 In a broken and fearful world
66 the Spirit gives us courage
67 to pray without ceasing,
68 to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
69 to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
70 to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
71 and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
72 In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
73 we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
74 and to live holy and joyful lives,
75 even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
76 praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

77 With believers in every time and place,
78 we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
79 can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

80 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.