

## NCF Belief Statement

- **We believe that the whole Bible as contained in the Old and New Testaments is given by inspiration of God, and is as such the infallible rule of faith and practice for all mankind.**
- **We believe the Bible is the supreme and final standard for the church. (Refer 2 Timothy 3:15-16).**
- **Our sub-ordinate standard of faith is contained in “The Westminster Confession of Faith” (1646).**
- **We encourage our members to make a profession of their faith as contained in the following Creeds: “The Apostles Creed” and/or “The Nicene Creed” and to instruct the members of their household accordingly.**

### ***In summary we believe:***

- We believe in one God who consists of three persons:  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. He is true God and true Man.
- We believe that God created man in His own image; that every man has sinned because he is born with a sinful nature; the penalty for this is spiritual and physical death;
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins. He took the punishment we deserve upon Himself. We are therefore saved entirely by God's grace and not by our own works or deeds. However we believe that truly saved people will want to outwork their faith in practical ways to glorify God, and out of gratitude to him.
- We believe that all who repent of their sin, believe in Jesus and receive him into their lives by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit. They are washed clean by the blood of Jesus and become children of God.
- We believe that Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and will return in person to the earth.
- We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit who gives believers power to serve Jesus and to use supernatural gifts. However these gifts of the Spirit need to be accompanied by the fruit of a changing Christ-like lifestyle.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous; Those who do not become children of God will be eternally separated from

God. Those who do become children of God will be eternally blessed in heaven.

- We believe that the one true church consists of all those people, from whatever denomination, who have been truly saved by Jesus Christ and have been reborn by the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ gave two sacraments to be observed by the Christian Church. These are to be administered by an ordained pastor or minister are Baptism and The Lord's Supper
- We believe that as God healed in Biblical times, so He heals today. He has not changed.
- We believe that once we become a Christian the Holy Spirit begins to change our lives so that we become more and more like Jesus. This process takes time and we must obey Him as He works in us to be witnesses for Him to the end of the world. (*Refer Matthew 28: 18-20*)

# The Apostles' Creed

## 3.1 Brief History

Developed between the second and ninth centuries it is the most popular creed used in worship by Western Christians. Its central doctrines are those of the Trinity and God the Creator. It has been called the Creed of Creeds.

Legend has it that the Apostles wrote this creed on the tenth day after Christ's ascension into heaven. That is not the case, though the name stuck. However, each of the doctrines found in the creed can be traced to statements current in the apostolic period. The earliest written version of the creed is perhaps the *Interrogatory Creed of Hippolytus* (ca. A.D. 215). The current form is first found in the writings of *Caesarius of Arles* (d 542).

The creed was apparently used as a summary of Christian doctrine for baptismal candidates in the churches of Rome. Hence it is also known as *The Roman Symbol*. As in Hippolytus' version it was given in question and answer format with the baptismal candidates answering in the affirmative that they believed each statement.

## 3.2 Modern English Version

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. AMEN.

# The Nicene Creed

## 4.1 Brief History

*The Nicene Creed, also called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies, which disturbed the church during the fourth century, concerned the doctrine of the trinity and of the person of Christ. Both the Greek (Eastern) and the Latin (Western) church held this creed in honor, though with one important difference: the Western church insisted on the inclusion of the phrase "and the Son" (known as the "filioque") in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit; this phrase still is repudiated by the Eastern Orthodox church. In its present form this creed goes back partially to the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) with additions by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). It was accepted in its present form at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but the "filioque" phrase was not added until 589. However, the creed is in substance an accurate and majestic formulation of the Nicene faith. This translation of the Greek text was approved by the CRC Synod of 1988.*

## 4.2 Current Reformed Church Version

We believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made;  
of the same essence as the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven;

he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
and was made human.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried.

The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory  
to judge the living and the dead.

His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life.

He proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.

He spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,  
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

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### **4.3 More detailed history**

In the first three centuries, the church found itself in a hostile environment. On the one hand, it grappled with the challenge of relating the language of the gospel, developed in a Hebraic and Jewish-Christian context, to a Graeco-Roman world. On the other hand, it was threatened not only by persecution, but also by ideas that were in conflict with the biblical witness.

In A.D. 312, Constantine won control of the Roman Empire in the battle of Milvian Bridge. Attributing his victory to the intervention of Jesus Christ, he elevated Christianity to favored status in the empire. "One God, one Lord, one faith, one church, one empire, one emperor" became his motto.

The new emperor soon discovered that "one faith and one church" were fractured by theological disputes, especially conflicting understandings of the

nature of Christ, long a point of controversy. Arius, a priest of the church in Alexandria, asserted that the divine Christ, the Word through whom all things have their existence, was created by God before the beginning of time. Therefore, the divinity of Christ was similar to the divinity of God, but not of the same essence. Arius was opposed by the bishop, Alexander, together with his associate and successor, Athanasius. They affirmed that the divinity of Christ, the Son, is of the same substance as the divinity of God, the Father. To hold otherwise, they said, was to open the possibility of polytheism, and to imply that knowledge of God in Christ was not final knowledge of God.

To counter a widening rift within the church, Constantine convened a council in Nicaea in A.D. 325. A creed reflecting the position of Alexander and Athanasius was written and signed by a majority of the bishops. Nevertheless, the two parties continued to battle each other. In A.D. 381, a second council met in Constantinople. It adopted a revised and expanded form of the A.D. 325 creed, now known as the Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed is the most ecumenical of creeds. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) joins with Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and most Protestant churches in affirming it. Nevertheless, in contrast to Eastern Orthodox churches, the western churches state that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but from the Father and the Son (Latin, *filioque*). To the eastern churches, saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son threatens the distinctiveness of the person of the Holy Spirit; to the western churches, the *filioque* guards the unity of the triune God. This issue remains unresolved in the ecumenical dialogue.

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Quoted from *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, Book of Confessions*; Geneva Press, Louisville, KY. Copyright ©1996 by the Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

## 5. Some Definitions:

### 5.1 Apostle

Derived from the Greek verb 'to send'. **Primarily** it refers to the 12 men whom Jesus commissioned to be with him, to preach, to heal and encourage (Mk 3:13-19). Their main aim was to witness to Jesus, and their witness was rooted in years of intimate knowledge, hard experience and intensive training (Mk 8:27). They also witnessed his resurrection (Acts 1:22), which made them effective witnesses to his Person.

Qualifications for the 12 were: **a call by God and witness to the resurrection** (hence Matthias can replace Judas - Acts 1:21-26). Paul can rightly claim the title by virtue of his Damascus road call and vision of the risen Jesus (1Cor 9:1).

1 Cor 15:5,7 implies a distinction between the 12 and 'all the apostles'.

The NT does not envisage the transmission of their apostolic functions because the foundations they laid were recorded in the NT for future generations.

## **5.2 catholic letters**

During the formation of the NT Canon the letters of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1,2 and 3 John and Jude were grouped together and called 'Catholic'(meaning '**universal**') because they were mostly addressed to a wider audience than a specific church or person. Later, the term was applied to those letters accepted by the church and orthodox in doctrine, and hence meant '**genuine**' or '**universally acceptable**'.