

NAC International

In September this year, the *Catechism of the New Apostolic Church in Questions and Answers* will be published in book form. *community* presents excerpts of some of the 750 questions and answers. In this issue we will look at the creed and the triune God.

What is a creed?

A creed is a summary of the essential content of a doctrine of faith. Such a creed contains all the things which the members of a particular religious denomination profess. It is by way of its creed that a religious denomination distinguishes itself from another.

How did the first Christian creeds come into being?

The first Christian creeds are called the "early church creeds". They came into being between the second and fourth centuries AD. It was during this time that the doctrine of the trinity of God and the doctrine of the essence of Jesus Christ, that is, of His nature, were formulated.

This had become necessary because there had been disputes about various contents of faith. For example, there was the opinion that Jesus Christ did not really die on the cross and that He did not really resurrect. The function of the creeds was to distinguish the faith from these heresies.

Which are the most important of the early church creeds?

The two most important early church creeds are the Apostolic Creed ("Apostolicum") and the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople. The basic features of the Apostolicum were compiled in the second century and lightly supplemented in the fourth century. The Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople is the result of the Council of Nicaea (in the year 325 AD) and the Council of Constantinople (in the year 381 AD). The main purpose of this creed was to enshrine the profession of the trinity of God.

A council is an assembly of senior religious dignitaries, who come together to discuss important matters of faith.

What significance do the early church creeds have for the New Apostolic Church?

The doctrine of the New Apostolic Church is based upon Holy Scripture. The early church creeds summarize important contents that are attested in Holy Scripture.

The New Apostolic Church professes belief in the triune God, in Jesus Christ as true God and true Man, in Jesus' birth by the virgin Mary, in the sending of the Holy Spirit, in the church, the sacraments, the expectation of the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, as formulated in the two early church creeds.

Despite the differences between the individual denominations, these professions constitute a binding element among Christians.

The term "confession" can mean "creed" or "church affiliation". The different Christian denominations can also be described as different "confessions".

What is the text of the New Apostolic Creed?

"I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.

"I believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, entered the realm of the dead, rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from where He will return.

"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the one, holy, universal, and apostolic church, the community of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting.

"I believe that the Lord Jesus rules His church and thereto sent His Apostles, and until His return still sends them, with the commission to teach, to forgive sins in His name, and to baptize with water and Holy Spirit.

"I believe that those designated by God for a ministry are ordained only by Apostles, and that authority, blessing, and sanctification for their ministration come forth out of the Apostle ministry.

"I believe that the Holy Baptism with water is the first step to a renewal of a human being in the Holy Spirit, and that the person baptized is adopted into the fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ and profess Him as their Lord.

"I believe that Holy Communion was instituted by the Lord Himself in memory of the once brought, fully valid sacrifice, and bitter suffering and death of Christ. The worthy partaking of Holy Communion establishes our fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is celebrated with unleavened bread and wine; both must be consecrated and dispensed by a minister authorized by an Apostle.

"I believe that those baptized with water must, through an Apostle, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to attain the childhood in God and thereby the prerequisite for becoming a firstling.

"I believe that the Lord Jesus will return as surely as He ascended into heaven and that He will take to Himself the firstfruits of the dead and living who have hoped for and were prepared for His coming; that after the marriage in heaven He will return to earth with them to establish His kingdom of peace, and that they will reign with Him as a royal priesthood. After the conclusion of the kingdom of peace, He will hold the Last Judgement. Then God will create a new heaven and a new earth and dwell with His people.

"I believe that I am obliged to obey the worldly authorities provided no godly laws are thereby transgressed."

What is the significance of the New Apostolic Creed?

In ten Articles of Faith, the New Apostolic Creed brings the doctrine of the New Apostolic Church to binding expression. It also has the function of defining the attitude of faith of New Apostolic Christians.

Beyond that, the creed serves to make other people familiar with the most important elements of the New Apostolic faith.

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