



A Word from Pastor Schielke

On Creeds: Part 2

The Nicene Creed begins with the words, "I believe in One God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible." This short statement says quite a lot. First, we confess with the Old Testament church that there is "one God." One of the foundational statements of God's people in the Old Testament, a doctrine that separated them from all the peoples around them is found in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." There is only one God. Every other so-called "god" is made up, a false god, an idol.

One early heresy that the Christian church dealt with was Manichaeism. Mani, for whom the heretical religion is named, was an Iranian born in 216 AD to parents of a Jewish Christian Gnostic sect. (See previous newsletter articles on Gnosticism.) Through a series of revelations or visions, Mani believed that Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions were incomplete. He referred to his new religion as "The Religion of Light" and felt he was

correcting the deficiencies in these other religions. Among other things, Manichaeism was dualistic, believing that the good, spiritual world of light was competing against the material, evil world of darkness. In his system, there were several gods, some gods of light and others of darkness. Adam and Eve were descended from the "Prince of darkness," an evil god sometimes called the devil.

Thus, in part, the first article of the Creed is confirming the revelation of a single God from the Old Testament and arguing against various pseudo-Christian heresies including Gnosticism and Manichaeism. To be fair, no Biblical Christian would have embraced having more than one god in that time, but the authors of the creed felt it necessary to refute this obvious lie about the true God so there would be no confusion as to what actual Christians believe.

Notice that the creed describes God making (creating) heaven and earth, visible and invisible. With these words we are confessing that Almighty God created both the things that we

can see and touch, the physical world, and the spiritual world, those things which are not seen. This reflects Colossians 1:16, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." Christianity objects to the notion that somehow only spiritual things were created good and physical things are inherently evil. We teach that the one God created all things good but that the devil and mankind corrupted that creation, bringing evil and decay both to spiritual things and physical things.

Finally, consider God as Father. There are other monotheistic religions, Islam comes to mind. But the idea of God being Father is important. God is not just the father of all people in some spiritual sense. God the Father has a begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, the first article of the creed is preparing us for the second article. More on that next time!

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

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The Formula of Concord - The Formula of Concord (FC) was the last of the confessional documents written by the Lutherans in the 16th century. Finished in 1577, the FC consists of twelve articles presented in two parts. The first part, the Epitome, is a brief presentation of each point of doctrine and the controversy surrounding it while the Solid Declaration presents a more detailed discussion. Over a dozen authors contributed portions of draft versions of the FC, but the most influential authors of the final document were Jakob Andrea and Martin Chemnitz. The need for the FC arose after the death of Martin Luther in 1546. Over time, the Lutherans became divided over several points of doctrine. Several political peace treaties also forced the Lutherans to entertain and accept certain points of Reformed theology which had been developing in Switzerland. Thus, the FC was pivotal in clarifying the Lutheran position over and against both the Roman Catholic position and more significantly, over the Reformed position. It is the FC that most clearly distinguishes Lutheran teaching on several important points and against the various Protestant bodies we see around us even today. Over the next months, you will find the articles of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord in our newsletter. It's good for all of us to have at least some familiarity with this important doctrinal statement.

II - Free Will - The Principal Question in This Controversy.

¹—Since the will of man is found in four unlike states, namely: 1. before the Fall; 2. since the Fall; 3. after regeneration; 4. after the resurrection of the body, the chief question is only concerning the will and ability of man in the second state, namely, what powers in spiritual things he has of himself after the fall of our first parents and before regeneration, and whether he is able by his own powers, prior to and before his regeneration by God's Spirit, to dispose and prepare himself for God's grace, and to accept [and apprehend], or not, the grace offered through the Holy Ghost in the Word and holy [divinely instituted] Sacraments.

Affirmative Theses. The Pure Doctrine concerning This Article, according to God's Word.

²—1. Concerning this subject, our doctrine, faith, and confession is, that in spiritual things the understanding and reason of man are [altogether] blind, and by their own powers understand nothing, as it is written 1 Cor. 2:14: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them when he is examined concerning spiritual things.

³—2. Likewise we believe, teach, and confess that the unregenerate will of man is not only turned away from God, but also has become an enemy of God, so that it only has an inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written Gen. 8:21: The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. Also Rom. 8:7: The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be. Yea, as little as a dead body can quicken itself to bodily, earthly life, so little can man, who by sin is spiritually dead, raise himself to spiritual life, as it is written Eph. 2:5: Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ; 2 Cor. 3:5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything good as of ourselves, but that we are sufficient is of God.

⁴—3. God the Holy Ghost, however, does not effect conversion without means, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written Rom. 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God

⁵—unto salvation to every one that believeth. Also Rom. 10:17: Faith cometh by hearing of the Word of God. And it is God's will that His Word should be heard, and that man's ears should not be closed. Ps. 95:8. With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia in Acts 16:14, are attentive to it, and are thus converted alone through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose

⁶—work alone the conversion of man is. For without His grace, and if He do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing, and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says John 15:5: Without Me ye can do nothing. With these brief words He denies to the free will its powers, and ascribes everything to God's grace, in order that no one may boast before God. 1 Cor. 1:29; 2 Cor. 12:5; Jer. 9:23.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Council Meeting	2	3 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	4	5	6	7 Evangelism Workshop 9:00 a.m.
8 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	9	10	11	12 Walk-a-thon 9:00 a.m.	13	14 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
15 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	16	17 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	18	19	20 Trustee Workday 8:00 a.m.	21
22 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon Voters' Meeting	23	24 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	25	26	27	28 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
29 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Study / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	30	31 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.				29

VIC Happenings



Reformation Sunday

Voter's Meeting 10/22 - After our lunch on Sunday the 22nd, we will have our quarterly voters' meeting. Congregational officers for 2023 will be voted on at this meeting. It is important for all voters to attend to be informed about the congregation and to lend your voice to the decision making process.

Reformation Sunday 10/29 - The annual Festival of the Reformation is Sunday, October 29. It's a day when we remember the rediscovery of the Gospel during the 16th century. We are saved by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone as declared in Scripture alone.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

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October Birthdays:

1 Sandee Hill



October Anniversary:

31 Marty Groves and Linda Watson

For 2023, I would like to challenge every member of this congregation to read or continue reading through the Bible in one year. The Bible readings for October and part of November are listed below.

Oct. 1: Malachi	Oct. 14: Matthew 27-28	Oct. 27: Luke 8-9
Oct. 2: Matthew 1-4	Oct. 15: Mark 1-3	Oct. 28: Luke 10-11
Oct. 3: Matthew 5-6	Oct. 16: Mark 4-5	Oct. 29: Luke 12-13
Oct. 4: Matthew 7-8	Oct. 17: Mark 6-7	Oct. 30: Luke 14-16
Oct. 5: Matthew 9-10	Oct. 18: Mark 8-9	Oct. 31: Luke 17-18
Oct. 6: Matthew 11-12	Oct. 19: Mark 10-11	Nov. 1: Luke 19-20
Oct. 7: Matthew 13-14	Oct. 20: Mark 12-13	Nov. 2: Luke 21-22
Oct. 8: Matthew 15-17	Oct. 21: Mark 14	Nov. 3: Luke 23-24
Oct. 9: Matthew 18-19	Oct. 22: Mark 15-16	Nov. 4: John 1-2
Oct. 10: Matthew 20-21	Oct. 23: Luke 1	Nov. 5: John 3-4
Oct. 11: Matthew 22-23	Oct. 24: Luke 2-3	Nov. 6: John 5-6
Oct. 12: Matthew 24-25	Oct. 25: Luke 4-5	Nov. 7: John 7-8
Oct. 13: Matthew 26	Oct. 26: Luke 6-7	Nov. 8: John 9-10

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