

TREVIN WAX

*The*  
THRILL  
*of*  
ORTHODOXY



*Rediscovering the Adventure  
of Christian Faith*



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## *This I Believe*



THE CHURCH FACES HER BIGGEST CHALLENGE not when new errors start to win but when old truths no longer wow. J. R. R. Tolkien once said that the most regrettable feature of human nature is how quickly we become unsatisfied with the good.<sup>1</sup> We receive good gifts from God and then grow bored with blessings. Spiritual dullness. Blurry vision. Hardness of heart. *This* is the challenge for the church.

I remember my first night back home in the United States, several months after moving to Romania as a nineteen-year-old. I'd decided to head home for a couple weeks at Christmastime, a brief respite from what would become a five-year sojourn dedicated to mission work and education in Eastern Europe. In those early months overseas, I had learned how to maintain a supply of drinkable water. I spent weekends in a little village, in a house with no indoor plumbing, where I learned new ways of washing up with buckets from the well and to always keep close a bottle or two of purified water.

That first night home, in the fog of jet lag, I unpacked my bags, surveyed my room, and then walked downstairs to get some ice water from the fridge before bed. I can still see myself standing on the staircase, holding a hunter green thermos filled with ice-cold purified water that had flowed, like magic, at the touch of a button. My mind registered shock: *that was so easy!* And my heart was brimming with gratitude at the marvel of drinkable running water, available to me in a matter of seconds—a feat that had required foresight and planning overseas. I wish I could say that sense of awe and gratitude at the wonder of water never faded, that since then I've never expressed frustration at the defect in our ice machine nor muttered while changing the filter. But as you might expect, overfamiliarity often leads us away from being satisfied by all that is good.

Familiarity is the enemy of wonder.

Years later, my commute put me every day on an interstate lined with trees. And for some reason, I started to notice them. My eyes were opened to the astonishing variety in those rows of green on either side, standing tall like the walls of the Red Sea parted. There was a shagbark hickory nestled up under a towering oak, with a drowsy birch tree flanked by a gnarled sycamore and the springtime purple of Tennessee redbuds. Awakened to the glory of trees, it was all I could do to keep my eyes on the road and my car from careening toward a ditch. Yet how many times before and after have I whizzed past those beauties without a second thought!

The adventure of life is a fight for astonishment, a determination to resist growing bored in a world of wonders. Perhaps that's why those who live near the quiet glory of the mountains go to the beach for vacation, and vice versa. We change the scenery

so we can *see* the scene. We leave home so that, for even the briefest of moments, upon our return we see its glory anew.

The Christian life begins with spiritual astonishment at the glory of the gospel and the goodness and beauty of Christian truth, with the wide-eyed surprise of the infant brought into a new world of grace. But over time, our eyes grow heavy and our tastebuds dim—and that’s when errors creep in. Spiritual sleepiness results in a sagging sense of God’s love and diminished commitment to pass on the faith to the next generation. We become sluggish with the Scriptures; bored with the Bible; drowsy toward doctrine. Overfamiliar with the truth, we gravitate toward “exciting” new teachings or practices that promise to awaken us from spiritual slumber. And error—always dressing itself up as more attractive than truth—seizes opportunity when we are most prone to wander.<sup>2</sup>

Why do we so easily lose our wonder at truths that have informed and inspired Christians for generations? How is it we find ourselves no longer wowed by old truths? Why are we drawn toward theological error? To better understand our susceptibility to this spiritual malaise, we should take a closer look at our context, to see the forces at work—in our world, in our churches, and in us—that diminish our devotion.

### **CULTURAL CHAOS**

We begin with the anxiety and unsettledness of these chaotic times, a result of political polarization, technological advances, and worldwide disasters. We are inundated by information (and disinformation), flooded by various views and opinions ranging from the absurd to the abstract, which make it difficult to discover what sources are credible. Anyone can grab a megaphone and shout down those who would deviate even slightly from whatever

new orthodoxy unites a particular community or political party. We don't know who, if anyone, we can trust.

For Christians, this sense of disorientation is magnified by the shifting moral landscape. No longer can we expect religiosity to be respectable. Long-held beliefs and values drawn from Christian doctrine are now “extreme.” Assumptions shared by nearly everyone a few decades ago are suddenly beyond the pale. As fewer and fewer people identify with a religious tradition, those who adhere today to institutional forms of religion fall further outside the mainstream.

In generations past, respectable religiosity and cultural Christianity presented their own set of challenges to true faith and practice. The way of Christ is never easy, and believers in every era are prone to forget their first love (Revelation 2:4). In our era, the danger of abandoning our first love manifests itself through the pressures of a society where Christianity is not the norm, and common Christian beliefs and morals no longer seem plausible. In the midst of constant flux, “stability” is now regarded with suspicion. Like everything else, faith is caught up in the whirlwind of change.

### **CHURCH CONFUSION**

Meanwhile, many churches are in a stupor—bewilderment drains the energy of the believers who attend. Congregations and denominations are embroiled in conflicts that resemble the world of hardball politics. Widespread disillusionment has settled into the church following the scourge of sex abuse scandals, abusive leadership patterns, and institutional coverups of atrocities committed by some of the world's most trusted and admired faith leaders.

Hypocrisy has bolstered the anti-institutional sentiments of many toward the church, leading to an explosion of new religious options and narrowly tailored spiritual experiences. Cultural observer Tara Isabella Burton says many people are trading institutional religion for *intuitional spirituality*: “a religion decoupled from institutions, from creeds, from metaphysical truth-claims about God or the universe . . . but that still seeks—in various and varying ways—to provide us with the pillars of what religion always has: meaning, purpose, community, ritual.”<sup>3</sup>

In response to this crippling confusion, some Christians call for the updating and improvement of the faith for a modern era. Others disavow aspects of historic Christianity but try to hold on to a few preferable parts. Several high-profile leaders have renounced the faith altogether. Meanwhile, large swaths of once-faithful churchgoers have quietly closed the door and just slipped away.

### **CHRISTIAN COMPLACENCY**

What happens to those who are left, the rank-and-file Christians who love their families and cherish their churches? In every generation, we face the danger of longing for the past while fearing the future. And this mix of nostalgia and fear leads us into a state of complacency—a mission-less faith. We file in and out of the sanctuary week after week, content to recite the same words with our lips, but our hearts remain unstirred by the truths we confess and we are less likely to invite others to believe the good news.

Complacent Christianity causes compartmentalization—a convenient separation of Christian truth from the beliefs that frame our day-to-day activities.

Christianity becomes just one aspect of a busy life. What we believe, we’re told, isn’t as important as how we live. And even

then, it's fine if our life choices don't line up with Christian teaching as long as our faith helps us be true to ourselves and keeps us from hurting anyone.

What's missing from this scenario is any sense of Christianity as a mission that requires obedience to a King, a rollicking adventure that brings us face to face with opposition, as we proclaim something bigger and more satisfying than personal preference. Christianity's call to costly obedience may not appear on the surface as heroic or radical—we may experience seasons of stress as we struggle to raise our kids, clock in and out of an unfulfilling job, and do our best to serve the believers in a church filled with problems—but we must remember that the pathway of repentance and faith imbues even the smallest acts of self-sacrifice with eternal significance. The mission remains, and it stands in contrast to a complacent Christianity that would domesticate the faith and dampen its revolutionary passion. In countless ways that may not seem obvious to us or others, we are to rebel against the rebellion of a fallen world and witness to the rule of the risen Jesus over the universe.

## THE DIAGNOSIS

I'm convinced that one of the primary causes of this spiritual malaise is our loss of confidence in the truth and goodness of the Christian faith. In every generation, we risk losing our wonder at the glory of Christian truth and the enduring witness of the church. Amid chaos and confusion, we can easily turn our focus on ourselves and, as a result, forget *God*. It's as if we have inherited a vast estate—sprawling grounds surrounding beautiful buildings filled with priceless heirlooms—but we stay cooped up in a broom closet, complacent and bored, with no desire to explore all that we've been given in Christ.



We've been here before. Chaos and confusion are not new. Every generation faces these challenges, for different reasons. The key to renewal is not to do away with the aspects of Christianity we find unsettling in our time. (After all, if Christianity is true, we ought to expect every culture to come into conflict with its claims at some point or another.) Neither should we ignore new challenges and wave away hard questions about what we believe and why.

No, the key to renewal is to return to the only truth that is reliable and sturdy when so much in the world seems fleeting and faddish: the gospel of God delivered once for all to the saints. The gospel is the royal announcement that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived a perfect life in our place, died a substitutionary death on the cross for our sins, rose triumphantly from the grave to launch God's new creation, and is now exalted as King of the world. This announcement calls for a response: repentance (mourning over and turning from our sin, trading our agendas for the kingdom agenda of Jesus Christ) and faith (trusting in Christ alone for salvation by the power of the Spirit). Much more can and must be said about this good news and its impact on us and on the world.<sup>4</sup> I've merely scratched the surface of what J. I. Packer used to tell his students is "the biggest thing that ever was"<sup>5</sup>; ancient truth, ever new. The way forward is to reach back, to find renewal in something old—foundational truths tested by time, a fount of goodness that refreshes and satisfies, long-forgotten beauty from the past that lifts our eyes above the suffering and sorrow of the present.

### THE THRILL OF ORTHODOXY

What the church needs today is to recapture *the thrill of orthodoxy*. For a philosopher like Aristotle, the word *orthodoxy* meant "right"

or “correct” opinion, but the early Christians repurposed it to mean “having right belief,” and they saw right belief as vital because of its connection to right worship of the one true God. Over the centuries, *orthodoxy* has come to mean conformity with Scripture, as agreed upon by the church.

You may think of orthodoxy as nothing more than a dry and dense list of doctrines. Necessary perhaps, but thrilling? Sounds a little like expecting your math book to give you heart palpitations.

But these two words belong together. I agree with the English crime writer and poet Dorothy Sayers who responded to the idea that empty churches are a result of preachers insisting too much on “dull dogma.” They get it backward, she wrote, “It is the neglect of dogma that makes for dullness.” It’s boring to adapt the Christian faith to better fit people; what’s exciting is to adapt people to better fit the Christian faith. “The Christian faith is the most exciting drama that ever staggered the imagination of man—and the dogma is the drama.”<sup>6</sup>

Orthodoxy is an ancient castle with spacious rooms and vaulted ceilings and mysterious corridors, a vast expanse of practical wisdom handed down from our forefathers and mothers in the faith. Some inhabit the castle but fail to sift through its treasures. Others believe the castle stands in the way of progress and should be torn down. A few believe the castle’s outer shell can remain for aesthetic purposes, so long as the interior is gutted. But in every generation, God raises up those who see the value in the treasure, men and women who maintain a deep and abiding commitment to recognize and accentuate the unique beauty of Christian truth so that future generations can be ushered into its splendor.

The world finds it thrilling to follow the suggestion of the old song from the 1960s—to “make your own kind of music” and “sing your own special song.”<sup>7</sup> You decide what song to sing, what path to follow, what traditions to cast off, and what beliefs work for you “even if no one else sings along.”

But the truth is, the reverse is more thrilling: we need the “old, old story” of “how a Savior came from glory.”<sup>8</sup> We need to be part of a courageous choir of Christians—reawakened to the beauty and majesty of the Christian melody, committed to right belief and right worship. To join our voices with the apostles of two thousand years ago, singing the one song that by the power of the Spirit still resonates today.

## DEFINING ORTHODOXY

Throughout this book, I will use the term *orthodoxy* to refer to the foundational truths, consistent with the Scriptures, upon which Christians through the ages have demonstrated agreement. Orthodoxy is the historic Christian consensus on the essential elements of true faith and practice, what has been believed “everywhere, always, and by all.”<sup>9</sup> Call it “classic Christianity”<sup>10</sup> or “mere Christianity,” but a *mere* that doesn’t mean “minimal” or “barely” but “essential” and “central.”<sup>11</sup>

Whenever you encounter a contemporary statement of faith expressing the beliefs of a church tradition, you’re likely to discover that it springs from the fount of the major creeds hammered out in the early centuries of the church (the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed) and from the decisions made by early councils received by all regions of the church. Christians—whether Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant—see these doctrinal expressions as biblically faithful.

The opposite of orthodoxy is *heresy*, a word that refers to the denial or twisting of an essential Christian doctrine. Heresy obscures biblical truth to the point the gospel is radically altered, and thus represents a substantial departure from the historic witness of the church in matters of faith and practice.

In between orthodoxy and heresy are “errors.” To be fair, we are all in error somewhere since none of us can claim exhaustive knowledge of God and his ways. But some errors are more serious than others, as they touch on areas that jeopardize our allegiance to fundamental Christian truth. The errors I refer to most often in this book are closely connected to essential doctrines, errors that—if left unchecked—will steer us toward heresy.

**A word on creeds.** Why define orthodoxy in line with ancient creeds instead of pointing only to Scripture? We see the development of creeds—statements of core conviction—in the Bible itself, from the foundational creed of the Israelites, “The Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4), to early statements summing up the person and work of Christ (Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7; 1 Timothy 3:16). While only the Scriptural creeds are breathed out by God, the early church, guided by the Spirit, carried on the tradition of articulating the faith in clear and succinct ways, providing a “grammar” to enable Christians to speak faithfully and biblically about the Savior we follow. The creeds are faithful summaries of Scripture, such that the whole church has confessed, despite doctrinal divisions on other points, that the Bible teaches these affirmations as the rule of faith, as essential for salvation. Creeds have helped the church speak truthfully about God and, like guardrails, have ruled out certain positions that would lead us to stray from Scripture.

The ancient creeds showcase the personal nature of Christian faith, drawing our attention to God—the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit. They are brief, universal statements that focus on God. He is the Father who made the world and everything in it, the eternal Son who came down for us and for our salvation, and the Spirit who renews us and restores the world.

Some leaders today claim to be “orthodox” because they affirm the ancient church’s statements about God, even if they call for massive revisions or a departure from the rest of Christian tradition on matters of morality. This minimalistic approach to orthodoxy diverges from the perspective of Christians through the ages who have seen the ancient creeds as inclusive—encompassing other doctrines that are implied but not explicitly mentioned in the creeds themselves. For example, when the North African theologian Augustine of Hippo combated the heresy of another church leader, Pelagius, he did not confine orthodoxy to previous creedal statements about God, but rightly saw other key doctrines—about sin, salvation, and humanity—implied in those fundamental affirmations. Augustine relied on the framework of creedal orthodoxy to oppose aberrant teachings that had not been explicitly condemned in those earlier statements. Like Augustine, we believe each line of the creeds is full of Scriptural resonance. Another example: confessing our faith in the Father, “the maker of heaven and earth,” implies the goodness of the created world and the givenness of our maleness and femaleness—truths we reaffirm when we confess “the resurrection of the body.” Each line opens a world of wonder and theological truth.

***A word on confessions.*** Many church traditions go beyond the creeds to offer particular confessions of faith that express in greater detail the beliefs of their faith community. What’s the difference between confessions and creeds? Creeds are brief statements on the nature of God, designed for memorization and recitation in the church. Confessions are longer statements that draw

out additional implications of the faith as understood by smaller groups within the church. Confessions build on the universal trinitarian statements of the creeds; they focus attention on issues that *derive* from our faith in the Triune God.<sup>12</sup> Creeds are the blueprint for the structure of orthodoxy. Confessions fill in many of the details of that blueprint and build on that foundation. Creeds are few; confessions are many.

My purpose in this book is not to adjudicate between the confessions of different denominations. Some of these differences are significant, especially the boundaries between the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Protestants, which is why a dramatic term like *conversion* gets used by those on all sides, whether Protestants converting to Orthodoxy or Catholics converting to Protestantism.<sup>13</sup> We should not dismiss the substantive and enduring disagreements between these traditions in favor of doctrinal indifference and “lowest-common-denominator” Christianity. I am an evangelical Protestant who believes more than what the ancient creeds and early councils confess, but not less. (I use the term *evangelical* to refer to certain theological distinctives, not the sociopolitical identity that often hijacks the label in the United States.) I adhere to the beliefs expressed in the Reforming Catholic Confession, a statement of faith released in conjunction with the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, which I’ve included in the back of this book. Therefore, you can expect to come across certain evangelical emphases in these pages. I don’t apologize for these, as I believe the movement of which I am part contains seeds of renewal that can bring about fruit in many denominations and traditions.

Still, my goal is to focus on the fundamentals of the faith, the underlying unity expressed by the ancient creeds that faithfully sum up biblical teaching, the foundation on which all the later confessions build (some better than others). For this reason, I am

including these three major creeds: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. I also include multiple Scripture references corresponding to the affirmations in these creeds, to demonstrate how the early church rooted their faith in what they read in God's Word. I urge you not to rush past these three affirmations of faith, but to linger over their words and to ponder the theological and moral implications of each line—the significance of these statements regarding what we believe about God and how we are to live the Christian faith.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

<b>I believe in God, the Father almighty,</b>	Deuteronomy 32:6; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 40:28-29; 44:6; 45:5; Malachi 2:10; Luke 1:37; Mark 14:36; John 14:1-3; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 1:17; 3:14-15.
<b>creator of heaven and earth.</b>	Genesis 1-2; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6-9; 104:1-30; Jeremiah 32:17; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15.
<b>I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.</b>	Matthew 16:16; Luke 2:11; John 3:16; 20:28; Romans 10:8-9.
<b>He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.</b>	Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:27, 30-35.
<b>He suffered under Pontius Pilate,</b>	Matthew 27:24-31; Luke 23:23-25; John 18:28-19:1.
<b>was crucified, died, and was buried;</b>	Matthew 27:57-66; John 19:16-20, 28-30, 38-42; Acts 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
<b>he descended to the dead.</b>	Luke 23:43; 1 Peter 3:18-20. For more on the subject of Christ's descent, see Matthew Y. Emerson, <i>He Descended to the Dead: An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday</i> (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).
<b>On the third day he rose again.</b>	Matthew 28:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:4.
<b>He ascended to heaven</b>	Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:7-10.
<b>and is seated at the right hand of the Father.</b>	Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3.

<b>He will come again to judge the living and the dead.</b>	Matthew 25:31-32; John 5:22; 2 Timothy 4:1.
<b>I believe in the Holy Spirit,</b>	John 14:26; 16:7-8, 13-14; Acts 13:2.
<b>the holy catholic church,</b>	Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Peter 2:4-10. The word <i>catholic</i> here refers to the universal Church of Jesus Christ, in all times and places, and not specifically the Roman Catholic Church. The same is the case for its meaning in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.
<b>the communion of saints,</b>	Acts 2:42, 45-46; 1 Corinthians 12:26-27; Ephesians 1:15-18; 4:16; Hebrews 10:25; Revelation 19:14.
<b>the forgiveness of sins,</b>	Luke 7:48; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.
<b>the resurrection of the body,</b>	John 6:39; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
<b>and the life everlasting. Amen.</b>	Daniel 12:2-3; John 10:28; 17:2-3.

### THE NICENE CREED

<b>We believe in one God,</b>	Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6.
<b>the Father Almighty,</b>	Genesis 17:1; 35:11; Deuteronomy 32:6; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 6:3; 40:28-29; 63:16; 64:7; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 6:9; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:37; Romans 1:20; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 1:17; 3:14-15; 4:6.
<b>maker of heaven and earth,</b>	Genesis 1:1; Job 38–42; Psalm 33:6-9; 104:1-30; Isaiah 44:24; Jeremiah 32:17; Revelation 4:11.
<b>of all that is, seen and unseen.</b>	John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11.
<b>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,</b>	John 20:28; Acts 11:17; 16:31; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:1.
<b>the only Son of God,</b>	Matthew 3:17; 14:33; 16:16; John 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 1:6.
<b>eternally begotten of the Father,</b>	Psalm 2:7; John 1:1-2; 5:26.
<b>God from God, Light from Light,</b>	Psalm 27:1; Matthew 17:2, 5; John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 1:3; 1 John 1:5.



<b>true God from true God,</b>	John 1:1-2; 17:1-5; 1 John 5:20.
<b>begotten, not made;</b>	John 1:1-2, 18; 16:28.
<b>of one Being with the Father.</b>	Isaiah 44:6; John 5:17-18; 10:30, 38; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 1:8; 22:13.
<b>Through him all things were made.</b>	John 1:3, 10; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2, 10.
<b>For us and for our salvation</b>	Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; 1 Timothy 2:4-5.
<b>he came down from heaven;</b>	John 3:13, 31; 6:33-35, 38, 51; Philippians 2:6-7; 1 Timothy 1:15.
<b>by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,</b>	Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:34-35.
<b>and was made man.</b>	John 1:14; Hebrews 2:14.
<b>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;</b>	Matthew 27:2, 26; Mark 15:15; John 18:48-19:1; Acts 2:36; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24.
<b>he suffered death and was buried.</b>	Matthew 27:50, 59-60; Mark 8:31; Luke 23:53; John 19:38-42; 1 Corinthians 15:4.
<b>On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.</b>	Mark 9:31; 16:9; Luke 24:45-46; Acts 10:40; 17:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.
<b>He ascended into heaven</b>	Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:7-10.
<b>and is seated at the right hand of the Father.</b>	Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55; Colossians 3:1.
<b>He will come again with glory</b>	Matthew 24:27; Mark 13:26; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
<b>to judge the living and the dead,</b>	Matthew 16:27; Acts 10:42; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5.
<b>and his kingdom will have no end.</b>	Luke 1:32-33; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:11.
<b>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,</b>	Genesis 1:2; John 3:5; 6:63; 14:17, 26; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17; Titus 3:5.
<b>who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],</b>	John 15:26. The inclusion of "and the Son" is disputed by the Eastern Orthodox, and was one of the reasons for the schism between East and West in 1054.

<b>With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.</b>	Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19.
<b>He has spoken through the prophets.</b>	1 Samuel 19:20; Ezekiel 11:5; Ephesians 3:5; 1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:21.
<b>We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.</b>	Matthew 16:18; 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42; Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; Ephesians 1:4; 2:19-22; 4:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:5, 9.
<b>We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.</b>	Matthew 28:18-19; Acts 22:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12-13.
<b>We look for the resurrection of the dead,</b>	John 11:24; Romans 6:4-5; 1 Corinthians 15:12-49; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
<b>and the life of the world to come. Amen.</b>	Mark 10:29-30; Ephesians 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1; 22:20.

## THE ATHANASIAN CREED

<b>Whoever wants to be saved should above all cling to the catholic faith. Whoever does not guard it whole and inviolable will doubtless perish eternally.</b>	Mark 9:43; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 2:6-8; 3:23-25; 6:23; 10:13; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Galatians 3:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 21:8.
<b>Now this is the catholic faith: We worship one God in trinity and the Trinity in unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the divine being.</b>	Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; Mark 12:29, 32; John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:5; James 2:19.
<b>For the Father is one person, the Son is another, and the Spirit is still another.</b>	Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:18; 6:44; 10:15; 14:16-17, 26-27; 15:26; 16:7, 13-15; Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2-4; Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:4-6.
<b>But the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory, coeternal in majesty. What the Father is, the Son is, and so is the Holy Spirit.</b>	Genesis 1:2, 26; Exodus 3:14-15; Isaiah 44:6; John 8:58; 16:15; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 9:14; 10:29; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 5:13; 21:22-23.
<b>Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit.</b>	Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; John 1:1; Ephesians 3:10-11; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:8.

<p><b>The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite.</b></p>	<p>Genesis 1:1; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 113:4-6; 145:3; 147:5; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 23:24; Romans 11:33; Ephesians 3:8; Revelation 4:8.</p>
<p><b>Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit: And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal; as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated and unlimited.</b></p>	<p>Isaiah 9:6; 48:12; Matthew 3:11; John 1:1, 3; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 17:5; Colossians 1:17; Titus 3:5-6; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:8; 22:13.</p>
<p><b>Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit: And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty.</b></p>	<p>Genesis 17:1; 18:14; Psalm 62:11; Matthew 19:26; Mark 14:36; Luke 1:35; John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 12:4, 11; Ephesians 1:20-21; 3:20-21; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 2:9-10; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6.</p>
<p><b>Thus the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God: And yet there are not three gods, but one God.</b></p>	<p>Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18, 23; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; 6:27; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 3:16; 6:19; 8:4; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 3:17; Colossians 1:15-17; 2:9; Titus 2:10.</p>
<p><b>Thus the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord; the Holy Spirit is Lord: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.</b></p>	<p>Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 11:25; Luke 2:11; Acts 10:36; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Revelation 17:14.</p>
<p><b>As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords. The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor created, but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor created, but is proceeding from the Father and the Son.</b></p>	<p>Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 33:27; Job 38:4; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 5:26; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 4:11.</p>

<p><b>Thus there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Spirit, not three spirits.</b></p>	<p>Matthew 23:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-6.</p>
<p><b>And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other; but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so we must worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.</b></p>	<p>John 1:1-2; 10:30; 16:14-15; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 4:4-6; Hebrews 9:14.</p>
<p><b>Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity.</b></p>	<p>Matthew 28:19-20; John 3:18, 36; 8:34; Romans 3:28.</p>
<p><b>It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus became flesh.</b></p>	<p>Matthew 1:23; John 1:14; 3:18; 6:40; Acts 13:38; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6-8; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16.</p>
<p><b>For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man.</b></p>	<p>Matthew 1:23; 3:17; 10:32-33; 17:5; Luke 2:11; John 1:14; 3:18; 6:40; 8:58; Acts 13:38; Romans 10:9; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Hebrews 5:5; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 1:17.</p>
<p><b>He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother—existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity.</b></p>	<p>Luke 2:52; 24:39; John 1:1-3, 14; 5:23; 7:29; 10:30; 11:35; 16:15; 17:24; 19:33-34; Romans 1:3; Galatians 4:4; Colossians 1:16.</p>
<p><b>Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ.</b></p>	<p>Romans 5:15, 17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5; 1 John 2:22.</p>
<p><b>He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity. He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures. For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man.</b></p>	<p>Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14-17.</p>

<b>He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead.</b>	Isaiah 53; Romans 3:25; 4:25; 6:4; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10; Hebrews 2:17; 1 Peter 1:3; 2:24; 3:18-19; 1 John 2:2.
<b>He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.</b>	Psalm 110:1; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; 7:56; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1.
<b>He will come again to judge the living and the dead.</b>	John 5:22; Acts 1:11; 10:42; 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10.
<b>At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds.</b>	Job 19:26; John 5:28-29; Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12.
<b>Those who have done good will enter eternal life, those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.</b>	Matthew 16:27; 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; James 2:14-26; Revelation 20:12; 22:12.
<b>This is the catholic faith. One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.</b>	John 3:18; Galatians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; Jude 3.

## AWAKEN TO ADVENTURE

We all will be rooted in *something*. It's important that the something we're rooted in is something that can sustain us, something that can transform us, something that doesn't change with every new movement or era. I hope to reawaken in you an appreciation for biblical and historic Christianity, so that you will be steady and fruitful in the turbulent times to come.

This is the adventure: to bind our hearts to something ancient and enduring, with faith that *the* faith will outlast all fads and fashions. We're not digging in, but digging *down* to the bedrock of our faith, so we can stand. The church marches on, not because we are faithful in every respect—we haven't been, and we won't be—but because Jesus himself is faithful. He promised to build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail. And so, shaking off our spiritual slumber, we join hands with millions of others across space and time, saying with boldness and confidence, "This I believe."

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