

4.1 God the Father

E. PBCC Statement

God the Father is unique in nature. He is eternal, having no beginning or end. He is the Father of Jesus Christ whom He sent in bodily form. He is our Creator by virtue of our physical creation, and becomes our spiritual Father by election and adoption. He created mankind for the express purpose of fellowship with us as His children, to the praise of his Glory.

[Gen 1:1; Ps 102:12,25; 139:13-14; Acts 17:29; Eph 1:3-6]

- ¹² But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever;
you are remembered throughout all generations.
- ²⁵ Of old you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands. (Ps 102:12, 25)
- ¹³ For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. (Ps 139:13-14)

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. (Acts 17:29)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Eph 1:3-6)

B. Other Creedal Statements

1. Apostles Creed

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

2. Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

C. Discussion

- Unique
- Eternal, without beginning of end
- God the Creator
- God our Father

4.2 God the Son

F. PBCC Statement

By miracle of the virgin birth, the Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God in order to reveal God and to redeem man. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. He is the means of Creation, and the visible expression of the invisible God. No one comes to reconciliation with God the Father except through Jesus Christ.

[Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; 2:7-12; 4:17-21; 24:25-27; John 1:1-2; 3:16; 14:6-12; Phil 2:5-12; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-2]

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isa 7:14)

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (Matt 1:18-25)

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)

⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:7-12)

¹⁷And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me

4. Concerning God

to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:17-21)

²⁵And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25-27)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1-2)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹²"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:6-12)

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (Phil 2:5-12)

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Heb 1:1-2)

G. Other Creedal Statements

1. Apostles Creed

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary...

2. Nicene Creed

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds...by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy

Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man...

3. Chalcedonian Definition

Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer (*theotokos*); one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence (*hypostasis*), not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the Fathers has handed down to us.

H. Discussion

1. Eternal Son of God

Participation in the divine love
Means of creation

2. The Incarnation

Incarnation (Lat. *incarnatus*, being made flesh; *caro* flesh).

The one who was with God and through whom everything else was *made*, himself was *made* flesh (John 1:1-3, 14).

- conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary (Apostles' Creed).
- was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary (Nicene Creed).

The God-man

- *homoousios*: of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father as regards his Godhead; of one substance with us as regards his manhood; not just of like substance (*homoiousios*).
- hypostatic union: two natures in one person (*hypostasis*).
 - Nestorianism: two distinct, separable natures; condemned by Third Council (Ephesus, 431) → Church of the East (Assyrians, etc.)
 - Monophysitism: one nature; condemned by Fourth Council (Chalcedon, 451) → Oriental Orthodox Church (Coptis, Jacobite, etc.).

Excursus: Mary

- God-bearer: declared *theotokos* by the Third Council, Ephesus 431. Eastern art depicts her as "Mother of God" (Μήτηρ Θεοῦ abbrev. ΜΡ ΘΥ)
- virgin:
 - virginity before, during, after birth of Jesus (*Protoevangelium of James*, 2nd cent.)
 - declared ever-virgin (Gk *aeiparthenos*) by 5th Council (Constantinople 553)
 - Blessed Virgin Mary

4. Concerning God

- holy
 - immaculate conception (Catholic dogma 1854; not Eastern church); parents Joachim, Anna.
 - Gk *Panagia* (all-holy): Orthodox title.
- bodily assumption: dogma 1951; Mary's uncorrupted body taken straight into heaven. Dormition: Mary slept, did not die).
- Queen of Heaven *Regina caeli*.
- co-Redemptrix: subordinate but essential role; willingly consented.
- Mediatrix: intercessor to her Son. Hail Mary, *Ave Maria* (Luke 1:28,42).

Veneration of Mary

- Mariology, study of Mary; Mariolatry, veneration of Mary.
- "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian Worship" (CCC 971).
- Enhanced by apparitions, e.g. Guadalupe (Mexico, 1531), Lourdes (France, 1858), Fatima (Portugal, 1917) > veneration of Our Lady of...

This understanding of Mary and the veneration of her is post-Biblical Tradition, without Scriptural basis.

3. The Purpose of the Incarnation

- to reveal God: the Son makes the Father known; the visible expression of the invisible God.
- to redeem man: no one comes to reconciliation with God except through Jesus Christ.

4. Fulfillment

- Israel: Born of the virgin Mary, Jesus was born into Israel's story. Israel: "the womb of the incarnation" (T.F. Torrance).
- Humanity: Second Adam, the man from heaven not from dust (1 Cor 15:47). Recapitulation: humanity has a new head (Eph 1:10).

5. Mediator

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5).

- Representation: God to man and man to God. He faces man as God; he faces God as man.
- Participation in God
 - Irenaeus (130-202): "our Lord Jesus Christ, who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself."
 - Athanasius (c. 296-373): "For He was made man that we might be made God."
 - Theiosis (becoming like God): major idea in Eastern theology.
 - in Christ through the Spirit.
- High Priest: having entered the true sanctuary with the one efficacious offering, he is the true worshipper (*leitourgos*, Heb 8:2). We pray to the Father through him.

The Lord Jesus Christ

- Jesus (Heb. *Yeshua*, *Yehoshua* "Yahweh is salvation"): a man who lived in space and time.
- Christ (Gk *Christos*, Heb *Mashiah* "anointed one"): the Messiah whom God sent in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Jesus is Prophet, Priest and King (the three OT covenant offices).
- Lord (Gk *kurios*, LXX translation for Heb *Yahweh*): fully God.

6. Erroneous views of God the Son

- **Adoptionism:** Jesus was a human prophet, a “mere man,” whom God adopted at his baptism. (Theodotus, Rome c 190; Paul of Samasota, 3d cent)
- **Apollinarianism:** Christ took on a human body and soul but not a human mind or spirit. Rejected by Council of Constantinople, 381. (Apollinarius [ca. 310-391], bishop of Laodicea).
- **Arianism:** Christ is a created being, the first and highest of God’s creation. There was a time when the Son was not. Condemned by Council of Nicea, 325. (Arius, ca. 250 – ca. 336, presbyter of Alexandria).
- **Docetism:** Jesus was fully God, but only appeared (Gk dokeō, seem, appear) to be human.
- **Monophysitism:** Christ is of one nature. Repudiated by Chalcedonian Definition which declared that Christ has two inseparable natures.
- **Monothelism:** Christ has a single will. Condemned by Council of Constantinople III, 680, which affirmed Christ has a human will and a divine will that function in perfect moral harmony.
- **Nestorianism:** Christ has two separable natures, human and divine. Condemned by Council of Constantinople, 381. (Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, 428-ca. 451).

God the Holy Spirit

I. PBCC Statement

The Holy Spirit is God, sent by the resurrected Jesus to reveal and glorify Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit living in the believer is the proof guaranteeing our inheritance in Jesus Christ. He provides spiritual gifts to all believers, and indwells, guides, teaches, empowers and comforts them. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.

[John 14:16-17; 16:5-16; Acts 2:1-4,16-21; Rom 8:26-27; 1 Cor 2:12-16; Eph 1:13-14]

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

⁵But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁶"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." (John 16:5-16)

¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance...

¹⁶"But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'" (Acts 2:1-4, 16-21)

²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom 8:26-27)

¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor 2:12-16)

¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

J. Other Creedal Statements

Apostles' Creed

I believe in the Holy Spirit;

Nicene Creed

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

K. Discussion

1. The Holy Spirit is God

2. God's Abiding Presence

- OT: God sent the Spirit sporadically to accomplish his purposes on earth.
- Jesus: the Son was incarnate through the Spirit; anointed by the Spirit prior to his entrance into ministry. God was present on earth in his Son (tabernacled among us, John 1:14).
- Post-Pentecost: God is present on earth in his Spirit in those who are “in Christ.”
- Assurance
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3. God's Empowering Presence

- The Giver of Life: all God's work is done by the agency of his Spirit. He is the executive of the Trinity.
- Spiritual gifts: Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-11; Eph 4:7-13; 1 Pet 4:7-11.