



# What We Believe: Getting More Specific

The early church's only creed (statement of belief) seems to have been: *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God* (Matthew 16:16; Acts 2:36; 8:37). This truth is the foundation upon which Jesus' church is built (Matthew 16:15-19). The apostolic church of the first few centuries AD (or CE if you like things to be politically correct) was not nearly as preoccupied with theological belief systems and theories as were believers of later centuries. While this points to the practical simplicity of the apostolic faith as opposed to the countless 'isms' that have accumulated around Christianity to this day, it did not mean the apostles considered that 'anything goes'. The apostle Paul identified seven truths that formed the basis of *the unity of the Spirit* among God's people (Ephesians 4:1-6). Jesus made it plain that, while *all* of God's revealed will is important, some things are *more important* than others (Matthew 23:23). Given the great importance that Jesus placed upon unity and love among His disciples (John 17:20-26), we view these *seven ones* to be weighty matters in God's sight (i.e. fundamental truths) to be honoured and defended by God's children where ever and when ever true unity of the Spirit is to be sought and found. If we cannot be united on God's own terms, then whatever unity we might seek to achieve on some other basis (compulsion or compromise) is not of God's Spirit but of some other.



In our commitment to respond to God's love with lives worthy of Him and His gospel, we seek to nurture a community of Christians characterised by humility and gentleness who, while bearing with one another in love, sincerely desire to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. According to the apostle Paul (Ephesians 4:1-6), the unity of God's Spirit is maintained around seven fundamental truths:

### **There Is One Body**

God's church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is a living organism – a family – comprised of all those people in fellowship with God through faith in Christ, and therefore, in fellowship with one another (Galatians 3:26-4:7). In solidarity with the apostolic church from the beginning, the oneness of Christ's body is celebrated by The Point Church each first day of the week (Sunday, which is the Lord's Day – the day of His resurrection and the birthday of His church) by coming together in sacred assembly as God's new covenant community to share in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:17-34).

### **There Is One Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead. God's word was revealed and confirmed by the Spirit and today He convicts the world of sin and sets apart God's people by means of that inspired word (John 16:8; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; Ephesians 6:17). Jesus promised His apostles that He would send the Holy Spirit to them in a special way to remind them of His teaching and guide them into all truth after Jesus had departed (John 14:25-26; 16:13-15; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4); and to abide in everyone who responds to the gospel by faith expressed in repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38-39; 5:32) to help our weaknesses and bear the fruit of holy lives (Romans 8:26; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:14-21).

### **There Is One Hope**

Our hope of resurrected glory (Romans 8:18-25) is based upon Jesus' own bodily resurrection from the grave and His promise to return to usher in new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21-22; 1 Corinthians 15). Living in this hope, we hold only lightly to this temporal world, seeking to live faithfully as sojourners and pilgrims journeying towards home (Colossians 3:1-11; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 2 Peter 3:10-13). This is not to be 'so heavenly minded that we become no earthly use'. God calls us to redemptively engage with this present world as leaven, salt and light; not to withdraw from it. But it is to acknowledge that this present life is not *ultimate* reality ... and to order and prioritise our lives accordingly.

## **There Is One Lord**

Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the second person of the triune Godhead. As the redeemer of all creation through His incarnation, atoning death and resurrection; Jesus is now reigning at the right hand side of the Father and is the one to whom every knee should bow (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:22-36; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 2:6-10; Revelation 5:1-14).

## **There Is One Faith**

Faith comes from hearing ... the word of God (Romans 10:17). We understand that all Scripture (both Old and New Testaments) is God-breathed (i.e. inspired) and is intended for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness; so that any person seeking God may access and know and do everything needed to please God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:15-16). We also believe the New Testament Scriptures (the writings of Jesus' apostles and their close associates) communicate the sole and authoritative revelation of Christ's will for His people living under the new covenant (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 28:18-20). *The faith that was once for all delivered to the saints* (Jude 3) was initially communicated through the oral teaching of Jesus' apostles, but was also committed to writing by them (e.g. Ephesians 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Thessalonians 2:15) and circulated among all the churches (cf. Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27) for future generations (2 Timothy 1:13-2:2; 2 Peter 1:12-21; 3:14-18). At the core of *the one faith* is the gospel: the very good news that God's love and grace is extended to all humanity through Jesus Christ's atoning death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21). Everything else flows either towards, or out of, those momentous historical events.

## **There Is One Baptism**

Immersion in water is the faith response (Galatians 3:26-27) indicated by God to be the time at which a repentant believer identifies with Jesus' own death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-7), and receives from God the gift of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of his or her sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-4:7; 1 Peter 3:21). Faith expressed in submission to Christ's command marks the new birth (John 3:5-8); the occasion of God's work of regeneration in us (Colossians 2:11-13; Titus 3:4-7).

## There Is One God and Father

Our heavenly Father is the first person of the triune Godhead. There is only one God from whom all things originated and for whom we live (1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the creator and upholder of all life (Acts 17:24-31). The Father initiated His plan for saving us in His Son as an expression of His gracious, loving and merciful character. Together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Father is the object of our adoration, service and praise. Our chief mission and desire is to honour Him by reflecting His holy character and purpose in our own lives to His glory.

Just as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in essence, purpose and fellowship; we seek to be **one body** in fellowship with God and all those who would come to **the Father** by surrendering to **Christ's Lordship** beginning in **baptism** and, strengthened by **the Spirit**, continuing to live the **one faith** revealed and confirmed by God's Spirit through Jesus' apostles in the first century AD; thus sharing in the glorious **hope** of resurrection at Jesus' return.

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