

## COMMON ROOTS

### Summary

The church is called the catholic church (catholic here meaning "universal"--the whole church) by everyone through the first several centuries of church history.

In the first few centuries, bishops gradually assumed the chief role in the various local churches, and among the bishops several of them--like those of Rome, Jerusalem, Constantinople--gained international influence and asserted their claims to authority over others.

Further, by the fifth century the church divided along linguistic and geographical (and to some extent theological) lines, the result being a Latin-speaking Western church and a Greek-speaking Eastern church.

These two, with their centers at Rome and Constantinople, increasingly debate with one another from the fifth through the eleventh centuries.

The definitive break occurred in 1054. From that time on we clearly have a Roman Catholic Church and an Eastern Orthodox Church.

For centuries before and after the break with the Eastern church, the Roman church was developing some of its distinctive doctrines--the mass as a sacrifice, veneration of saints, purgatory--so that when the Protestant Reformation occurred in the sixteenth century it came from within a fully developed Roman Catholic Church. At the Council of Trent (1540s to 1560s) the Roman Catholics reaffirmed their doctrines, creating a sharp difference between themselves and the Protestant reformers.

Meanwhile, the Eastern church continued its separate existence, and rejected the Protestant Reformation, thereby maintaining the three-part division of Christendom. All three divisions accept the creedal statements of the first six ecumenical councils, A.D. 325-681.

## EVANGELICAL

The term was not widely used prior to the sixteenth century so it does have particular application to Protestants, the heirs of the Reformation.

Evangelicals:

1. Hold to the evangel (Greek: euangelion), the "good news" that there is salvation in Christ alone through personal commitment to him.
2. Regard the Bible (in contrast to the Bible and Tradition) as the final authority in matters of faith and conduct.
3. Believe that personal witness is a natural consequence of salvation in Christ.

2, 16 he expresses the hope that his correspondents may be comforted and strengthened by "our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father". St James describes himself (1, 1) as "the servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ", and St Peter (1 *Pet.* 2, 5) speaks of "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". The Apocalyptic too describes himself (1, 2) as having borne witness "to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ". The catalogue could be extended almost indefinitely. The items contained in it, the reader scarcely needs to be reminded, are not creeds; but they are highly significant as instances of the codification of fundamental theological ideas in the apostolic age, and they help to explain the lines along which creeds proper developed.

The binitarian schema, it is evident, was deeply impressed upon the thought of primitive Christianity; so, it would appear, was the Trinitarian. Explicit Trinitarian confessions are few and far between; where they do occur, little can be built upon them. The two most commonly cited are St Paul's prayer at the end of 2 *Corinthians* (13, 14), "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all", and the baptismal command put by St Matthew (28, 19) into the mouth of the risen Lord, "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". These are not the only examples, however, of such formulae in the New Testament, although preoccupation with them has sometimes caused others which, while perhaps less obvious, are in reality no less significant to be overlooked. Amongst these may be reckoned 1 *Cor.* 6, 11, "But you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"; 1 *Cor.* 12, 4 f., "There are varieties of talents, but the same Spirit, varieties of service, but the same Lord, and varieties of effects, but the same God Who effects everything in everyone"; 2 *Cor.* 1, 21 f., "It is God Who confirms us along with you in Christ, Who has anointed us and sealed us and given us the earnest of the Spirit"; and 1 *Thess.* 5, 18 f., "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you: quench not the Spirit". The triadic schema is again clearly visible in such a context as *Gal.* 3, 11-14, "It is obvious that no one is justified in the sight of God by the law . . . Christ has

redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that you may receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." An excellent instance of it is to be found in 1 *Pet.* 1, 2, ". . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the consecration of the Spirit, unto obedience to . . . Jesus Christ", and another in *Hebr.* 10, 29, "Of how much worse vengeance will he be thought worthy who has spurned the Son of God . . . and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" A host of other passages stamped with the same lineaments might be quoted.<sup>1</sup> In all of them there is no trace of fixity so far as their wording is concerned, and none of them constitutes a creed in any ordinary sense of the term. Nevertheless the Trinitarian ground-plan obtrudes itself obstinately throughout, and its presence is all the more striking because more often than not there is nothing in the context to necessitate it. The impression inevitably conveyed is that the conception of the threefold manifestation of the Godhead was embedded deeply in Christian thinking from the start, and provided a ready-to-hand mould in which the ideas of the apostolic writers took shape. If Trinitarian creeds are rare, the Trinitarian pattern which was to dominate all later creeds was already part and parcel of the Christian tradition of doctrine.

#### 4. *The Original Pattern*

The preceding section has provided a survey, not necessarily complete but sufficient for our purposes, of the credal elements embodied in the New Testament. The reader should be wary of drawing hasty or extravagant conclusions. Often the words "creed", "confession" and "formula" have been used to describe the material; but they have been used loosely, for lack of more precise designations. It cannot be too often repeated that, in the proper sense of the terms, no creed, confession or formula of faith can be discovered in the New Testament, with the possible exception of such curt slogans as *Kurios Iêsous*. What is manifest on every page is a common body of doctrine, definite in outline and regarded by everyone as the possession of no

<sup>1</sup> Cf., e.g., *Lk.* 24, 49; *Rom.* 1, 1-5; 1-5; 14, 17 f.; 15, 16 and 30; 1 *Cor.* 2, 10-16; 6, 13 f.; 12, 3; 2 *Cor.* 3, 3; *Eph.* 1, 3; 1, 11-13; 1, 17; 2, 18-22; 3, 3-7; 3, 14-17; 4, 4-6; 4, 30-32; 5, 18-20; *Phil.* 3, 3; *Col.* 1, 6-8; 2 *Thess.* 2, 13-15; 1 *Tim.* 3, 4-6; 1 *Pet.* 4, 14; *Jud.* 20 f. The *conama Johanneum* (1 *Jn.* 5, 7 f. in the A.V.) is not admissible as evidence, being a 4th cent. Spanish interpolation.

The Tanak (According to the Masoretic Text) = 24 books

The Law (Torah) = 5 books

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

The Prophets (Naviim) = 8 books

- Former Prophets = 4 books
  - Joshua
  - Judges
  - 1-2 Samuel
  - 1-2 Kings
- Latter Prophets = 4 books
  - Isaiah
  - Jeremiah
  - Ezekiel
  - The Twelve
    - Hosea
    - Joel
    - Amos
    - Obadiah
    - Jonah
    - Micah
    - Nahum
    - Habakkuk
    - Zephaniah
    - Haggai
    - Zechariah
    - Malachi

The Writings (Kethubim) = 11 books

- Poetry = 3 books
  - Psalms
  - Proverbs
  - Job
- Rolls = 5 books
  - Song of Songs
  - Ruth
  - Lamentations
  - Ecclesiastes
  - Esther
- Others (History) = 3 books
  - Daniel
  - Ezra-Nehemiah
  - 1-2 Chronicles

The Roman Catholic Old Testament (According to the Jerusalem Bible) = 46 books

Law = 5 books

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

History = 16 books

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Tobit
- Judith
- (Esther (with additions))
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees

Wisdom = 7 books

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Wisdom
- Ecclesiasticus

Prophecy = 18 books

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Baruch (including the Letter of Jeremiah)
- Ezekiel
- (Daniel (with additions))
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

The Canon of the New Testament  
In the First Few Centuries

Text	Year	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts	Romans	1 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	Galatians	Ephesians	Philippians	Colossians	1 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy	2 Timothy	Titus	Philemon	Hebrews	James	1 Peter	2 Peter	1 John	2 John	3 John	Jude	Revelation	Hermas	Barnabas	Didache	Apoc. of Peter	1 Clement	2 Clement			
Marcon	c. 140	o	o	o	o	o																															
Irenaeus	c. 130-202	o	o	o	o	o																															
Old Latin Version	c. 150-70																																				
Muratorian Canon	c. 170																																				
Tertullian	c. 150-220																																				
Old Syriac Version	c. 200																																				
Origen	c. 185-254																																				
Hippolytus	c. 200-225																																				
Eusebius of Caesarea	c. 325-40																																				
Codex Vaticanus	c. 325-350																																				
Codex Sinaiticus	c. 325-425																																				
Athanasius	367																																				
Amphilochus of Iconium	380																																				
Peshitta	c. 375-400																																				
3rd Council of Carthage	c. 397																																				
Codex Alexandrinus	c. 425-75																																				

d = disputed (canonicity mentioned as in doubt)  
 i = included (canonicity definitely accepted)  
 m = missing (the codex omits the Pastorals and ends at Heb 9:13)  
 o = omitted (canonicity doubted or denied)  
 r = rejected (canonicity specifically denied)