

# The Creeds in Contemporary English

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During the course of its work at readying hymns and liturgies for the forthcoming hymnal, the Joint Hymnal Committee (JHC) had to deal with what was perhaps the most sensitive problem of its assignment. This related to the texts of the Lord's Prayer and the two commonly used Creeds. What wording should be proposed for use in the liturgies of the hymnal—and then, by extension, in the catechism? Shall we retain the traditional English text taken almost verbatim from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*? Shall new translations be prepared which would be unique to our synod? Shall we avail ourselves of the translations made initially by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), now reconstituted into the more broadly representative English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC)? The translations of this organization first undertaken in the 1970s, then revised in 1986 and approved in 1988, hold promise of becoming the commonly used texts of churches in English-speaking Christendom—as this was true of the cherished traditional texts.

In approaching its assignment, the committee has not been unmindful of Luther's counsel in the preface to his Small Catechism. Of passages committed to memory he wrote:

Take the utmost care to avoid changes in the text and wording....Choose the format that pleases you, therefore, and adhere to it henceforth.

To understand Luther as advocating that changes never be made in memorized texts is, of course, to misunderstand him. When word meanings had become unclear or language infelicitous, he did not hesitate to improve upon traditional wording.<sup>1</sup> With Luther it was simply a case of following one sound pedagogical rule—don't confuse people with constant change, while not forgetting another good rule—don't distress people with obscure or misleading language.

In accordance with these principles, the committee aimed at steering a course consistent with past Lutheran practice. When dealing with the precious truths of our faith and confession, Lutheran practice, first of all, is alert to the distinction between inner content and outward form. Accordingly, if inner content shall remain clear and edifying, it may become necessary to revise outward form, for rigorous adherence to outward form may result in distorted perspectives of inner content. We continually revise outward form in secular life—with clothes, styles and all the rest of it—to retain the sameness of inner content. How much more compelling to follow this course in behalf of faith-life. When done judiciously and decorously, change of outward form should not damage inner content but serve to clarify and thus to preserve it.

For over a decade our church has been engaged in the task of bringing outward form—the language of Scripture's unchanging message and of treasures from our Lutheran heritage—into the English idiom that we understand and use in today's world. Given the large influence of the hymnal on the personal faith-life of all God's saints, it becomes no less compelling to carry out this work with the language of our worship: the hymns wherever possible, the liturgies, and the Lord's Prayer and Creeds embedded in the liturgies.

In matters of outward form, past Lutheran practice, furthermore, has avoided the sectarianism of going it alone, being different, striving for the unique. Thus Luther kept with the church year and the general structure of the Mass inherited from the medieval church. In America also, during the difficult transition from German to English, our Lutheran forebears likewise, and no doubt for want of options, reached for worship materials in the English language that were most commonly used and readily available. The Lord's Prayer, the Creeds, the traditional collects, as well as the lessons from Scripture: all these forms were appropriated from the Anglican

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*Book of Common Prayer* and the Anglican King James Bible. And though, for confessional reasons, we live in a state of outwardly divided communions, the Christian church nevertheless remains a single catholic community of believers confessing one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

In this light would anyone want to gainsay that the sameness of outward form which for many years we experienced and cherished with the common texts of the Lord's Prayer and Creeds has been a heartwarming and compelling witness to the true unity of the Church? Granted that for the present this unity remains hidden from the eyes of flesh, its hiddenness detracts in no way from its reality for the eyes of faith. In the absence of freedom-robbing compulsion that makes a law of conformance in externals, we can bear witness to our respect for true ecumenicity by refraining from going it alone with our own translations of worship forms commonly used in English-speaking Christendom. We can be consistent with past Lutheran practice, and in Christian liberty freely make use of texts in contemporary English that have gained acceptance in the mainstream of English-speaking churches and that hold promise of becoming the "common" texts of the next generation. The duty which remains, then, is to examine these texts for ourselves. We need to assure ourselves that they are faithful to the original texts in Greek and Latin; that they have not employed particular words or expressions which, though linguistically correct, may in our own context give offense.

Such work has been done by the JHC. It now reports on its work and offers reasons for the revised texts it recommends for the forthcoming hymnal. This report applies to the Creeds only. The committee stands by the two versions of the Lord's Prayer printed in the *Sampler*. But since the publication of the *Sampler*, minor and major alterations were made in the texts of the Creeds, and this calls for explanation.

Three years have elapsed since the *Sampler* was prepared for printing so that it would be in everyone's hands for Advent, 1986. The preparatory work was devoted almost totally to readying the hymns and Psalms and to reaching agreement on a proper combination of our present liturgies on pages 5 and 15 of *The Lutheran Hymnal* and on an acceptable sequence of these liturgical parts. Meanwhile, pressure was building up that the committee publish some tangible evidence of its work, because many were eager to try out whatever the committee had done. Thus the task of bringing the Lord's Prayer and Creeds into contemporary English was postponed until the very end. As a matter of fact, time ran out to give the Creeds the thorough study that was needed. But this did not seem a serious problem three years ago. The committee had prepared the *Sampler* as a temporary piece of work. It was to be tested for six months and then put aside until a more finished product, influenced by criticisms from the field, would appear in the forthcoming hymnal. As continued use of the *Sampler* in many congregations has shown, the committee's thinking was wrong, and many have now committed the Creed texts in the *Sampler* to memory. Meanwhile, the committee returned to the work on the Creeds which had remained undone. It now proposes further revisions in the texts of the Creeds with apology for its negligence, on the one hand, but also with more assurance that these changes, the product of longer reflection on the issues involved, will serve the church in a more satisfactory way.

Students of symbolics know that the original text of the Apostles' Creed is in Latin as shown below because the evidence at hand points to its origin in the congregation at Rome. They also know that the intensely personal tone of this Creed ("I believe") and its unembroidered testimony to God's acts of salvation reflect the purpose for which it was made. In an age when creeds by design were not committed to writing, this Symbol should serve as an easily memorized confession spoken by catechumens at their baptism.

The Latin and Greek texts which are printed beside the recommended English translations are derived from *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* published in 1930 and recognized as the definitive edition of our Lutheran Confessions.

## The Apostles' Creed

<i>Credo in Deum, patrem omnipotentem, Creatorem coeli et terrae.</i>	<p><b>1</b> I believe in God the Father Almighty, <b>2</b> maker of heaven and earth.</p>
<i>Et in Jesum Christum, filium ejus unicum, Dominum nostrum: qui conceptus est de spiritu sancto, natus ex Maria virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus et sepultus, descendit ad inferna, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad coelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei, patris omnipotentis: inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos,</i>	<p><b>3</b> And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, <b>4</b> who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, <b>5</b> born of the virgin Mary, <b>6</b> suffered under Pontius Pilate, <b>7</b> was crucified, died, and was buried. <b>8</b> He descended into hell. <b>9</b> The third day he rose again from the dead. <b>10</b> He ascended into heaven <b>11</b> and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. <b>12</b> From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.</p>
<i>Credo in spiritum sanctum, sanctam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, et vitam aeternam. Amen.</i>	<p><b>13</b> I believe in the Holy Spirit, <b>14</b> the holy Christian Church, <b>15</b> the communion of saints, <b>16</b> the forgiveness of sins, <b>17</b> the resurrection of the body, <b>18</b> and the life everlasting. Amen.</p>

Several guidelines were set down in advance in order to assist the committee in the decision-making on textual revisions. With the Apostles' Creed the first concern was pastoral: revise the archaic English with the ICET translation as a model, yet keep the text as close to the traditional wording that everyone knows from memory.

No alterations were made in the First Article. The earliest known form of the Apostles' Creed, called the Old Roman Symbol, implies that the word "God" related only to the Father. In the Creed's most ancient texts, one version states, "I believe in God almighty," another has it, "I believe in God the Father almighty." *Omnipotens* occurs in Latin both as a noun and an adjective. The context may determine whether to spell the word "Almighty" or "almighty." This is not clear in the First Article. The committee's choice was to leave the word in upper case. In another departure from both ICET and the Latin text, "maker" has been retained in preference to "creator." Our people are used to the first word, and it is the correct word in the Nicene Creed. To employ "creator" in one creed and "maker" in the other may cause unnecessary distress.

The text of Article Two departs from ICET at several places, chiefly in order to keep what the people have memorized. Because line 3 stands in close relation to line 1, "I believe" is not repeated. Since *spiritus sanctus* appears here for the first time, it may be desirable at this point to make a statement on why *spiritus* is rendered, wherever possible, as "Spirit," some few having claimed "Ghost" to be the better word. In contemporary English "Ghost" no longer carries the broader connotation of the German *Geist* or the early English *gast* and *gest*. As a noun denoting deity, "Ghost" cannot stand alone any more; it conjures up other things than deity. In reference to God it must be accompanied by "Holy." But "Spirit" can stand alone. Etymologically, "Ghost" is a German word. "Spirit" reproduces the word of the Latin Creed precisely.

Other changes in Article Two include "died" (line 7), "is seated" (line 11), "there" (line 12), and "living" (line 12). Three of these alterations are made in the interest of felicitous English; also, "died" fits the thought progression in line 7 more naturally. As for the fourth revision, "is seated" won preference over "sits" or "is sitting" as expressing more effectively the majesty of the Lord's reign in heaven. It delineates the

beginning as well as the continued nature of this event: Jesus entered his inheritance and remains in this office. The revised wording might also minimize ideas about a specific location and thus clarify the proper sense of God's right hand as his almighty power which fills heaven and earth.

For pastoral and theological reasons *descendit ad inferna* has been retained as "He descended into hell." By its own admission, ICET settled on a wording ("to the dead") which would be acceptable to various interpretations of 1 Peter 3:19, whether Lutheran, Reformed or Roman Catholic. We have a confessional statement (Formula of Concord, Article IX) regarding the *descendit*. Literally, the Latin text may be rendered "lower regions" (see Eph 4:9). Our approach has been not to speculate where *inferna* is or how the descent occurred. It is enough to know that before the resurrection, Jesus as God-man descended into hell, where he proclaimed his victory to the disobedient.

Criticism has been received regarding the retention of "again" in line 9, as if this implies one or more previous resurrections. We defend "again" as the natural way of English expression. Seen in its context, this word declares that Jesus, who died and was laid into the grave, has again returned to life.

We have also taken exception to ICET in retaining, at line 9, "from the dead" and, at line 11, "God the Father Almighty." Both statements were discarded in ICET. We keep them from a desire to stay with the familiar and from respect for the Latin original. Furthermore, we found no compelling reason to alter the familiar text by adopting ICET's "on" at the beginning of line 9 and "again" in line 12 after the "come." Though eminently scriptural, the "again" is not in the Latin text.

In Article Three, line 14, "Christian" has been retained for pastoral reasons. ICET reverted to "catholic." On the word "Christian," Luther comments in a gloss to his study of the ecumenical Creeds: "'Catholic' can be translated in no better way (*kann man nicht besser deutschen*) than 'Christian'—as was done in the past—to signify wherever Christians are found throughout the world."<sup>ii</sup>

As it considered the placement of "communion of saints" on line 15, the committee recognized that research into the history of the expression brings to light the fact that the precise meaning of *sanctorum communionem* is historically ambiguous. It could refer to believers—the fellowship of saints. It could also signify things. Then it would designate the sharing of holy things (*κοινωνία τῶν ἁγίων*). The "holy things" referred perhaps at first to the visible elements of the Lord's Supper (the bread and wine) and then later also to baptism. According to ancient Latin interpreters of the Symbols, *sanctorum communionem* referred to the bond which united believers on earth with those who have fallen asleep as confessors of the faith. In common understanding the phrase is essentially an appositive to "holy Christian Church," and the translation of *sanctorum* with "saints," taking it as masculine, not neuter, necessitates this understanding.

The Lutheran understanding of the phrase is clearly enunciated in the Lutheran Confessions, which state, "The Creed denominates the holy Christian church, *communionem sanctorum*, a communion of saints; for both expressions, taken together, are identical."<sup>iii</sup> The decision was made, therefore, to separate each of the five phrases with a comma, but to *indent* "the communion of saints," thus making it clear that this phrase is appositional to "the holy Christian Church."

## The Nicene Creed

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα θεόν  
πατέρα παντοκράτορα,  
ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς,  
ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,  
τὸν υἱὸν θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ  
πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν  
αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ  
θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα,  
ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα  
ἐγένετο, τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ  
διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ  
τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ  
πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου  
καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, σταθρωθέντα τε  
ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου καὶ  
παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ  
τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ  
ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ  
καθεζόμενον ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ πατρὸς, καὶ  
πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας  
καὶ νεκρούς· οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται  
τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ κύριον καὶ  
ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς  
ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ  
συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον,  
τὸ λαλήσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν· εἰς μίαν  
ἀγίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν  
ἐκκλησίαν. ὁμολογοῦμεν ἕν βάπτισμα εἰς  
ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν  
νεκρῶν καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος,  
ἀμήν.

- 1 We believe in one God,
- 2 the Father, the Almighty,
- 3 maker of heaven and earth,
- 4 of all that is, seen and unseen.
  
- 5 We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
- 6 the only Son of God,
- 7 eternally begotten of the Father,
- 8 God from God, Light from Light,
- 9 true God from true God,
- 10 begotten, not made,
- 11 of one Being with the Father.
- 12 Through him all things were made.
- 13 For us and for our salvation
- 14 he came down from heaven,
- 15 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
- 16 and became fully human.
- 17 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
- 18 he suffered death and was buried.
- 19 On the third day he rose again
- 20 in accordance with the Scriptures;
- 21 he ascended into heaven
- 22 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- 23 He will come again in glory to judge the living and
- 24 the dead,
- and his kingdom will have no end.
  
- 25 We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
- 26 who proceeds from the Father and the Son
- 27 who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped
- and glorified,
- 28 and has spoken through the prophets.
- 29 We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
- 30 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
- sins.
- 31 We look for the resurrection of the dead,
- 32 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Nicene Creed was from the beginning designed to be the confession of catholic orthodoxy, subscribed to by the whole community of the faithful. Thus the Greek original begins “we believe.” This was turned into the Latin *credo*, which then passed over into the German *ich glaube* and the *Book of Common Prayer*’s “I believe.” In faithfulness to the original, “we believe” was adopted for all three parts of this creed.

Unlike its companion inherited from the Latin church, the Nicene Creed is less easily committed to memory; people keep an eye on the words in their hymnal to speak it. A broader revision of the text, that would be more faithful to the Greek original and more meaningful to the people seemed, therefore, to be the right option. After more reflection, it also became apparent that, for faithfulness to the Greek and for felicity of

language, the ICET translation would serve us well. The text here recommended departs from ICET only at line 29. Here, as in the Apostles' Creed, "Christian" has been retained in preference to "catholic," because the latter word conveys a message easily misunderstood and distressing to our people.

The creedal formulations in the Greek East, where most of the Trinitarian controversies emerged, followed the formula in 1 Corinthians 8:6 in accentuating the individuality of persons in the Godhead. Hence the "one" in lines 1 and 5: we confess one God, the Father; we confess one Lord, Jesus Christ. To balance the second statement with the first, and to give the individuality more prominence, the comma is added after "Lord" in line 5. It invites a pause before proceeding to "Jesus Christ." Returning to line 2, the definite article before "almighty," also preceded by a comma, accentuates this word's use in the Nicene Creed as a noun. It is the English translation of the Greek *παντοκράτωρ*, "ruler of all things," and is used at several New Testament places in reference to both the Father (2 Cor 6:18) and the Son (Re 1:8). *Παντοκράτωρ* is the Septuagint word for the Hebrew expression translated "Lord of Hosts" in the King James Bible.

The wording in line 4, "of all that is," states the truth of the creation as well as possible, surely more inclusively than "of all things" and more felicitously than "of all seen and unseens," as the Greek has it. "Is" omits nothing; it comprises all created reality and should rule out anything which has corrupted that reality and is no part of God's creation. In this line, "seen and unseen" replaces "visible and invisible" for several reasons. The traditional terms reproduced the Latin translation of the Creed. The new wording is simpler English and reflects the Greek text precisely.

The omission of "begotten" in line 6 should not be construed as opening the door to doctrinal dilution. The word is retained in lines 7 and 10. The NIV formula, "one and only" (Jn 1:18; 3:16), is not felicitous at this place either, coming right after line 5. The Greek *μονογενής* was a standard term for denoting what in English we express as "only." At other places in the New Testament (Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38) *μονογενής* is translated "only." The retention of "begotten" in lines 7 and 9 should assure that the truth of the Son's unique relationship to the Father has not been obscured. He is Son not by adoption, nor by emanation, nor by creation, but by generation. He has his existence from the Father. Luther was amenable to the same wording in the German text of the Creed where *μονογενής* is translated *einig*, "only," whereas in the German Bible his translation of John 3:16 reads *engeboren*.

We grew up with the wording of line 7 as "begotten of the Father before all worlds." "Worlds" could also be rendered "ages" or "aeons." A precise English equivalent for the Greek is difficult to achieve. The phrase aimed at refuting any idea that the Son did not always exist—which would signify subordination. "Before all worlds," however, could suggest that the Son was indeed begotten before time, yet not from eternity, and therefore not eternal with God the Father, hence less than God. "Begotten of the Father from eternity" received serious committee consideration for a while, because the expression is familiar to ears attuned to the catechism translation in Luther's Second Article. Finally, consensus shifted to the ICET translation as expressing the Son's co-eternity with the Father as well as the language allows. And should it be asked whether "eternally begotten" implies a continuing process of being begotten, Athanasius, the premier witness to classic Nicene theology, offers this approach to the mystery:

If he [the Son] is called the eternal offspring of the Father [always Father, always Son], he is rightly so called. For never was the essence of the Father imperfect, that what is proper to it should be added afterwards....

For as the Father is always good by nature, so he is *always generative* [emphasis added] by nature.<sup>iv</sup>

The preposition "from" replacing "of" in line 8 is more faithful to the Greek. It also states unambiguously that the Son has his origin from the Father. "God of God" like "King of kings" may direct one's thinking away from source toward superlative: the Son is God above all gods. "True" replaces the archaic "very," although this revision does not catch the full connotation of the Greek adjective.

Readers who check line 8 of the English translation against the original text will note that “God of God” does not occur in the Greek text. This is the Greek text of the Nicene Creed revised at Constantinople in 381 and appropriated for use in the liturgy. The earlier version adopted at Nicaea in 325 does have “God of God.” It is also found in the Latin text, and it is retained in the contemporary English translation in order to minimize distress and stay with the familiar.

We come now to the historically most significant expression in the Nicene Creed, the *ἁμοούσιος* of line 11. It is rendered “of one Being” in replacement of “being of one substance.” The traditional wording was derived from *consubstantialem* in the ancient Latin translation of the Creed. The Latins chose what for them was the more idiomatic *substantia* in preference to the more precise *essentia* despite the fact that *substantia* also denoted the individuality or *ὑπόστασις* (person) which distinguished Father, Son and Holy Spirit from one another. As a result, when Latin and Greek theologians in the third and fourth centuries consulted with one another about the Trinity, confusion was bound to occur. Even at the time of its adoption into the Nicene Creed *ἁμοούσιος* was a term with a variety of interpretations. In the East many objected to the use of the word on account of its ambiguity and because it was not found in Scripture.

In process of time, however, an understanding was worked out—an event not unique in church history—on how the various theological terms that came into use during the Trinitarian controversies should be interpreted. It was agreed that *ἁμοούσιος* should be understood to signify something more than that Father and Son share a common Godhead in the sense that many individual persons—John Doe, Mary Smith—share a common humanity. The *ἁμοούσιος* should be understood to preserve the mystery of the same identical Being of Father and Son (and Holy Spirit); the Godhead comprises one undivided Being, yet also three individualities (*ὑποστάσεις*): Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In Nicene Confession, therefore, whatever constitutes the Father’s Godhead—call it *οὐσία* or *substantia*—applies equally to the Son’s Godhead. Their *οὐσία* or *substantia*—whatever it is; we cannot grasp it—is single, undivided, the same. In contemporary English, however, “substance” is normally used in other contexts than to denote the existence or underlying nature of something. “Substance” carries one’s mind to the laboratory. It suggests created things. “Being” recovers the Greek *οὐσία*. God the Father identified himself to Moses (Ex 3) as “I AM,” the One who is. God the Son, when he spoke to the unbelieving Jews (Jn 8), did the same. “Being” directs our thought to the existence, the reality, of the Godhead. This is possessed by the Son in equal measure with the Father because the Son is eternally begotten of the Father.

Line 12 refers to the Son. Creation has its origin from the Father. It has its instrumentality through the Son (1 Cor 8:6; Jn 1:3, 10; He 1:2). This biblical truth has not been commonly realized. In confessing the Nicene Creed, our people, in large measure, have applied line 11 to the Father, as if the statement means: the Son is of one substance with the Father by whom (the Father) all things were made. The recommended wording assists in clarifying the intent of the Creed. It introduces the statement as an independent sentence and replaces “by” with “through” as the more precise translation of *διὰ* and a preposition more likely to direct attention to the Son as the agent of creation.

The omission of “men” at line 13 results in the loss of a noun for which no satisfactory substitute came to light. To replace “men” with “people” or “humans” or “human beings” or “all of us” or “us all” does not come off well. To insist that “men” has a generic sense and should be so recognized in an age when people commonly associate “men” with gender is to close the eyes to reality. The loss of the noun seems a small price to pay in exchange for clarity and unambiguity.

At line 15, alterations from the familiar text involve a preposition and a conjunction: “of” the Holy Spirit for “by” the Holy Spirit; “and” the virgin Mary for “of” the virgin Mary. These changes are faithful to the Greek text. It is more than likely that the traditional English text in the *Book of Common Prayer* was taken from the Latin version of the Nicene Creed where line 15 reads: *incarnatus est de spiritu sancto ex Maria virgine*. It is just as likely that this choice of the Latin prepositions, *de* and *ex*, was influenced by what had been earlier committed to memory in the Apostles’ Creed: *conceptus est de spiritu sancto, natus ex Maria virgine*.

The change in line 16 from “was made man” to “became fully human” may be counted as one of the finest improvements in the new translation; it catches quite satisfactorily what the original participle (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα) intends to communicate. The Greek text here asserts that God’s Son took on all that makes a human being a human being; that he became a genuine human being with soul, body, mind, senses, emotions and everything else that constitutes the human person in God’s original creation.

“For our sake” in line 17 gives the Greek preposition its proper sense. Placed at the beginning of the line, the phrase intensifies its message and improves the diction. Adding “death” in line 18 (to the bare “suffered”) completes what the Greek παθόντα intended, but which remained incomplete and misleading in the traditional translation.

For the sake of clarity and precision, “according to” in line 20 is revised to “in accordance with.” (The “Scriptures” in this context are the Old Testament.) “According to” left room for thinking that Jesus’ resurrection is what the Scriptures prophesied, but whether it happened or not is another matter. The revised expression clearly states the historical reality of the resurrection exactly as Scripture had prophesied long ago. “In accordance with” puts the sense of the Greek text into unequivocal English. Other text revisions in lines 21–24 have been treated in connection with the Apostles’ Creed.

The comma after “Lord” in line 25 reflects precisely the sense and intent of the Greek: the Holy Spirit, like the Son, is also “Lord.” Furthermore, he is “the lifegiver.” Without a comma and without the definite article that follows the comma, the statement might be understood to say no more than that the Holy Spirit is both Lord of life and giver of life.

Students of the Symbols who are knowledgeable about the *Filioque* Controversy will need no explanation for the absence of and the Son (line 26) in the Greek text and for its presence in the western texts of the Nicene Creed.

In line 27, the “together” of the traditional English text (“with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified”) attempted to retain something of the quality of the Greek participles. The “together” failed to do this, for a literal translation from the Greek would state that the Holy Spirit is “together worshiped and together glorified” with Father and Son—a most cumbersome way of speaking. The new translation picks up the Greek sense as well as the English allows: “who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.”

At line 28, “and has spoken” replaces “who spake” in the interest of smoother English. The prepositional change in this line (“through” instead of “by”) reflects more precisely the Greek διὰ and states more clearly the role of the prophets as the Holy Spirit’s agents in the miracle of inspiration. An “in” is inserted after “believe” in line 29 for the sake of idiomatic English. The Holy Christian Church with its many gifts is also an article of faith. The Greek makes no distinction between believing in the church and believing in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It puts an εἰς at all four places in the Creed. Finally, “forgiveness” supplants “remission” in line 30. “Remission” has acquired another more familiar sense in contemporary medical terminology. Thus the change became compelling.

### Concluding remarks

This rationale for the Creed texts recommended for the forthcoming hymnal will elicit mixed response. Readers may notice an occasional inconsistency in the explanation for the word choices which were made. It is also possible, though not probable, that within a few years another revision of the ICET text could be put forward. Of this, one can only say at the present time that the committee will keep a close check on all materials sent out by the ELLC until the day when our own hymnal is ready for publication.

The JHC gave many hours to debating the various points just itemized and to reaching agreement on the texts herewith presented. On several occasions during the course of the work, decisions which had been made were, after longer reflection, rescinded. This process could continue, perhaps, endlessly, for all work of this nature remains tentative; it does not come to perfection. In carrying out an assignment one can only do what



needs to be done to the best of one's ability. Then comes the time when, in spite of imperfections, we must make a decision. The form found most acceptable will have to be chosen, and then we should adhere to it.

### Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> See Luther's comments under the Third Article of the Large Catechism, *Concordia Triglotta*, pp 689-693, or his discussion of the "Hail, Mary" in "On Translating," *Luther's Works (LW)*, 35, 181-202.

<sup>ii</sup> St. L., X, 1019.

<sup>iii</sup> The Large Catechism, Part Second, 47 (*Concordia Triglotta*, pp 689-691).

<sup>iv</sup> "Against the Arians," 1:14; 3:66, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series Two, IV: 314, 430.