

Christian, what do you believe?

Dimitry Grant-Frost looks at the Apostles' Creed¹

This question is the customary opening to the recitation of the Apostles' Creed – the ancient declaration of Christian belief chanted by congregants in churches worldwide as a reminder to one another of the central truths of God's glorious gospel. It's a good question, and one we, who call ourselves Christians, would do well to ask ourselves on a regular (daily?!) basis. As a new academic year begins, some of you will be picking up a copy of *Nucleus* for the first time, whilst others, further into your studies or practice will know it better (the crossword is on page 35, by the way). Some of you will be new to the family of God, whilst others will have put your faith in Christ long before any decision to enter healthcare. Any way, it is a sensible and a wonderful thing to remind ourselves of the truths by which we live.

we believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

From the atom to the elephant, the planted foxglove to the expansive nebulae, from oceans to zygotes, we believe in a God who made everything we see and that everything we see in creation points us back to him. The Lord crowned man and woman as the pinnacle of his creative prowess, giving them authority to steward his creation.

It's our privilege as healthcare professionals, under the sovereign hand of our perfect king, to minister through our work to the very image of God. Far from believing that 'we are our brains' we can be confident, as we explore the workings of the body, that we are dealing with immeasurably complex and spirited creatures made for and loved by God, and that the wonders of scientific study do nothing to challenge his supremacy and rule. 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good' (Genesis 1:31a). Be confident in enjoying your study of that which God has made.





Dimity Grant-Frost is CMF Nurse Student Staffworker

we believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

The world is indeed governed by a wonderfully creative and almighty God, but there is a terrible truth to which the good news of the life and death of Jesus points us: all mankind and creation have been bound to the effects of sin. Without Christ we are dead in our trespasses, under its curse, and destined for judgment. You won't have to look far to see that this is true: the lives of our patients will point us to this world's pain, sorrow, rebellion, disease and death. We will ourselves experience these pains and inevitably and regularly be part of the problem, even as we try to help and care for others.

And yet there is a great and wondrous hope: God did not abandon the world that turned its back on him. Rather, he entered into it, overturning 'the laws of science', showing 'nature' who's boss, as he grew in a virgin's womb, performed innumerable healing miracles and returned to life from the death that took our judgment on himself. Greater than all these things was the love that drove him towards even the worst of sinners. He gave himself up to betrayal, abuse, insults, beatings and death for our sake. At the cross, his sinless life and sacrificial death reconciled us to God, bringing to us the most important kind of healing there is. The gospel is better than any medicine we will ever offer.

we believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection

of the body, and the life everlasting.

Jesus bought us freedom from condemnation and a future without the tears that this life brings. Christians believe a new heaven and a new earth will one day stand where our present world does. The promise of eternal joy in God is our source of hope for the future. But what of this life? Why practise medicine or nursing – why bother with the stresses and struggles of long hours, pressured resources, failed treatment and unhelpful colleagues when we feel so weak and could simply wait for him to come? In his lavish love, the Lord has sealed us in the present, even now, with the Holy Spirit and made us part of the worldwide body of believers (that's what the holy *catholic* church bit means!).

The Spirit empowers, counsels and changes us, so that we are daily being renewed in preparation for the new bodies we will receive when the Lord returns. The same love that drove Jesus to die for us, gives us the strength and courage now to live obedient, self-sacrificing, God-honouring lives for him as we receive his grace moment by moment. The staggering effect of Christ's compassion is the power and freedom to care as recklessly and selflessly as he did. And the church is the place where we are built-up in our faith, learn to love others and where wonderful change can occur within the messy, blood-bought safety of the family of God. All this has been given to us because of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and rule. Why bother with the laborious hours, the difficult relationships, the failures and rejections that lie ahead? Because God did and it has changed the world.

Amen! What a hope! ■

REFERENCES

1. The Apostles' Creed text from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, 2000*. bit.ly/1BC720e