

## **From the Pastor's Desk 1980-1989**

### **Apostles' Creed**

For hundreds of years Christians have confessed the Apostles' Creed. The full form as we know it stems from about 700 AD. However, some of its segments can be found in Christian writings dating back to as early as the second century. The churches of the Reformation gladly gave their allegiance to the Apostles' Creed. It is a beautiful summary of the Christian faith. It is Christ centered and Trinitarian in character. And today it is still the most widely accepted creed among Christians.

In the Reformed churches there never has been a question whether or not the creed should be a part of the service. But there have been lively discussions on how it should be confessed. In my first congregation we had such a discussion for a while. As I studied the origin of the debate I found the comments by two well-known Dutch theologians quite interesting. In his book, "Our Worship Service" (Onze Eeredienst) Dr. Abraham Kuiper said that the creed should be confessed by the congregation; it should not be read or recited by the pastor. He proposed that it should be read by either one of the members or that the whole congregation should recite it or sing it. His first preference was the recital in unison; the second was the singing of the creed. But he observed that the recital in unison or singing was not part of the church tradition of the Dutch. The Reformed pastor D. Sikkel wrote that the creed is a response to God speaking to us through His Word. We don't just listen to its recital but we respond in unison. He also mentioned that the Dutch could not apparently do this, (he didn't mention the reason), while Christians in other countries could do it.

The apostles' creed is ecumenical. And throughout the world, the church confesses "I believe . . ." And I appreciate it that, Reformed churches adopted the ancient tradition of reciting in unison, or singing, the apostles' creed.