

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding the Proposed Change To the Article of Faith Concerning the The Nature of God

Q: Why change the wording of the article on the nature of God in our statement of faith? Why does this matter now? How did we get to this point?

A: The impetus for the change to 'open up' the statement of faith for possible revision comes from Wes Mills as our ACOP President. Wes had noticed how ACOP's theological position was being misunderstood or misrepresented in the broader Pentecostal and Evangelical circles. There was a growing realization that three statements (the nature of God, water baptism and Spirit baptism) could be reworded to bring further clarity to ACOP's current theological position. The statements on water baptism and Spirit baptism were affirmed by membership vote at our conference in Surrey in 2024. The amended statement on the nature of God presented at the time was a very close vote, nearly 50/50, but ultimately failed. This required further revision, prayer and reflection before bringing a new amended statement to the membership for another vote.

Q: Is there a problem that we are trying to prevent or solve with this proposed change?

A: The current wording leaves ACOP's convictions about the nature of God ambiguous to readers — some of whom wonder if we believe in some unorthodox formulation of God's nature. Adjusting the wording helps us clarify our convictions.

Q: Is this a response to something inside our churches or outside of our churches?

A: Both. From within ACOP: our churches and members, as a whole, are more Trinitarian in their belief, and the current wording could better reflect that conviction. From outside ACOP, other global Pentecostal and Evangelical organizations have wondered whether we are biblically faithful to Scripture because of the ambiguity in

our current statement. While this is not our primary impetus, we want to demonstrate a robust commitment to Scripture for faith, life and theology, and a stronger statement on the nature of God can better reflect the truth of who God is according to his Word.

Q: The group that worked on the proposed amendment is the ACOP National Faith & Life Team. How did that team come about?

A: In 2024, Nikolas Amodeo approached ACOP President Wes Mills with a proposal for a new ministry initiative for the fellowship that would focus on cultivating spiritual formation resources and theological vitality. The aim was to help steward the spiritual life and theological health of ACOP through prayer, learning, writing and community across our fellowship. And to provide a writing team to work and pray through proposed revisions to the statement of faith that would come from the President and the Trustees.

So that's how the Faith & Life Team began, and we opened it up to any in ACOP member who would like to join it. This was a few months after our conference in Surrey, so Wes asked us to start praying and exploring options for renewed wording of the article on the nature of God.

That launched a multi-month process of prayer, discernment, and collaboration.

Q: How are proposed changes or amendments to the statement of faith processed? What warrants consideration for such a change?

A: The Faith & Life Team has three qualifying scenarios in which ACOP might pursue amending an article in the statement of faith:

- We believe that older language in the article needs updating in order to clarify its original intent, so that it will not be misconstrued.
- We believe something needs to be added or altered in a specific article in order to address a new situation facing the ACOP.
- We believe a present article does not faithfully express biblical teaching as interpreted in our ACOP community.

This article qualifies for revision based on the first and third criteria: the language needs to be updated to clarify the original intent, and the current article does not faithfully express the breadth of biblical teaching as interpreted in our ACOP community.

Q: Who worked on the writing?

A: A writing team was created from the broader Faith & Life team. They were all ordained members of ACOP. Nikolas Amodeo, Elmer Chen and Verner Drost worked specifically on the wording. After an initial period of prayer, study, and clarification, the first drafts and ideas would be sent back to the full Faith & Life team for feedback, prayer, and revision. Specific word choice, sentence structure, and overall purpose of the statement were discussed.

Q: How does the revision process work?

A: After the Faith & Life team drafts a proposed statement, the amended wording goes to the President, who presents it to the Trustees and Regional Directors for their feedback. The Faith & Life team incorporates the leadership feedback, and this process can go back and forth over several months. Once a satisfactory statement is drafted, the proposed amendment then goes out to the ACOP Membership for prayer, review, discussion, learning, etc. Based on feedback from the Fellowship, the statement might be further amended, or the President and Trustees might choose to move ahead with putting the amendment to a vote at the ACOP Biennial Conference.

Q: What implications might this have for the future of ACOP?

A: ACOP has a range of beliefs on this question: some members hold to a more Trinitarian theology, while others hold to a Oneness theology.

Over recent decades, ACOP members have tended to lean more towards Trinitarian theology. The intention was to draft a statement that would be more in line with historical Christian understanding of the Nature of God, and thus better reflect the current theological position of ACOP's membership, while still making room for Oneness Pentecostals who have been part of ACOP to be part of the Fellowship.

The proposed changes reflect both the inner change within the Fellowship towards a more Trinitarian confession. It also addresses the concerns from outside of the Fellowship that read the current wording and wonder if ACOP is truly orthodox.

Q: What does the new language actually express?

A: See 'Brief Guide to the Nature of God Statement Amendment' [posted here](#).

Q: Why not use the traditional term 'persons' to describe the Trinity? As in the EFC's statement: "The EFC believes in one God, who is Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and existing eternally in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?"

A: The language of "person" has a long and faithful history in expressing the Church's understanding of God. However, the meaning of the word has shifted significantly over time. In modern English, a "person" is typically understood as an independent individual with their own will and consciousness—essentially, a separate being. When applied to God, this can unintentionally suggest three separate individuals and lead to a misunderstanding of three gods (tritheism).

In the early Church, however, the terms translated as "person" (Greek: hypostasis, Latin: persona) did not refer to independent individuals but to distinct identities within the one divine being—"one essence, three hypostases."

Because both "person" and "essence" can carry meanings today that differ from their original intent, our wording seeks to preserve the historic Christian doctrine while using language less likely to be misunderstood. The phrase "each distinct and fully divine" affirms real distinction without suggesting separate gods.

Q: Does changing our statement of faith set us on a slippery slope towards changes away from the Bible?

A: No. We believe that Jesus and the Bible are the authority for faith and life. Our statement of faith seeks to summarize the truths of Scripture in clear language for our historical moment. As word usage changes over the decades, so statements of faith need revision to ensure they still clearly reflect the intent of the Church or organization that holds them. ACOP has undergone several healthy changes to its statement of faith over the last 100 years. Many denominations review their statements of faith periodically to ensure they continue to accurately reflect biblical doctrine and express their members' theological convictions.

While some churches or organizations have chosen to follow the worldly and sinful cultural ideologies of 21st-century progressive secularism, ACOP resists this

temptation and stands stalwartly in line with the historic biblical confession of Christ's Church. Our statement of faith reflects our commitment to the essential truth of Scripture and the centrality of Jesus and his Gospel for faith, life and mission.

Q: Will those who hold to a more Oneness position on the nature of God still be welcomed as members of ACOP?

A: Yes! Just as Trinitarian members were welcomed when ACOP was predominantly Oneness in orientation, so now those of an Oneness theology are still welcomed in ACOP.

Q: How does this new language still affirm the correct and beautiful aspects of the faith of those who prefer the current wording?

A: The new wording retains the 'one true God' language of the current statement. The new wording is also more expressive and descriptive of God's life, character and power than the current 'belief in the existence of God' only language.

Q: Why do amendments to the Statement of Faith not require a super majority (2/3 vote) as opposed to a simple majority of 50%?

A: Situations requiring 'ordinary' or 'special resolution' are spelled out in the ACOP bylaws and constitution. This process will follow the bylaws, which require that all statements of faith revisions be decided by a majority of 50% or more of the ACOP members present and voting.

Q: Will this proposed statement cause some to think we believe in three separate gods?

A: The current wording and the proposed amended wording exhibit a clear commitment to biblical Judeo-Christian monotheism: the belief in one true God.

Q: If I have a question or suggestion about this process or the amendment statement, to whom do I reach out?

A: All feedback or ideas for further revision can be passed on to the National Faith & Life Team. Email your thoughts or comments to acop@acop.ca -- and they will be forwarded to the team. Anonymous feedback will not be considered.
