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## Articles of Faith, Twelve



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## Key Information

Pentecostal churches in Latin America directly or indirectly originated from the Pentecostal Azusa Street Revival in the beginning of the twentieth century. This movement spread quickly throughout the United States and flourished among Italian Evangelicals in Chicago. Pioneers such as Louis Francescon, Pietro Ottolini, Giacomo Lombardi, Lucia Menna, and many others evangelized among Italian-speaking people throughout the United States and later to Canada, Italy, and Latin America. In 1927, leaders of the Italian Movement met in Niagara Falls, New York, for the first convention of the Italian Pentecostal Movement. During this convention, the leaders agreed and adopted a set of Biblical doctrines that became known as “The Twelve Articles of Faith” (Palma 1987). The main objective of the General Council in that convention was to establish fellowship among the different Italian Pentecostal churches in the United States, by unifying

them under one shared set of believes. It was also at this meeting that the cooperative fellowship known as *the Unorganized Italian Christian Churches of the United States* was organized (later known as *the Christian Church of North America*, and today as *the International Fellowship of Christian Assemblies*).

The Twelve Original Articles of Faith are as follows:

1. **The Bible.** We believe and accept the entire Bible as the infallible Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the only and perfect order of our faith and manner of living, to which nothing can be added or taken away, which is the power of God unto salvation to believers (2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16–17; Rom 1:16).
2. **God and the Trinity.** We believe there is only one living and true God, eternal, with unlimited power, Creator of all things; and in the One God are three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Eph 4:6; Matt 28:19; 1 John 5:7).
3. **Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Because we believe in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, we acknowledge what is recorded in I John 5:1, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.” Blessed indeed are those who know Him as the Son of the living God.

4. **The Adversary.** We believe in the existence of a personal Devil, who, with all evil spirits, will be punished in the lake of fire (Matt 25:41).
5. **Regeneration or the New Birth.** We believe that Regeneration or the New Birth is received only through faith in Christ Jesus, who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification. They who are in Christ Jesus (cleansed through His blood) are new creatures and have Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (Rom 3:24–25; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Cor 1:30).
6. **Water Baptism.** We believe in water baptism by single immersion, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's commission (Matt 28:18–19).
7. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience received subsequent to salvation, with the sign of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4; 10:45–47; 19:6).
8. **The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.** We believe that in the Lord's Supper, the body of Christ is given, received and eaten in a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means of receiving and partaking is by faith (Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor 11:24).
9. **Abstinence.** We believe it is necessary to abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication, as decreed by the Holy Spirit in the General Assembly held at Jerusalem according to Acts 15:28–29; 16:4; 21:25.
10. **Divine Healing.** We believe that Jesus Christ Himself bore all our infirmities, and therefore, we obey the following commandment: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he has committed any sins, it shall be forgiven him (Matthew 8:17; James 5:14–15)."
11. **Second Coming of Christ.** We believe that the Lord Himself (before the Millennium) shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive that are left, shall, together with them, be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess 4:16–17; Rev 20:6).
12. **Bodily Resurrection.** We believe there shall be a Bodily Resurrection of all the dead, just and unjust. And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Acts 24:15; Matt 25:46).

The Twelve Articles of Faith are Trinitarian in theology (Article 2), based in bibliology (Article 1) and premillennial in eschatology (Article 11), and emphasize speaking in tongues (Article 7), which was the basis of the revival movement. These twelve points of doctrine represent the core beliefs and are the foundation of many Pentecostal churches in Latin America to this day. Some churches have added more points of doctrine to these twelve tenets of faith, while others have kept the twelve points but edited them (changing, removing, or adding a few words and phrases). The Christian Congregation in Brazil (CCB), for example, one of the largest and also the oldest Pentecostal church in Brazil, adopted these twelve points of doctrine editing it only slightly (CCN America 2018). Much discussion was generated in 2013, for example, when the first point of doctrine at CCB was edited to say, "we believe in the Bible and accept the entire Bible as containing the infallible Word of God," instead of "We believe and accept the entire Bible as the infallible Word of God." Other churches like The Assemblies of God, for example, have added four more points of doctrine in addition to the Twelve Articles of Faith in their "Statement of Fundamental Truths" (Assemblies of God 2018).

It is interesting that the Twelve Articles of Faith seem to have been inspired by the Apostles' Creed, a Catholic prayer that originated around the seventh or eighth century AD. Its name comes from the belief that each one of the twelve Apostles contributed an article of a creed. The Apostles' Creed was also the source of inspiration for

the 12 Articles of Catholic Faith (each identified in parenthesis below):

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
 Creator of heaven and earth; (*The 1st article*)  
 And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;  
 (*The 2nd*)  
 Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
 Born of the Virgin Mary, (*The 3rd*)  
 Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
 Was crucified, died, and was buried. (*The 4th*)  
 He descended into hell;  
 The third day he rose again from the dead; (*The 5th*)  
 He ascended into Heaven,  
 And is seated at the right hand of God, the  
 Father Almighty;  
 (*The 6th*)  
 From thence he shall come to judge the living  
 and the dead.  
 (*The 7th*)  
 I believe in the Holy Spirit, (*The 8th*)  
 The Holy Catholic Church,  
 The Communion of Saints, (*The 9th*)  
 The forgiveness of sins, (*The 10th*)  
 The resurrection of the body, (*The 11th*)  
 And life everlasting. Amen. (*The 12th*)  
 (ELLC 1988)

The Apostles' Creed is still used in many Christian churches, and some scholars argue that it will survive in use and will always be a permanent and binding norm of faith (Lash 1994; Rahner 1978). Given that the Twelve Articles of Faith were crafted and adopted by the leaders of the Italian Pentecostal Movement, many who had

been devout Catholics prior to becoming Pentecostal, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Apostles' Creed could have been a source of inspiration to the Twelve Articles of Faith.

## Cross-References

- ▶ [Assemblies of God](#)
- ▶ [Christian Congregation in Brazil](#)
- ▶ [Pentecostalism in Brazil](#)
- ▶ [Pentecostalism Waves in Latin America](#)

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