Ethical and Theological Definitions

1. **Theological Ethics**: (what) An account of moral living based on the assumption that God exists and that God desires certain behaviors over others. /// (how) One adheres to such morality by acting in a way that is congruent with the intentions of the Divine, revealed through scripture, reason, tradition and experience, /// (why) so that God’s good intentions will be exhibited in Creation.

Sources:

2. **Doctrine of God**: (what) The Creator of all that is and the Source by which all Creation is sustained and enriched. /// (how) We understand that God is Good, Powerful and Wise in relating to Creation, as revealed by scripture, reason, tradition and experience, /// (why) so that God’s nature will be evident among Creation and exhibited by Creation.

Sources:

3. **Doctrine of Christology**: (what) Jesus, the Nazarene, is called the Messiah, or the “Christ,” by his followers. /// (how) By his teachings and the example of his life, Jesus displayed extraordinarily right and good relations to God and Creation. /// (why) Followers of Jesus seek to emulate his life so that we will be brought into deepened and better relationships with God and Creation.

Sources:

4. **Doctrine of Pneumatology**: (what) The Spirit serves as the life chord between God and Creation/// (how) by making available to all things created the benefits of the Source/// (why) so that the image and sustenance of the Creator will be most evident.

Sources:
5. **Doctrine of Trinity**: (what) In Christianity, God appears to relate to Creation in three ways—the Source, the Chord and the Incarnate—/// (how) by the infinite wealth of Quality (Source) provided to sustain (Chord) all that has been created (Incarnate)/// (why) so that the One will be known wholly by all that is. (Economic Trinity)

Sources:

6. **Doctrine of Ecclesiology**: (what) The Christian Church is the entire body of people who relate to the Divine through the teachings and model of Jesus/// (how) by practicing rites that proclaim what God is like and in favor of/// (why) so that Faith, Hope and Love will abound and be evident in Creation.

Sources:

7. **Doctrine of Theodicy**: (what) The iniquities that exist in the world in the form of injustice, violence and suffering/// (how) resulting from the myriad capacities possessed by humanity and the vastness of Creation in direct conflict with the extreme finitude of human intellect, emotionality, and physicality/// (why) so that actual events oppose the ultimately good will of God.

Sources:

8. **Doctrine of Soteriology**: (what) God continually works salvation in all of Creation/// (how) by offering divine mercy and trustworthy guidance in the form of spiritual revelation and material incarnation/// (why) so all that has been created will be reconciled to the Creator in this life and the next.

Sources:

9. **Doctrine of Theological Anthropology**: (what) The origin of humanity is in God and yet humans are not divine; as such, humans, in their finitude, bear the mark of God/// (how) both in an unseen, inherent sense, and in the relationships among humans and between humanity and the rest of Creation///
(why) so that the presence and nature of God will be most evident.

Sources:

10. **Doctrine of Missiology**: (what) The primary mission of the church is to embody grace///
(how) by living in a way that honors God and witnesses to the benefits of the divine order///
(why) so that all will be encouraged to honor the Creator and cooperate in the Supreme order of Creation.


11. **Doctrine of Liberation**: (what) The ultimate power of the gospel is to free persons from the destructive power of sin///
(how) by undoing the authority of individual and social systems that perpetuate the oppression of persons based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, geographical location and a variety of other means///
(why) so that all persons will experience the full grace of God's activity in history.


12. **Doctrine of Grace**: (what) The benefits of God that are neither earned nor requested and given to all of Creation///
(how) by the sustaining and enriching of life and merciful treatment of human finitude and fault///
(why) so that persons will be able and inclined to cooperate in the divine activity in history and eternity.


13. **Doctrine of Eucharist**: (what) A Christian sacrament that calls Christ to be present in his followers///
(how) by receiving the meal (often bread and wine) in remembrance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus///
(why) so that Christians will be transformed into the incarnate, living Word of God in their own time and place.
14. **Doctrine of Baptism:** (what) The sacramental rite of initiation into the Christian Church and sign of the extended grace of God/// (how) by covering the one being baptized in oil, water or some other symbolic medium/// (why) so that the internal transformation of the one into a follower of Christ will be visibly celebrated by the Christian community.

Sources:

15. **Doctrine of Eschatology:** (what) The foundation for Christian hope is the belief that divine love will ultimately reconcile Creation fully to God/// (how) by continual revelation and incarnation in history that anticipates the reconciliation to occur universally/// (why) so that life is given meaning and grace will ultimately triumph.

Sources:

16. **Imago Dei:** (what) All of Creation reflects the likeness of God in a variety of ways/// (how) by benefiting from the elements of being given by the Source/// (why) so that aspects of the Creator’s character and activity will be known in all that is.

Sources:

17. **Imitation of Christ:** (what) A Christian commitment to conform one’s life to that of Christ/// (how) by defending the oppressed, providing for the poor, accompanying the lonely and challenging the oppressor/// (why) so that God will be glorified and persons will be more free to receive the divine benefits.

Sources:
Howard Thurman, Jesus and the Disinherited (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976)
18. **Deontology:** (what) An ethical system by which persons behave morally///
   (how) by adhering to divinely given maxims///
   (why) so that Creation will ultimately cooperate in the intended order of Creation.
   Sources:

19. **Teleology:** (what) An ethical system by which persons behave morally///
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