

## Statement of Faith – Toby Mueller

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As Creator, God creates all that is and calls it good. We, too, are good, for God created us in God's image. Being human, however, means that we are not God and so are separated from God. Our separation also affects our actions: toward ourselves, one another, and God. However, God knows and is with us in all of our lives and we can be comforted in this.

Jesus is the Christ, my Lord and Savior, fully God, fully human, in whom God chose to reveal Godself. In Jesus Christ we receive salvation, a gracious gift from God. Jesus has shown humanity how we are to live in loving existence with ourselves, God, and neighbor. On the cross, God participated in our suffering through Jesus, taking on our sins and transforming us (Rom. 12:2). God has also been revealed to us through Scripture. Scripture is faith's hearing God's 'beckoning' now through the community's past witness. It is the written, creative response from divine revelation, written in a particular time and place.

The Holy Spirit is the sustainer of life. The Holy Spirit works in the world to draw us as individuals and as faith communities toward God and away from what is contrary to God. The Spirit is manifested through faith and love. The Holy Spirit is not limited to working within the church but moves where the Spirit wishes to bring healing and wholeness to an estranged world. God has brought believers together to support and encourage each other in faith communities. These faith communities exist to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and, being led by the Holy Spirit, are enabled to transform the world in which we live. We all participate in the ambiguities of life, but the Spirit's character of love calls all to be renewed, and be partners with God in bringing in the Kingdom.

The sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace instituted by God. The grace exhibited in the sacraments is not from the elements, but is the work of the Holy Spirit. In baptism, God shows how our lives are cleansed from sin, and brought to new life in Christ, to be lived out in a community of faith. In the Lord's Supper, God helps us remember Jesus' partaking of bread and wine with his disciples, and also helps us look forward to feasting in God's kingdom. Through these sacraments the church is renewed and empowered, sustained, and sealed.

An affirmation of hope in eternal life is an important promise for Christians. Eternal life is something which we, as humans, have no claim to; it is through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that this hope is a reality for us. I hope for eternal life for all of humanity, for it is because of all humanity that Christ came, died, and rose again.