

Brief Statement of Faith

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All things are created by God. God is “maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.”¹ The emerald iridescent wings of a Ruby Throated hummingbird... the howl of wolves at sunset on a frosty winter’s night...the flicker of a firefly on a sultry summer evening are breathtaking examples of God’s unbounded imagination, creativity and penchant for diversity. Human beings are made in the image of God...born with a strand of stardust and an imprint of holiness that nudges us to long for a connection to something greater than ourselves...beyond ourselves...to God.

I love to think about what I believe and why and welcome the occasion to exchange ideas in conversation with others. So before I make my next set of statements, I want to say with clarity that the exercise of the mind and thinking deeper thoughts about God are not drivel. What I am trying to establish is what Peter Enns in The Sin of Certainty says, “The deeper problem is the unspoken need for our thinking about God to be right in order to have a joyful, freeing, healing, and meaningful faith. The problem is trusting our beliefs rather than trusting God.”² My theological library is replete with theologians’ worthy attempts to explain and understand the nature of God, the Trinity, and the Resurrection to name a few theological topics. While the wisdom of theologians is invaluable, I believe no matter how cogent the theological constructs, God is in the business of breaking free of them. God will do what God will do and will show up in unexpected ways. Isn’t that marvelous and astounding that we worship a God that is Holy Other...a God who is with us and for us but will not be restrained by us and our limited thoughts and/or language of God? God resists being confined by our finite minds.

God told Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”³ How we speak of God matters. Rich inclusive language for and about God opens us to new possibilities for thinking about God. The God of Abraham and Sarah...the God who delivered Israel from captivity reaches out to us in love. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God’s faithfulness is steadfast and sure. “God is love and we love God because [God] first loved us.”⁴

“God is not elsewhere and heaven is not later. The presence of God is infinite, everywhere and always forever. One cannot, not be in the presence of God. There is no other place to be. Wherever we are, God is. God’s divine energy flows through us.”⁵ “The notion that God is elsewhere is overcome through the Incarnation... ‘The Word became flesh and lived among us’^{6,7} God in Jesus became flesh. God visibly moved in with the material world to help us overcome the illusion of separation”⁸

Jesus is the very imprint of God. Jesus walked the dusty roads of God’s world feeding the hungry, healing the sick, teaching in parables, binding wounds, and transforming lives. Today Jesus walks the dusty roads of our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ life and death are pregnant with the power of reconciliation, redemption and the refreshing embrace of a forgiving love. Jesus calls us to discipleship and to the transformation of our souls. Jesus reconciling power is an expression of God’s extravagant, indiscriminate, inclusive, divine love and grace, and a bold witness to God’s resurrection power. Power that proclaims life not death has the last word. “We are children of the resurrection and we are both burdened and brightened by a cosmic and irrepressible hope. We are both burdened and brightened with a gift of an optimism whose headwaters are not rational or provable, and yet are endlessly knowable to us”⁹ as we humbly abide in the love of God.

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to us as we journey forth in life. The Spirit of God pursues us, causes us to realize that God’s grace surrounds us and makes a claim upon our lives. This same Spirit moves us to call out to God, say yes to God’s love for us, and commit our lives in service to and adoration of God. The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth and is both our Comforter; and when we need it, our Dis-Comforter. The Spirit of God calls us to dynamic transformation and reformation. The dynamism of the Spirit of God

is ever nudging us toward that which is good, lovely and true....toward unflinching unity as we honor diversity...toward being fully present in each moment and knowing we are one with God and all of creation.¹⁰

¹ Nicene Creed.

² Peter Enns. *The Sin of Certainty*. 2016. Harper Collins Publishers. 21.

³ Exodus 3:14, *New Revised Standard Version*.

⁴ I John 4: 16, 19, *New Revised Standard Version*.

⁵ Richard Rohr. Practicing Presence. November 24, 2017.

⁶ John 1:14, *New Revised Standard Version*.

⁷ Incarnation and Indwelling. Richard Rohr. November 20, 2017.

⁸ Incarnation and Indwelling. Richard Rohr. November 20, 2017.

⁹ Richard Rohr. Faith and Science, Evolution. October 25, 2017.

¹⁰ Richard Rohr. Practicing Presence. November 24, 2017