

PERSONAL THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

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God is the source and Sovereign of all that is. As Creator of all things, all things exist for God's praise and purpose. Humankind, man and woman imaging *God*, lives under God's government and is commissioned to be stewards of creation, but sadly we have refused to acknowledge dependence on God and God's claim on all creation. Although humankind has rejected God's sovereignty and defied God's authority, God does not choose to abandon us to damnation, but acts to reclaim creation through love.

God in Christ comes to us with a saving disclosure of love. The act of revealing God's self to defiant creatures is an act of condescension and humiliation, which occurs out of respect for our freedom to respond and for our uniqueness in Creation. God's Word comes in the form of a person so as to be communicable to the most contumacious of creation's creatures. This divine communiqué announces: the debt we owe has been paid in full; now, accept the bill as being paid; and enjoy your new status of friendship and partner with God.

How scandalous it is to believe that God would go so far to reclaim the likes of us. We, who exist for God's purpose and praise, discover God acting for us and for our wholeness.

Christ the Word and human language of God, announces God's love and concern for the lost. Scripture testifies to this saving act of love and forgiveness and to God's participation in history. Scripture declares Christ as the sovereign One of history because God participates in history. Since the Spirit of God and Christ has affected Scripture's formation and has revealed the truth of God's action, the word has proven to be reliable to those who choose to follow it and therefore it is authoritative.

God continues to demonstrate divine love (*agape*) through the life and service of the church, the new creation. The church continues its Lord and Savior's incarnation. The church's worship is the Christian's response to the love one comes to know in Christ. It is a response of gratitude that makes us adore and praise God and seek to know and do God's purpose. Worship proclaims and reveals God as our Friend. It provides us with a daily opportunity to be renewed and transformed into the image of God.

The sacraments are the graceful gifts God gives us to set us on the way of grace and to nurture us continually in that way. This way is living as a neighbor to all, serving as faithful stewards of creation, working as agents of *shalom* in the world. *God's* agenda becomes our agenda. Social, economic and political involvement in the world is not something Christians decide to do; it is something we are impelled to do. God's grace frees us for faithful action.

As a servant of Christ and the church, I am called to discern *God's* presence and action among us as Scripture illustrates. As God partners with the church and with me, I am compelled to model and help others live out the partnering connection that is God's will for all creation.