

Statement of Faith

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I believe in God, triune in the manifestation of Creator/Parent, Redeemer/Son, and Sustainer/Holy Spirit. I believe from the very beginning of history God desired and engaged in full loving relationship with creation in general and humanity in specific to provide life and joy in abundance. The biblical story engages the journey of God's walk with humanity in history, specifically through the lens of the people of Israel and their constant struggle and wrestling to understand and grow in Divine truth.

God the Creator/Parent represents an earthly model assisting humanity to grasp a mere glimpse of an infinite Divine presence whose limitless depth and breadth cannot be understood. God consistently connects with humanity and, through the biblical witness, plays the main character in the linear timeline of the history of Israel. I believe God calls all people according to their gifts to accept the challenge of expressing Divine truth to continue developing and fostering spiritual relationship between the Creator/Parent and individuals, communities, and nations. Sometimes those people God seeks accept the challenge set before them and sometimes they do not. It remains uncertain how much time elapsed before Moses, for instance, recognized that a particular bush was not being consumed even though set ablaze (Exodus 3:1-17). The question exists for us today. How many burning bushes do we pass in a lifetime, many of which we may never recognize coming from Divine opportunities? Nevertheless, God, Creator/Parent, never ceases to pursue us, the children of Divine creation. Scripture embodies this persistent characteristic of God in multiple ways and ever so concisely in Psalm 139: *"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast"* (Ps 139:7-10 NIV).

I believe the ultimate expression of God pursuing relationship with people comes through Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us, the Redeemer/Son. Jesus represents the full grace of God inviting every individual into the complete love of Divine relationship. Through his walk and lessons among humanity, Jesus teaches us of God's endless love and of how we can reciprocate our desire and love for God. He instructs us to pursue God above all other needs and aspirations, thus exercising our faith that God will provide everything we require: *"Seek first [God's] kingdom and [God's] righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matthew 6:33 NIV). The willingness of Jesus to subject himself to the darkest desires of human selfishness and demonstrate the conquering power of love and life over the hopelessness of sin and death, through his death and resurrection, exhibits the ultimate expression of God's yearning to be in loving relationship with every person and to never let that relationship be severed. *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life ... nor anything ... in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39 NIV).

The Sustainer/Holy Spirit represents, for me, the presence of God continually nurturing our relationship with the Divine through the workings of spiritually cognizant individuals and faithful communities. Jesus tells us, *"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things"* (John 14:26 NIV). The Holy Spirit exemplifies the helping presence of God working with us in the present to demonstrate love, manifest healing, and attain peace, even in the midst of life's many storms.

I believe I possess a part to play in and belong to God's continuing story. I believe it remains my responsibility to lovingly pursue God's call within the Divine story being a created child of God, a redeemed follower of Jesus, and devoted partner of the Holy Spirit. I believe I can find true meaning in life by working toward reflecting the radiance and truth of God's love and know, for now, my best efforts most often reveal splintered slivers of insufficient light. I believe in God's grace to correct that.