

## Personal Statement of Faith

To be honest, I'm not a huge fan of the phrase "personal statement of faith." I think that biblical faith is intrinsically a communal reality. Though God does give His elect faith on a personal level, that faith is never in isolation and it is never distinct from the *same* faith that He gives to *all* the elect. This is why I am so drawn to the Christian Reformed Church—its ecclesiological impetus springs from the unified Church of which Christ is the head. Everyone that is saved by Christ is saved by the same faith in Christ and is united to the same body of Christ. Of course, many Christians believe many different things about God, and there are various levels of theological triage, if you will (i.e. primary, secondary, and tertiary matters). However, I see myself largely inheriting the faith-system as laid down in the Old Testament, fulfilled and expanded in the New Testament, propounded by the church fathers through the middle ages, and finally codified by the Reformers, with modest advancements since then. I see a clear line of continuity strung throughout these millennia and, as such, the adjective "personal" does not seem to be the best fit.

I am Christian, Reformed, covenantal, paedobaptist, amillennial, predestinarian, innerrantist, complementarian, sabbatarian, Presbyterian<sup>1</sup> and confessional (Three Forms of Unity). I hold to the regulative principle of worship and believe that preaching should be expository and generally *lectio continua*. I believe all 66 books of the Protestant Bible are innerrant in their original manuscripts (Hebrew and Greek). The apocrypha, however, is edifying, though not inspired. Preaching, when faithful to the text and attended to by the Holy Spirit, is God's very voice for His people. I hold to the traditional biblical sexual ethic that sees biological

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<sup>1</sup> See CRC BCO p. 9 which describes the CRC as "...a Presbyterian form of church polity..."

(X or Y chromosome) men and women as the only candidates for marriage with each other in purely monogamous fashion. Marriage is not restricted to Christians, but it is restricted to the union between one man and one woman. All other *soi-disant* “marriages” are misnomers. All forms of transgenderism and homosexuality are declared by God to be sinful, along with heterosexual sins like lust and pre/extra-marital sex.

My position on the gifts of the Spirit requires some nuance. I am a “soft-cessationist.” I follow Vern Poythress.<sup>2</sup> I believe that God does indeed speak to His people today. I believe that God’s speaking does not reveal new information about Himself or salvation. Therefore, prophecy has ceased and the cannon is closed. However, God can and does illuminate the minds of His people to guide them with propositional content that may not be available in Scripture. For example, a person can get a “sense” that God is calling him or her to a new job, or to witness to a person, or that someone close to them is going through a divorce and should be prayed for. These things are not inerrant, they are not prophecy, but they are analogous to the way in which God inspired Scripture. The word “analogous” is key. God’s speaking today is not univocal to biblical inspiration but it is not equivocal either. For a thorough description of this concept see the paper in footnote 2.

Finally, I believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. By no other name is any person ever saved. All people deserve the just wrath of God for living in sin (both imputed and actual). Jesus Christ took our sin into His body on the tree, and imputed to us His righteousness. Christians are saved by grace, through faith in Christ, to the glory of God as is described in Scripture. May His name be praised forevermore.

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<sup>2</sup> Vern Sheridan Poythress, “Modern Spiritual Gifts as Analogous to Apostolic Gifts : Affirming Extraordinary Works of the Spirit within Cessationist Theology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39.1 (1996): 71–101.