

Statement of Faith – W. Robert Martin, III

“No confession of faith looks merely to the past; every confession seeks to cast the light of a priceless heritage on the needs of the present moment, and so to shape the future. Reformed confessions, in particular, when necessary even reform the tradition itself in the light of the Word of God!”

--Preface to “A Brief Statement of Faith” PC(USA)

My whole life long I have believed in God,
a God whose invitational grace invites us to participate in bringing about the fullness of creation;
a God whose insistent love refuses to segregate us into the divisive categories
of clean or unclean, rich or poor, righteous or rejectable;
a God whose impassioned justice never pits us against each other
because of race, condition, social class, sexual orientation, or gender;
a God whose immeasurable mercy at no time turns away from the last, or the lost, or the
very least among us.

I believe in Jesus the Christ—wholly human and holy divine—
who continually calls us to embrace the unity of the human family we daily seek to divide.
As one who lived fully and loved wastefully, we see in him and through him what our own
humanity can divinely become and be.
Jesus is the silence from whom our words are formed, the questioner from whom our questions
arise,
the disturber through whom we are continually confronted and challenged, and the mystery in
whose depths we find both healing and hope.
It is this Jesus who invites us here and now and always to experience life in an alternative
kingdom—
a kingdom where we embody the extravagant compassion of God,
not only in our selves, but also in our social, political, and religious systems as well.

I believe in the radical and restorative movement of God’s Spirit in daily existence—
that Spirit which reclaims our wounded lives, revives our defeated dreams, renews our
hope for wholeness,
and reminds us of our responsibility in ushering in God’s reign of equity and equality in
the here and now!

I trust in, and am ever-informed by, the rich tapestry of Scripture—
and I daily grapple with the tender yet sometimes troubling witness it bears.
Remembered and recorded under the guidance of God’s Spirit,
I affirm that the Scriptures are nevertheless “the words of human beings,
conditioned by the language, thought forms, and literary fashions
of the places and times at which they were written”
reflecting views of life and the cosmos that were then current.
This is why I believe that the church has the powerful obligation to approach the Scriptures with
literary and historical understanding,

ever-trusting that God will “continue to speak through the Scriptures in our changing world and in every form of human culture.”

I believe that the sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of God’s grace— for baptism with water and God’s Spirit is the communal mark of our welcome into the care of Christ’s Church, the sign and seal of our participation in the fullness of possibility which God freely offers to us, and the beginning of our growth into the rich commitments of Christian faith and the risky challenges of Christian discipleship.

I believe the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to be a sacred yet subversive act— for it boldly challenges any system or any power that accepts hunger or hate or hostility as the norm. Through this humble yet holy act, through this meal of remembrance and resolve, we re-member Christ’s community, we recommit ourselves to justice and equity in Christ’s name, and we receive the nourishment we need to be vital communities of faith committed to God’s alternative order in the world.

And so it is that I ever-strive to be a faithful Christian in the places, conditions, circumstances, and relationships of the present moment— trusting in the resplendent grace and the restorative love God lavishly extends to all!