

Statement of Faith for Chad Neal

I believe in God, who is the Sovereign Lord of all and Creator of all things seen and unseen. God is one God, but has revealed Himself to us in three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is Eternal, Almighty, Holy, Just and Loving. God created this world and all that is in it to live in holiness and perfection. In His gracious love He chose to give humanity freedom of will. Rather than choosing to love and obey God, humanity was disobedient and sinned against God. Through this rebellion, came brokenness, turmoil, alienation, suffering, judgment and ultimately, death. God's perfect Creation was tainted by sin, and the chains of that sin continue to hold the world captive to this day. Throughout history, God has called people into a covenant relationship with Him. He told Abram that from his seed, the whole world would be blessed. Through Moses' leadership, God established the Law which taught the people about the holiness of God and their own sin. Blood sacrifice was instituted in order to cover the penalty for sin and to temporarily atone for their sin. In spite of the covenants they had made with God, the people of God continued to wander away from Him choosing to go their own way rather than living in intimate relationship with God.

In the fullness of time God sent His Son into the world. God revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit to a virgin named Mary. Setting aside the treasures and comfort of heaven, God came to earth in a most humble manner in order to rescue His Creation. Fully God and yet fully man, holy and sinless, and yet able to understand all that human beings endure, Jesus lived a perfect life and demonstrated through His life and ministry the love and power of God. Although He was God, Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the ultimate payment for the sins of all human kind. At the Cross, Christ's death became the blood sacrifice that could erase the stain of sin once and for all time. Only through Jesus and His death can we be restored to a right relationship with our God. This reconciliation is not obtained by our own efforts, but is offered to all who believe as a gift by our loving, gracious God. Our Lord Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb. On the third day, He was raised from the dead as God's great affirmation of the sufficiency of His sacrifice to cover once and for all time, the penalty of sin for those who believe. Jesus conquered death and rose from the grave. His final words before his ascension was a call to make disciples everywhere. Jesus ascended to Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, from which He intercedes on our behalf.

I believe that God is still active and at work in our world today through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ until we recognize His gracious claim upon our lives. We receive the sacrament of Baptism as an act of faith – an outward demonstration of an inward reality, it is a public proclamation that we belong to Christ. God's Holy Spirit continues to work in us, and through Him, we can grow in our knowledge and love for Him. In the Lord's Supper, by faith, we experience God's presence as we share together in the elements. I believe the Bible is God's Word. It tells us who we are as God's creation, and God's intention for us. The Bible's teachings are beyond time and culture, and are the authoritative declaration of God's work and purpose for individuals and the human race.

I believe the Church is to be God's hands, His feet, His mouth, His eyes, and His heart in this broken and hurting world. God calls the Church to proclaim the Gospel for the salvation of human souls, to minister to the needs of those suffering, and to worship God. The Church's greatest purpose is to bring glory to God in word and deed as it seeks to reconcile all the world to God. The chains of sin still bind this world, but one day, Christ will come again in glory to bring about the ultimate and complete fulfillment of His kingdom. Until then, we walk by faith, in His grace, working to achieve the goal that "one day, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord over Heaven and Earth!"