

Neal Nybo, Statement of Faith, 2019

I have come to believe that the essential tenets and reformed distinctives traditionally held by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and articulated in its Constitution are my best understanding of God's personal revelation in Scripture, in nature and in the work of human history. I believe the Triune God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has a plan for the world that includes the salvation of humanity (1 Tim. 2:3-5). Salvation is made possible through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection. We learn this from the Bible, God's uniquely inspired writing that is for all people in every age, for teaching, correcting and training in uprightness and equipping for God's good work (2 Tim. 3:16).

God is at work in every person. He knew them before they were born and knit them together in their mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). He plants seeds, builds faith, redeems brokenness, establishes holy patterns, respects choices. Our opportunity is to look back and see God's loving fingerprints throughout our lives and to surrender to God's goodness and Christ's Lordship. But, people are in rebellion, walled up in their personal kingdoms, separated from God. God graciously rescues people from this domain of darkness and brings them into the Kingdom of his beloved son (Col. 1:13). Many people resist surrendering and remain in rebellion and not all of humanity is saved, only those who believe and surrender. This is not faith and works but faith demonstrated by works.

God has been drawing human beings from everywhere on earth to be God's sacred people, a testimony to God's goodness (Eph. 2:6, 7). But Christians, far from being salt and light to the world (Matt. 5:13, 14), swagger through life, revealing only ourselves, instead of Christ (Col.3:1-4). Christians too often know about God without fully knowing God. We say much about Jesus but seem unable to live out his love and transformation among those he came to save. Using Jesus' metaphor of seeds and soil (Mark 4:1-9) we must create an environment of growth and discipleship in our hearts and churches. Then, God's Spirit can grow the seed of faith planted in us. We can create a productive heart and soul environment by practicing habits and activities like listening prayer, fasting, silence and solitude individually and with others. (Heb. 10:24, 25). When we pay attention to the people, circumstances, and events of our lives, the Holy Spirit is able to move life into the seed of faith and send roots deep into our heart soil, growing our whole lives beyond expectation.

From this growth, we are able to serve out of who we have become in Christ, individually and together. This is God's covenant commitment worked out in our lives together in the church. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible signs of God's invisible reality and commitment to God's people. The real presence of Jesus is recognized in his community and remembered in the bread and cup of communion (1 Cor. 11:23-26). The promises of belonging, forgiveness, and eternal life are demonstrated in the waters of baptism. In this community of God's people, we dare not substitute rules, cultural values and the expectations of others for the clarion call of Christ in our lives (2 Tim.2:23, 24, 1 Cor. 2:2). Our gracious opportunity is to surrender to Christ so he appears in and through us. I pray, Christ appear and by your grace let me be there as well, as a follower in your kingdom. Christ, through your church and through me, appear in the world you love.