

Rev. Dr. Jason Carter

Brief Statement of Faith

Preamble:

My creed is shaped by the historic biblical faith passed down through the ages. The Nicene Creed, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Lausanne's Cape Town Commitment have all expressed the center of the Christian faith in different centuries and ages of the church which inform my own theology and ministerial praxis. I believe that theology is meant to be lived and personal, responding to the timeless human search for identity and belonging as embodied by Question 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

Question: What is your only comfort in life and death?
Answer: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul,
 both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood
and has set me free from all the power of the devil.

He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly
Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together
for my salvation.

Therefore, by his Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me
heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

A biblical theology that clearly articulates the gospel always moves the child of God towards robust worship, authentic relationships, and daring discipleship.

Bible:

I believe in the life-transforming power of the Word of God to change self-centered sinners to God-glorifying saints. God graciously reveals his redemptive love and steadfast faithfulness to his covenant creatures in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments which are without error in the original writings. In humanity's mistaken propensity to cobble together its worldview from dominant cultural narratives, the Word of God is authoritative for life in a way that is both radically countercultural and deeply satisfying for the soul. The focus of God's entire revelation comes spectacularly into focus in the person and work of Jesus Christ in the Gospels as the promises of God in the Old Testament come to perfect fruition in the Son of God; the New Testament completes the beautiful tapestry God has woven in His Word by giving an alluring and convincing invitation to join the joyful seriousness of following Jesus with fellow disciples.

Triune God:

I believe in the Living God whose essence is relational: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the One True God eternally exist and mutually love and glorify each other. The three-in-oneness of the Trinity reveals the relational nature of God, offering a template which calls God's children to move into loving, servant, and sacrificial relationships. I believe the church goes forth in a distinctly Trinitarian mission, striving to show forth the relational unity and redemptive love of the Triune God to a broken world.

I believe God reveals Himself as Father whose love is unconditional and who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The adoption into the family of God makes beloved sons and daughters out of rebellious sinners who have the privilege of calling God "Abba" Father. Our own

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identity as creatures both humbles us before our Creator and bestows an incredible dignity upon humanity in being made in the image of God.

I believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, who in the fullness of time came to redeem people from their sins through his vicarious life and death: *Jesus lived the life I could never live and died the death that I deserved*. As the only Mediator between God and humanity, Jesus Christ lived a perfect sinless life and died a sacrificial death on the cross as our Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus was fully human, completely assuming human nature so as to be an acceptable propitiation for the sins of humanity; Jesus was fully divine, sovereignly powerful to redeem his covenant partners. On the third day, Jesus rose victorious from the grave, conquering sin, death, and the devil and is now seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead and usher forth the new heavens and the new earth.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who breathes life into dry bones, the counselor who gifts the peace of Christ to believers walking through the valley of the shadow of death. The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier who reminds us of the Words of Jesus, convicting us of sin so that we might daily repent and believe the Gospel. Believers pray for the power of the Holy Spirit without whose presence the church's witness is fruitless. The Holy Spirit brings unity to the church when division threatens us, equips the church for courageous service when fear paralyzes us, and sends the church to proclaim the riches of Christ when we are tempted to remain silent.

Salvation:

I believe there is no more joyful news that can be heard or proclaimed in the universe than this: Jesus Christ came to save sinners. By repenting of sin and trusting solely in Christ alone, believers are united to Christ and receive the imputed righteousness of Christ through the Holy Spirit. In being justified by grace alone through faith alone, believers are forgiven of their sins and adopted into the family of God.

By Word and Spirit, the children of God progressively (albeit imperfectly) grow up into the image of Christ. Salvation is not by works. Yet the faith that saves is never alone, being accompanied by the obedience of a transformed life which expresses itself through love (Gal. 5:6). Freed from the *power* of sin, believers are called to put off the *presence* of indwelling sin, walking in the "good works which God prepared beforehand" for His children (Eph. 2:10).

Church:

I believe the church lives by its unique mission to preach the Gospel to all the world. The church is the herald of Jesus Christ, proclaiming through word and deed the Good News of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins. The missional nature of the church is rooted in the *missio dei*, our missionary God from whose heart mission springs.

The church consists of redeemed people from every tribe and language and people and nation (Rev. 5:9). Christ is the Head of the church—*all ministry is Christ's ministry* which means that no one in the church stakes a greater claim upon God's glory than Christ Himself. The church is called to follow Christ into the dark places of our world: into broken relationships by bringing reconciliation, into marginalized communities by practicing justice and compassion, and into forgotten peoples by speaking the truth of the Gospel.

Conclusion:

In our life together and shared ministry in the church, I seek to be a Christ-centered, gospel-driven, and relationally-authentic follower of Jesus Christ. I exist to *be* a disciple and *make* disciples of Jesus Christ through preaching, teaching, and living the Word of God.