

Héctor Herrera: Statement of Faith

Deum et animam scire cupio. Nihilne plus? Nihil omnino.
—St. Augustine, *Siloquia* (I, 2.7)¹

I believe in one Triune God whom I worship and serve. God eternally exists, in and outside of spacetime, in the three persons of the Holy Trinity: the First Person (the Father, Mother, Creator), the Second Person (the Son, Jesus Christ), and the Third Person (the Holy Spirit). I believe that God created all creation. God knows, loves, and cares for us as a parent. God is free, gracious, and desires a relationship with all. God invites us into a relationship by sending Jesus to establish the possibility for one. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, fully God and fully human. It is through Jesus that I am forgiven of my sins. Through His bodily resurrection from the dead, there is a hope of victory over death for all. I believe that the Holy Spirit is the consoler and empowers and nurtures us through God's Word (spoken and proclaimed) and constantly reminding us to live holy and joyful lives. The Spirit also makes God known to us and enables us to have a relationship with God throughout our entire lives.

I believe all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Although we are sinners, we are submerged in God's grace and are made new creations in Christ. I believe the Bible is a set of Holy Scriptures that is inspired by the Word of God. It is God's revelation of the truth, and I believe it to be authoritative and applicable in matters of faith and practice. I believe that nothing in life or death can separate us from the love of God that is through Jesus Christ our Lord. I believe that what God created is good and that humans ought to maintain God's creation and be good to all creation. Creation includes our neighbors, enemies, animals, the earthly environment, and all other cosmic creations.

I believe that the Church is a covenant community of grace composed of imperfect individuals whom God claims—scattered and gathered to worship God and going out into the world to reflect God's grace upon all. I affirm two sacraments: baptism and communion. Instituted by Christ, the sacraments are an outward sign of an inward grace given by God. All who are baptized receive the Spirit. The waters of baptism represent God's merciful covenant with the whole Church for both infants and adults. Communion is a meal of grace of embodied in the bread and wine that is contextual to the congregation. In the Lord's supper we are sustained by God and remember the birth, life death and resurrection of Jesus. These two sacraments make explicit and proclaim, through our practices, God's presence with the Church and God's commitment to creation.

I believe that I have experienced God's and the Church's *love* in both the lamentations and joys of my life:

Growing up in varying Christian denominations and cultural contexts, I witnessed the diversity of God's community.

Weeping and praying with my family when my mother died during my youth and when we lost an unborn child, I experienced the embrace of the Church and their faithful compassion.

Falling in love with and marrying my wife, I felt the most tangible love journey that faintly approximates God's enduring love for us.

Hearing my children cry as they were born, I embodied the unconditional sacrificial love that befalls a parent to their child, akin to God's covenant to us.

¹ Augustine: "I want to know God and the soul" Reason: "Nothing more?" Augustine: "Nothing at all."