

Raymond Scott Herr**Statement of Faith**

I believe that the heavens and earth were created to be the object of God's affection and love, and that although things have gone terribly wrong at times in human history, God has revealed in the birth, life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ a Love that will prevail until the end of the age when Christ will make all things new! Jesus Christ, friend of sinners, Savior of all, is someone who has fascinated me since I was a child. Listening to Widor's Toccata at First Presbyterian Church in Lancaster, PA, where I was baptized, caught me up in the wonder of the One we praise as King of Kings, Lord of Lords. I am still awed and amazed in worship when the Holy Spirit stirs the congregation and with nothing but our voices we sing hymns, songs and spiritual songs... I still am moved by the Toccata but also am transported with contemporary forms of worship and praise. At the heart of worship is God's gracious call to the ministry of reconciliation. The Messiah is both Master and Friend, Lover of our souls and hope for the world who comes along side to encourage, guide and sustain us in proclaiming the gospel in season and out of season. God calls us to be peacemakers between nations, races, genders, classes, and any other human relationship broken by sin or injustice. Jesus helps us to know that even in our wretchedness, there is no longer condemnation for anyone who is in Christ. In Christ, we are set free to live a new life with meaning and purpose, connected with the communion of saints around the world and throughout the ages who God has graciously called forth to be salt and light in the world. The Church, for better or for worse, is my family, and God's instrument of choice to transform the world and bear witness in word and deed to the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. We are called to be a signpost to the Kingdom of God. In the church as we allow the gospel in Word and Sacrament to form and reform us more into the likeness of Christ, as saints and sinners alike we are transformed and learn to love one another and reveal God's great love for the whole world. I believe that if your interpretation of the Bible does not lead you to a greater love for God and neighbor, it's probably wrong. "Welcome one another as God has welcomed you in Jesus Christ..." is a verse we need to practice always, as well as welcoming the stranger, for it is when the stranger is in our midst, Christ is also there. The Church is the context for God's people to practice doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God so that we are better equipped to turn the world upside down with grace, truth, love and compassion. Life is short, but even in a moment we can experience the joyful dance of eternity in relationship to God through Jesus Christ, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May that day come when we will see heaven kiss earth and we will experience the fullness of God's redeeming love face to face... *Come, Lord Jesus, come!*