

# Commentary on Campus Crusade for Christ's *Statement of Faith*

By Rev. David Thatcher, Orthodox Priest

The sole basis of our beliefs is the Bible, God's infallible written Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that it was uniquely, verbally and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit and that it was written without error (inerrant) in the original manuscripts. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters on which it speaks.

We accept those areas of doctrinal teaching on which, historically, there has been general agreement among all true Christians. Because of the specialized calling of our movement, we desire to allow for freedom of conviction on other doctrinal matters, provided that any interpretation is based upon the Bible alone, and that no such interpretation shall become an issue which hinders the ministry to which God has called us.

1. There is one true God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality.
2. Jesus Christ is God, the living Word, who became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. Hence, He is perfect Deity and true humanity united in one person forever.
3. He lived a sinless life and voluntarily atoned for the sins of men by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone.
4. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died.
5. He ascended bodily into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, the only mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own.
6. Man was originally created in the image of God. He sinned by disobeying God; thus, he was alienated from his Creator. That historic fall brought all mankind under divine condemnation.
7. Man's nature is corrupted, and he is thus totally unable to please God. Every man is in need of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
8. The salvation of man is wholly a work of God's free grace and is not the work, in whole or in part, of human works or goodness or religious ceremony. God imputes His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justified them in His sight.

**Comment:** This is the Reformation doctrine of "sola Scriptura" -- that the Bible alone is the basis for true Christian belief. The problem is that the Bible, especially the New Testament, originated from -- and was preceded by -- the Church. The "place" of authority for the Christian is Church tradition, of which the Scriptures are -- of course! -- core and absolutely crucial. But they do not exist apart from the Church community.

**Comment:** The Bible of the historic Christian Churches (Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, etc.) included the so-called Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament. Even the original Authorized Version of the Bible (the KJV) included them.

**Comment:** Agreed -- but many Evangelical Protestants veer away from this and into historic errors like Nestorianism or monothelism.

**Comment:** This understanding of the Atonement is (1) late, (2) Western (beginning with Anselm of Canterbury), and at best incomplete. At worst, it is based on feudalistic ideas about God's "honor" that are, in short, blasphemous.

**Comment:** Yes, but this very Western interpretation of the Fall is lop-sided; the fundamental result of the Fall was corruption of the image of God in man, the passions, and death. Romans 5:12, properly translated & understood, provides the key. Augustine got it wrong.

**Comment:** I can agree with this if we are referring to the "salvation" established by Jesus Christ's incarnation and redemptive death & life. I cannot agree with it if (as most Protestants believe) it means that men are not required to respond to God's grace with "the obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5). Mere "belief" without the obedience of discipleship does not save, but is the faith of demons (James 2:17-26).

**Comment:** This idea of a "foreign righteousness" added to a human being's "account" by God is not historic Christianity, and I believe cannot be found in the Bible.

**Comment:** "Justification" is not being "declared righteous" in spite of our sinfulness, but rather because we are full members of the Christian community (as opposed to clinging to the Torah or our own philosophies). See N. T. Wright.

9. It is the privilege of all who are born again of the Spirit to be assured of their salvation from the very moment in which they trust Christ as their Savior. This assurance is not based upon any kind of human merit, but is produced by the witness of the Holy Spirit, who confirms in the believer the testimony of God in His written word.
10. The Holy Spirit has come into the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to men. He convicts and draws sinners to Christ, imparts new life to them, continually indwells them from the moment of spiritual birth and seals them until the day of redemption. His fullness, power and control are appropriated in the believer's life by faith.
11. Every believer is called to live so in the power of the indwelling Spirit that he will not fulfill the lust of the flesh but will bear fruit to the glory of God.
12. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, His Body, which is composed of all men, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith.
13. God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures and for mutual encouragement.
14. At physical death the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting glory and blessing.
15. At physical death the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting judgment and condemnation.
16. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth - personally, visibly and bodily - to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.
17. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to disciple men of every nation. The fulfillment of that Great Commission requires that all worldly and personal ambitions be subordinated to a total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us."

**Comment:** Historic Christianity never taught "eternal security" of a believer based upon being born again or some other experience (i.e. Baptism). This is a dangerous and misleading teaching. We have confidence in Christ, but no guarantee until course of our life is complete and faithful (Philippians 3:12f).

**Comment:** In historic Christianity, "saving faith" does not exist apart from "incorporation" into the Church, the Body of Christ, through the Sacrament of Baptism (1 Cor. 12:12; Gal. 3:26-27) and the Holy Eucharist (Communion). The Church is not an "invisible" association of believers, but a concrete, historical faith-community established on Pentecost and spread by the Apostles and their successors. Denominations are splinters from this "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church" (Nicene Creed).

**Comment:** This is a simplistic "cookie-cutter" approach to Christian life after death, which is something more of a mystery and a process than this statement allows, according to historic Christianity.

**Comment:** Yes! Excellent statement.