

## Edward W. Jillson Statement of Faith

My beliefs are very much in line with our historic Presbyterian Confessions and traditional Christianity. I believe that the core message of the Bible is that God, in great love, created a beautiful world for people to inhabit and in which to enjoy intimate fellowship with God and one another. Because of human distrust of God and chosen rebellion against God's commands, all people live in degrees of isolation and estrangement from one another and especially from God. We have not the power within ourselves to repair this broken situation.

The good news of the Bible, however, is that God has taken the excruciatingly painful, but necessary steps to reconcile people to himself and to one another. God accomplished this by sending his only son, Jesus, to teach the truth, show us the way of faith back to God, and to die on the Cross a sinner's death to pay the price for our sins. Death and sin could not hold him captive; Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and now rules in glory, giving eternal life to all who believe in him. I look forward to the day when Jesus shall return to bring an end to the sufferings of this world and set all things right, and take all of God's people, the true Church, to share eternity with him. This promise and hope energizes me in the daily routine and challenges of life.

Jesus promised his followers that he would not leave them alone to their own devices, but would send the Holy Spirit (third person of the Trinity) to teach, guide, bring understanding of spiritual things and empower for service. I know the Spirit is with and within me and seeks to guide me in the things of Christ. My problem is that I am slow of heart and mind, and often do not discern the Holy Spirit's leading. The Spirit of God is persistent and eventually prevails in my life.

I accept the Bible as God's inspired Word to me. It has the effect in my life of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training me in the ways that please God (II Timothy 3:16). Through the words of Scripture the Holy Spirit talks to me on a day-by-day basis if I have the ears to hear. As such, the Bible is my rule for faith and practice.

Corporate worship is essential to my spiritual life and is meant to be so for all Christians. In worship we are re-grounded, reoriented, and refreshed in our relationship with God. As we offer our praises and thanks, receive forgiveness, attend to God's words in Scripture and sermon, and celebrate the sacraments; we are nourished in the inner person and give God pleasure. As we complete our worship through ongoing witness and service to others, we fulfill our calling as God's ambassadors of grace.

On a more personal level, I find that faith in the goodness and presence of God is the Core of my life. Through the lens of faith I interpret all of life, gauge my values, set my agenda, and find meaning. I experience God as the lover of my soul, my companion, guide, helper, energizer, comforter, and at times the one who gives me a kick in the pants and stern correction. As I ponder Scripture and commune with the Lord in Prayer, I find my joy and hope renewed, my confidence boosted, and my ability to love and forgive revived. My relationship with God includes much mystery, sometimes frustration and disappointment, but always life-giving holiness and hope that keep me hungry for more of God. Often God is most real to me in the people closest to me, in special moments listening to music, or pondering the varied beauty of the world.

