

Faith Statement, The Reverend Michael J. Magee, MD

The truth of God, our creator and lover

I trust in God the creator of all that exists, that God declared all of creation good, that God forgives, and that God saves. Because it is God who saves, we do not need the law for our salvation. In the mission field of Guatemala, and in our own backyard, we do not focus on making people believe, as if belief is the new law. We do not save souls: it is God who saves. Instead of focusing on saving souls, we focus on embodying Christ's ministries toward others. No matter how we answer God's call to ministry and mission, God forgives, and we all have a place at God's table.

I believe that before we were conceived, God our creator loved us. God would have loved us no matter what country or faith tradition our families' heritage. "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is God not also the God of the gentiles? Yes, of the gentiles also" (Ro 3:29). Since the world from Paul's point of view is composed only of Jews and gentiles, I believe he writes of God's radically inclusive sovereignty. "God desires all to be saved" (1 Ti 2:4). This scripture confirms God's radically inclusive love. ***God's sovereignty*** is sovereign love. ***The authority and truth of scripture*** is this: "God is love."

The way of Christ, our redeemer into wholeness and peace

I trust in Jesus. God has always loved us, but we ignore and reject God's love until our reconciliation and ***atonement*** through Jesus' incarnation, teachings, ministry, and painful death under the authorities, and the resurrection of Jesus by God. We are born within our culturally and biologically erected walls of judgmentalism, competition, self-promotion, survival of the fittest, and violence. We are born within the separating walls of dualism. Living within these walls keeps us from the wholeness we could

experience living in full community with God. Our own inability to break down the walls which divide us results from our idolatrous confidence in humankind and its princes rather than trust in God (Ps 118:8-9). We need a savior. Jesus' "foolish" **way** of redeeming humanity is wiser than the apparently stronger forces of systemic evil. By the cross and resurrection, Jesus bridges the gap between humanity and God by both breaking down our culturally and biologically erected walls and by showing us a new reality, releasing us so we can once again experience God's love.

I believe God chooses all of humanity for wholeness – what the Hebrew Bible calls shalom – what the Good News calls peace. We all have an unearned place at God's table. God foreknows all, justifies all, and calls all (Ro 8:29-30). But I believe not all respond to God's call. I believe our God-given free will can interfere with God's plan. Otherwise it would not be free will. Despite our irrevocable place at God's table, I believe the full flowering of God's plan for our wholeness requires a response from us as free moral agents. By responding to God's call, we water the seed of wholeness God implanted within each of us. I believe that though all are chosen and called, the flower of wholeness does not come into full bloom until we embody **the way** of Christ's ministries and the Great Ends of the Church. All are entitled to sit at God's table, but the meal is more satisfying when we answer the call to embody and continue Christ's ministries. And I believe regardless how we respond to God's call to service, Christ's **judgment** is always mercy.

*The life of God's Holy Spirit, our comforter and encourager into
fellowship*

I trust in God's Holy Spirit; who sighs with us in prayer too deep for words (Ro 8:26), and encourages the flourishing of all of creation into the *life* abundant; who comforts us in anxiety, loneliness, and despair, and encourages us in times of discernment and sin.

I believe that as the *Word* is proclaimed and heard, and as the *Sacraments* are administered, we *receive and understand Jesus* with all our senses, and God's Spirit transforms the assembled into the body of Christ.