

**The Session of the Cranberry Community United Presbyterian Church of Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, meeting this second day of July, 2001 hereby approves this *Statement of Affirmation*:**

“In every age, the church has expressed its witness in words and deeds as the need of the time required. The earliest examples of confession are found within the Scriptures. Confessional statements have taken such varied forms as hymns, liturgical formulas, doctrinal definitions, catechisms, theological systems in summary, and declarations of purpose against threatening evil.”<sup>i</sup>[i] The confessions of our church express the essential tenets of the Reformed faith and are “authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do.”<sup>ii</sup>[ii]

This *Statement of Affirmation* is not an attempt to speak to all the traditional topics of theology. Rather, in the face of continuing theological and moral confusion in our generation, and in accordance with the historic confessions of the church and the witness of Scripture, we affirm the following as of first importance as we seek to be the church and to be faithful to Jesus Christ:

1. “We confess the following evangelical truths: ... Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and death.”<sup>iii</sup>[iii] This Jesus Christ, “the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity ... is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and [humanity].”<sup>iv</sup>[iv] “The risen Christ is the savior for all,”<sup>v</sup>[v] “the Only Savior of the World,”<sup>vi</sup>[vi] and “we quite openly profess and preach that Jesus Christ is the sole Redeemer and Savior of the world.”<sup>vii</sup>[vii] God has acted “with justice and mercy to redeem creation”<sup>viii</sup>[viii] and “we confess and avow that there remains no other sacrifice for sin”<sup>ix</sup>[ix] than that of Jesus Christ. He is called Savior “because He saves us from our sins, and because salvation is not to be sought or found in anyone else.”<sup>x</sup>[x] “Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all His benefits.”<sup>xi</sup>[xi] “To receive life from the risen Lord is to have life eternal; to refuse life from him is to choose the death which is separation from God.”<sup>xii</sup>[xii] It is our calling in the Church “to tell the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord.”<sup>xiii</sup>[xiii]
2. “We believe and confess the canonical Scriptures ... of both Testaments to be the true Word of God”<sup>xiv</sup>[xiv] and “by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal.”<sup>xv</sup>[xv] “We believe and confess the Scriptures of God sufficient to instruct and make perfect the [people] of God”<sup>xvi</sup>[xvi] and to be that from which “are to be derived true wisdom, godliness, the reformation and government of churches ... instruction in all duties of piety ... the confirmation of doctrines, and the rejection of all errors.”<sup>xvii</sup>[xvii] The “Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written”<sup>xviii</sup>[xviii] is “not a witness among others, but the witness without parallel.”<sup>xix</sup>[xix] “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, [our] salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or [human] traditions.”<sup>xx</sup>[xx] “The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures ... is the only rule [given to us by God] to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.”<sup>xxi</sup>[xxi] All our words and actions should be examined to “see whether they agree with Holy Scripture and with the Confessions of the Fathers”<sup>xxii</sup>[xxii] for we are to live our lives “in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture,”<sup>xxiii</sup>[xxiii] “taking our stand upon Scripture”<sup>xxiv</sup>[xxiv] for the Scripture is “given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life”<sup>xxv</sup>[xxv] and for “the framing of a life acceptable to God.”<sup>xxvi</sup>[xxvi]
3. We believe and affirm that “the relationship between man and woman exemplifies in a basic way God’s ordering of the interpersonal life for which he created mankind. Anarchy in sexual relationships is a symptom of [humanity’s] alienation from God, his neighbor, and himself.

[Humanity's] perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day ... The church, as the household of God, is called to lead [God's people] out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ"xxvii[xxvii] and to call them to live life according to the Word of God including "the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior."xxviii[xxviii] "Marriage ... was instituted by the Lord God"xxix[xxix] and "is to be between one man and one woman."xxx[xxx] The Scripture clearly states that sexual intimacy outside of the marriage relationship is wrongxxxi[xxxi] and that "the church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by [humanity] when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together."xxxii[xxxii] Called to speak the truth in love, the church must always also be mindful that it must show "the compassion of Christ to those caught in the moral confusion of our time." xxxiii[xxxiii]

In addition we call upon all Presbyterians to prayerfully affirm their commitment to the Scriptural and historic confessional standards of our church and to declare their conviction not to ordain or install any person to a leadership position in the church who can not or will not personally affirm these standards that we might bring honor and glory to the name of Jesus Christ through his church.

(Abbreviations below refer to Documents in the *Book of Confessions and the Book of Order* and are abbreviated as follows: NC, Nicene Creed; SC, Scots Confession; HC, Heidelberg Catechism; SHC, Second Helvetic Confession; WCF, Westminster Confession of Faith; WSC, Westminster Shorter Catechism; TDB, Theological Declaration of Barmen; C67, Confession of 1967; BSF, A Brief Statement of Faith; G, Form of Government.)

- [i] (C-67 9.02)
- [ii] (G-14.0801e3)
- [iii] (TDB 8.09, 8.11)
- [iv] (WCF 6.044)
- [v] (C67 9.10)
- [vi] (SHC 5.077)
- [vii] (SHC 5.077)
- [viii] (BSF 10.3)
- [ix] (SC 3.09)
- [x] (HC 4.029)
- [xi] (HC 4.020)
- [xii] (C67 9.11)
- [xiii] (G-3.0300a).
- [xiv] (SHC 5.001)
- [xv] (G-14.0207b)
- [xvi] (SC 3:19)
- [xvii] (SHC 5.003)
- [xviii] (WCF 6.002)
- [xix] (C67 9.27)
- [xx] (WCF 6.006)
- [xxi] (WSC 7.002)
- [xxii] (TDB 8.04)
- [xxiii] (G-140207d)
- [xxiv] (TDB 8.04)
- [xxv] (WCF 6.002)
- [xxvi] (SHC 5.002)
- [xxvii] (C67 9.47)
- [xxviii] (WSC 7.071)
- [xxix] (SHC 5.246)
- [xxx] (WCF 6.123)

[xxxix] (HC 4.087, SHC 5.027, WSC 7.070)

[xxxix] C67 9.47)

[xxxix] (C67 9.47)

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