



The SCC Standard

A monthly journal covering the Shuswap Community Church Statement of Faith as found on our website.



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Each month here on The SCC Standard we are going to be looking at the individual statements found in the Shuswap Community Church Statement of Faith. This statement as a whole can be found on our website at aplacetobelong.ca and either downloaded, read or printed from there. Each month an assortment of pastors, elders, staff and lay people will share their answer to the simple question, “Why does this matter to me?”. We hope that this will be a helpful and learning experience as we all look a little closer and dig a little deeper into our commonly held theological belief standards.

This month we are looking at the third statement which reads as follows:

III. OF THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He is truly and eternally God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; that for our redemption He took upon himself the nature of unfallen man; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a unique and miraculous manner, and was born of Mary, a virgin; that in the one Person of Christ there are two natures, the Divine and the human, each distinct, and indissolubly united; that being tempted in the flesh He lived a sinless life; that He

was crucified under Pontius Pilate; that the third day He arose bodily from the tomb and manifested Himself for forty days to His disciples; that in His glorified body He ascended to the Father; that as High Priest He ever lives to make intercession for His own; that according to His promise He will come again in person, visibly, with power and great glory.



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My first theology professor in seminary began his very first lecture with a statement that went something like this: Christianity is largely a rational religion; much of its doctrine being understandable and sensible, but there are three great mysteries that we must accept in faith even while admitting we can never understand them:

First, how can our salvation both wholly depend on God choosing us and yet it is our responsibility to choose Him?

Second, how can one being – that is Jesus – be both 100% human and a 100% God at the same time?

Third, how can three persons make up one God?

To attempt to explain or make sense of any of these, perhaps especially the trinity, is to invite misunderstanding and mistakes. Is their one God? Yes. Are there three persons of the Godhead, being “the same in substance, equal in power and glory?” Yes. Enough said.

What we can speak of a bit more safely however are the functions of the Godhead. Perhaps an overly simplistic – but a good place to start – description of the functions of the Godhead is this:

- The Father is the author and creator of our salvation (cf. e.g.: Genesis 3:15).
- The Son works out our salvation through His teachings, life, death, burial, and resurrection (cf. e.g.: Ephesians 2:1-10).
- The Spirit convicts us of our sin, thus convincing us of our need for salvation (cf.: Jn. 16:4-11). He is also the seal, guarantee, and reminder of our salvation (cf. e.g.: Ephesians 1:13-14; Jn. 16:12-15).

For the purposes of this article, I want to concentrate on the function of the Son as being the person of the Godhead who works out our salvation. First, though, we must at least mention the voluntary submission of the Son and the Spirit to the Father necessary for the persons of the trinity to carry out their various functions of our salvation in unity and coherence. This submission in no way implies that the Son is somehow less than or below the Father or that the Spirit is beneath the Father or Son. An essential element of the doctrine of the Trinity is that the

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three persons “are completely and fully God... [being] completely equal in attributes, each with the same divine nature.” But the Son cannot effectively work out a plan that the Father has authored and created unless He voluntarily submits Himself to the Father. The Son submits Himself to the Father perfectly, even to the point of dying a brutal, humiliating, and painful death for our sake at the Father’s bequest. In other words, in no way is Christ’s identity or even His authority as God compromised or redefined by His voluntary submission to the Father.

I mentioned earlier that the Son works out our salvation in at least five ways:

His teachings: Scripture never wastes words. All that is said in the whole of scripture about the Son and by the Son teaches us what He has done for His glory, our sake, and what we are called to do in response.

His life: Christ lived a perfect life, that He might be able to bear the injustices of we who are unjust.

His death: Justice requires that injustice be dealt with; that it not be ignored. A penalty must be paid. By Christ’s death, He paid the penalty not for His own injustice, as He was perfect. He paid the penalty for our injustice.

His burial: Scripture tells us that He was in the tomb for three days. This is important because ancient Near Eastern cultures contemporary to Christ’s crucifixion believed that the human spirit didn’t leave the body until the third day after death. By remaining in the tomb for three days, New Testament Jews would have understood Him to be fully dead; His resurrection wholly miraculous. Anything less and they may have just believed they were mistaken about His death when they placed Him in the tomb. Christ took our sin with Him to the tomb and it is here, in the tomb, that our sin remained after Christ rose again and left the tomb.

His resurrection: The resurrection is what renders all other aspects of Christ’s salvific work – His teachings, life, death, and burial – effective and efficient. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:17-20: “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” In other words, our salvation wholly depends that Christ was fully dead, and miraculously raised from the dead. If this is not true, His death was pointless. Our faith is futile. Our salvation is not a reality. And to bring us back to the subject of the trinity, remember that it is because of His divinity; His position as the second person of the trinity, that Christ was able to rise again.

There is an eternal existence and distinction that is crucial to understand when thinking about the Trinity and God's threeness.



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This is in no way meant to be an exhaustive statement on how the Son works out the Father's plan for our salvation. Rather, it is a brief survey intended to emphasize the fact that our works – or lack thereof – are wholly insufficient to save us; we cannot save ourselves. More than that, it is a survey intended to celebrate that Christ's works are wholly sufficient to save us. We are all sinners in need of a saviour, and Christ – and only Christ – perfectly fulfills that need. This was the Father's plan all along. We are convinced of its truth and necessity as well as continually reminded of it by the Spirit. It is indeed true that, "our only hope in life and death... [is] that we are not our own but belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to God and to our Savio[u]r Jesus Christ."

- Richard Magill

Oftentimes before bed I will ask my daughter some catechism questions. I ask and she responds:

- Are there more gods than one? There is only one God. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Jeremiah 10:10; Mark 12:29; Acts 17:22-31)
- In how many persons does this one God exist? In three persons. (Matthew 3:16, 17; John 5:23; 10:30; 14:9, 10; 15:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:20, 2 John 9; Revelation 1:4, 5)
- Who are they? The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20, 21)

These are foundational truths for our faith and they are truths that even a 5 year old can recite, although it will take a lifetime for her to unpack and understand them. Our statement of faith affirms these truths, helps us to flesh them out and "because the triune God has revealed himself, we can understand the Trinity."²

Looking at the Bible, there is little debate that there is one God and that the Father is clearly God but there has been more dispute over the deity of Jesus throughout history, "yet Scripture also identifies him as God."³ Our statement of faith says, "We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He is truly and eternally God equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit." It says that He redeems us as being both divine and human yet without sin. It says that He lived a sinless life, was crucified, buried, and rose again and concludes that, "in His glorified body He ascended to the Father; that as High Priest He ever lives to make intercession for His own; that according to His promise He will come again in person, visibly, with power and great glory."

Where does all this come from? The Scriptures!

One of the most potent examples of Jesus' deity is seen in the opening words of John's gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1) and verse 14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"(John 1:14). Here the son is clearly called God. "The fact that the 'Word' (who is seen to be Christ in vv. 9-18) is

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‘with’ God shows distinction from God the Father.”⁴ Jesus is stated as distinct from the Father and yet, He “was God.” It is also vital to note that the Son did not become God, but He was God from the very beginning. There is an eternal existence and distinction that is crucial to understand when thinking about the Trinity and God’s threeness. In John 17:24 in particular Jesus says, “Father, I

desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” “Before he ever created, before he ever ruled the world, before anything else, this God was a Father loving His Son.”⁵ The Son has always been the Son and the Father has always been the Father.

Theologian John Frame states, “there are about ten passages in which the New Testament directly identifies Jesus as God.”⁶ These passages would be John 1 which has already been mentioned and John 20:28, Acts 20:28, Romans 9:5, 1 Timothy 3:15-16, 2 Thessalonians 1:12; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1, Hebrews 1:8, 1 John 5:20, Philippians 2:6, and Colossians 2:9. These passages clearly state Jesus as “God”, but there are other titles that Jesus carries that point to His deity that we won’t list here.⁷

At the end of the day as with all theological truth, the point is that the more we know and see about God and who He is, the more that should cause us to worship. “Scripture does not shrink back from the remarkable conclusion that we should worship Jesus as God.”⁸ Jesus is to be worshiped! We know from the monotheism seen in the Bible from beginning to end that God alone is to be worshiped. In John 20 specifically we see the resurrected Jesus appear to his disciple Thomas. Thomas had not been with the group of disciples earlier when Jesus had appeared to them and he could not believe them. He wanted to see Jesus with his own eyes. When Jesus appeared and spoke to Thomas he cried, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). “The narrative shows that both John in writing his gospel and Jesus himself approve of what Thomas has said and encourage everyone who hears about Thomas to believe the same things that Thomas did.”⁹ Thomas knew what he was saying and it is very informative for the reader as to what is happening here. John himself writes a few verses later, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). “In other words, the entire gospel is written to persuade people to imitate Thomas, who sincerely called Jesus ‘My Lord and my God.’”¹⁰ Jesus is God and is to be worshiped as God!

1 Ascol, Truth & Grace Memory Book 1, 24.

2 Reeves, Delighting In The Trinity, 12.

3 Erickson, Christian Theology, 295.

4 Grudem, Systematic Theology, 231.

5 Reeves, Delighting In The Trinity, 21. 6 Frame, The Doctrine of God, 663.

7 Ibid, 671.

8 Ibid, 679.

9 Grudem, Systematic Theology, 235. 10 Ibid.

- Kevin Hardy



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He was, and
is, and will
continue to
be exactly
who he said
he was –
Lord, the
Son of the
living God.

I have one question for you. Who was the man, Jesus of Nazareth? Who was he?" Often we answer this question like this, "Well, he's a good man, good person, good teacher."

You can't just say, "Jesus is works for you, but not for me." No he's not. He is either right or he is wrong. And there's no way you can get around the issue. And that's what C.S. Lewis was said, and that's what I found when I heard the options with regard to the man Jesus of Nazareth.

One – he is a liar. If He said he was the Son of God and he purposefully, intentionally, misled people to think he was the Son of God, or in a more exact way to put it, God the Son, God in the flesh, the God man. Now if he said that, and he did not believe it, and he was planning some sort of deception or trickery, he was a liar. And there's no way around it.

The other option is this: he's a lunatic. Any person who really believes they are God and they're not, they're a lunatic. If you saw someone screaming out, "I'm the way, the truth, and the life," what are you going to think about them? You would think they are a lunatic.

There's one other option. He was, is, and will always be who he said he was – Lord, the Son of the living God.

You have three options. Call him a bald-faced liar. Call him a lunatic. Or third, bow your knee to Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the world. Those are your three options. You that you only have three options. Liar, lunatic, or Lord.

The big issue of Christianity is not that Jesus is a saviour or Jesus is a lord or Jesus is a prophet. The issue of Christianity is that he is the Lord, the Saviour, the Prophet. And anyone who contradicts Him is wrong. That is the issue of Christianity. When you try to work your way around it to make your faith easier and friendly, so that people like you more, you've denied Jesus Christ. He is not a saviour. He's the Saviour. He did not say, "I am a way, a truth, and a life." He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

There are people here today in our world who would say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Messiah. But when they die and stand before God, to be judged, and will not gain entry into heaven but be condemned for eternity and separation from God. Even though with their mouth they have said, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world." Because they really didn't believe it. It was just something they were taught. They became convinced in their mind but they never truly did believe. Their life was never impacted and their religion was never internalized. There is no real love for Christ, and their lives are not changed by him. He is not important to their lives. Jesus is just part of a religion they have adopted or inherited, but there's no transformation.

And all the
 religion, all
 the church
 going,
 everything
 else you mind
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 you one bit.
 You're
 condemned.

On that tree,
 the Father
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 presence
 from his Son
 as he should
 from us, and
 then his
 Father
 crushed his
 Son.

If God is good, he can't forgive you. Because God is righteous and holy, he can't just forgive you without consequences. This is one of the greatest problem in all of the Bible. If God is just, how can he simply turn his back to your sin, how can he cover your sin, how can he cast your sin away from you as far as the east is from the west?

God is righteous and he is holy, and guess what? Because he is love, he hates. He hates evil. He can't just ignore evil and he can't just turn his back on your evil, my evil, or anyone else's evil. God is a righteous judge. So the question is: how can God be just and yet simply forgive wicked men?

How can he do it? The answer is in Jesus Christ. This is what so many do not understand about the cross. God in his righteousness condemns man; every man, everyone since Adam, condemned in our sin. All the religion, all the church going, anything else you might want to add to it is not going to help you at all. You're condemned. For entry to heaven you must be perfect; perfect in righteousness, and no one has that.

God in his righteousness condemns you, me, and all of humanity. And then God in his love becomes a man and he lives the life you could not live, the life I could not live. While he avoiding all sin, he is also living a life of perfect righteousness! Not only avoiding doing the things he shouldn't do, but also always doing the things that he should do. A perfect righteous life. Then Jesus the Son of God, he goes to the cross. And on Calvary, he dies.

We are saved from our sins when Jesus was on the tree, all of your sin was imputed to Jesus, and then God the Father in heaven turned from his only Son. Not that he lacked the moral strength to see him suffer, rather he turned away from Jesus because his only Son became sin. The separation from God that you and I should experience for all of eternity, the Son of God experienced on that tree. The Father removed his presence from his Son as he should from us, and then the Father crushed his Son. That's what was in the cup. The wrath of Almighty God for every sin we have ever committed. He drank it and cried out, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) the cup was empty, not one drop came out. He drank it all. Paid in full. And then he died. On the third day, he was raised. By his own power, by the Spirit's power, and by the power of the Father he was raised.

There are two doctrines in the Bible everything needs to understand. The first is justification. What is justification? The person who believes in Jesus Christ is justified before God. God looks at that person as right with him, not on the basis of their efforts, but on what Christ did for them. God proclaims them righteous. That's the believer's standing. Then there's the doctrine of regeneration. If you've read the Bible, you've found it in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things pass away, behold all things are new." What does that mean? It means those who believe in Jesus Christ have been born again, or, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They've been made alive.

As we enter into this salvation the power of God to transform a life is on display. As a result we begin to walk in newness of life. Our standing before God is never about what we do. It's only based on Calvary and the cross. Christ alone.

God shows us his Son, and as a result he puts a new desire in you to follow him and to honour him. That gets us to the idea of ontology. It is this: I have a nature and a will, and they lead us to the way we live our lives, or the things I do. If I embrace evil, my heart and will is for evil. Things of this world if draw my attention: the immoralities, the sensualities, the money, everything that's found in this world, if my heart loves them, then they will influence my will, and my actions. I'm driven by my desire and my desire is driven by a love of that which is evil, and I do what is evil. Now, if somehow changing our hearts can happen, then the things I once desired I will now despise and the things I once despised, like righteousness, I will now desire. This transformation will cause our hearts to align with God the Father because of Jesus Christ. My new desires will cause my life to go in a completely opposite way, and when I do sin, it will break my own heart because my heart's been restore to God.

The question is, have you become a new creature, having new desires with a new heart? How do we do this? Acknowledge your sin, acknowledge that all your righteousness is like filthy rags before God. And throw yourself on Christ. That is why this doctrine of Christ matters. Who is, and what we do with that knowledge is everything for the believer.

- Steve McLean

God showed
you, this is his
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you to follow
him and to
please him.
Do you see
that?