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EFCA Statement of Faith - 1. God

The 2008 EFCA Statement of Faith begins by agreement on the basic existence and attributes of God. In this paper I will examine the biblical support of the statements made in Article 1 of the ECFA Statement of Faith. I will look closely at this two sentence statement phrase by phrase, looking at Biblical support for each as reflected in the Statement of Faith with Scripture references from June 26, 2008. After examining the Scriptures to see if these things are so, I will reflect on how these verses and concepts impact me.

The first of the 10 points of this statement encompass the belief in one God from Deu. 6:4 and Mark 12:29. The first reference from Deuteronomy shows God telling His people that He is the One and only God. This is backed up by the first commandment which tells us He alone deserves worship as the one God. In Mark, Jesus is restating this foundational truth of his oneness and exclusivity (Κύριος εἷς ἐστί), but builds upon it with its implications for us – that we are to love Him with all we are and have, as well as to so love others. Believing in one God implies that we do not serve another, and live on His terms (commands, examples, principles from the Bible).

Second is the statement that God is the Creator of all things, therefore building on the first point of the one and only God who alone made everything – creation is not by chance or our doing, but His alone. The first verse in the Bible states clearly that God created both the earth and heavens, which includes both what is visible under our feet as well as the sky with all its stars (the universe), which is also mentioned in Heb. 11:3. Ps. 33:6 reiterates that God created the heavens by His word, and living hosts by His breath (or Spirit). Jn. 1:3 makes the same statement of everything made by God, and Col. 1:15-17 adds more detail to include everything seen and unseen created by God the Son, the Word of God.

Thirdly, we read the statement of God being holy. Exo. 15:11 speaks of the glorious nature of His holiness, which is qodesh, defined by Strong's (H6944) as apartness or sacredness. His holiness is repeated three times in Isa. 6:3 to indicate how important His holiness is, and this holiness in Isa. 57:15 tells us that both He and where He dwells are holy, high above us who should be low in a spirit of broken humility which He then can give life to in our spirit and heart.

The fourth phase of this statement speaks of God's infinite or boundless perfection. Deu. 32:4 affirms this by proclaiming that God's work is perfect, while Psa. 18:30 tells us His way or manner is perfect. God is also the perfection of beauty according to Psalm 50:2, and is infinite from Psa. 90:2. Even His greatness is unsearchable and absolute (cheqer, H2714) as Psa. 145:3 says. Jesus summed it up in Matt. 5:48 by saying that God the Father is perfect (τέλειο, complete and fully developed – there is nothing to add to God, since He is at the pinnacle of perfection by nature).

For the fifth part of this statement, we see God is eternally existing – He has no beginning nor end. Part of this is seen in Psa. 33:11, which states that His plans and counsel are eternal. He exists forever, never comes to an end, and was there at the beginning of time as Psa. 102:25-27 indicate. Even Dan. 4:34-35 reveal that God lives and reigns forever. God as both Son and Father have life in and of themselves –

they are self-sustaining and nobody therefore could have created or borne them – therefore God was always there, without a beginning. He requires nothing from anyone (Acts 17:24-25).

Number six speaks of God's loving unity – the three persons in one with a relationship of absolute love. John 3:35 reveals that the Son is loved so much by the Father that all was given to Him, while 17:11 goes further to point out that the Son and Father are unified. God's Spirit is shown in relation to the Son in Matt. 3:16-17, and also to the Father in 28:19. Salutations such as in 2 Cor. 13:14 demonstrate all three persons together, showing the grace of the Son, the love of God (Father), and communion of the Holy Spirit. 1 Pet. 1:2 adds to this unity by pointing out our election by the Father's foreknowledge, the Spirit's sanctification, and the Son's blood so we can be able to obey and find grace and peace in the totality of God.

God has unbounded knowledge as the seventh point is made. Psa. 139:1-16 points out many areas He knows, and shows the completeness of all God's knowing; each of us was known by God even before we were conceived! This understanding (object of His knowledge, BDB) of God is literally infinite (H4556, mispar – unable to be counted or measured) according to Psa. 147:5. Since God is omniscient, He is able to tell us the end and beginning (Isaiah 46:10), having knowledge without end and unbounded by time. He knows all things as John 21:17 records from Peter's lips to Jesus.

Point 8 covers His sovereign power as Jer. 32:17 sums up – there is absolutely nothing God cannot do. He has the ability and strength to do anything and everything He chooses. He predestines us by His will (Eph. 1:11), works to do His purpose (Rom. 8:28), and is almighty (παντοκράτωρ, omnipotent ruler of the universe). God is the eternal and almighty One as Rev. 1:8 sums up.

The ninth point of this statement shows faith accepts that God had a purpose based on grace alone from before time began (Titus 1:2) to buy us back from sin to reconcile us to Him. Rev. 13:8 reveals that our names are already written in His book. This mystery of God's wise plan (1 Cor. 2:7) was always in existence, but is revealed in Christ, predestined by His purpose (Eph. 1:11; 3:10-11) which purpose and grace was known by God always (2 Tim. 1:9, 1 Pet. 1:20).

Finally, this statement of faith asserts that God will make all things new. Jesus spoke in Matt. 19:28 of the regeneration (G3824, παλιγγενεσία - new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation, Thayer), and Acts 3:21 speaks of the time of restoration or reconstitution of all things. This is for His glory: "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made (ESV)." Rev. 4:11 tells us that He is worthy of the glory in and by His creation. This means that remaking everything as intended in the Creation at Eden will be brought back for His original purpose to bring glory to Himself.

What this means to me is that by faith in God's word I understand who He is, what He has and will do, and can so aim to live to glorify and please Him as I strive to choose His way, resting in the fact of His trustworthy character to make everything new and restore not only myself and other believers, but all of creation to Himself. He has a plan, has revealed much of it, I can trust it because of who He is, what He has done on the cross, and because He lives in me as Spirit I have the ability to understand and put into practice all He tells me in His word.