



CROSSCULTURE

STATEMENT OF FAITH



INTRODUCTION

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity”

This is a phrase written by the German Lutheran theologian Rupertus Meldenius around the year 1627. It has also been adopted by the Churches of Christ denomination and is at the heart of [CrossCulture’s Statement of Faith](#)¹.

Our Statement of Faith was recently revised to make it more concise and simpler to understand. We believe it captures the essentials that unite us as a church family. It is important that we study these essential doctrines together, so that we can be clear on what we believe and why we believe it.

Of course, the Statement of Faith is not an exhaustive list of Christian doctrine. However, we believe that alignment on these particular essentials will further our vision of ‘Knowing Christ, Growing in Christ and Proclaiming Christ’ for the glory of God.

We hope that your Life Groups find these studies not only challenging, but also enriching. We encourage you to test each of these statements with the Scripture and sharpen each other in your thinking around these deep truths.

We trust that as your mind is stretched and humbled by a big God, it will overflow into praise and love for our creator, saviour and redeemer.

¹ Our statement of faith is available online: crossculture.net.au/beliefs

Study 1

GOD'S WORD

From our Statement of Faith:

1. The Bible, as originally written, is the inspired and infallible Word of God.

It is our supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

This statement is number 1 for a reason. It declares the basis for all that we believe – where we go to find truth. It is the foundation for all that follows. Various churches have taken different sources for their authority. Scripture, tradition and experience are common ones, or a combination of them. Our statement is clear – that Scripture stands supreme as the arbiter of truth.

1. What sources do you turn to as authoritative in your life? Think of categories such as news, health, investment, work, career, ethics and morality.

6. In what ways does God's word feature in your decisions and lifestyle choices?

7. How can we help each other in this process in a Life Group and a discipleship?

Study 2

ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS

From our Statement of Faith:

2. God is one and exists eternally in three persons:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

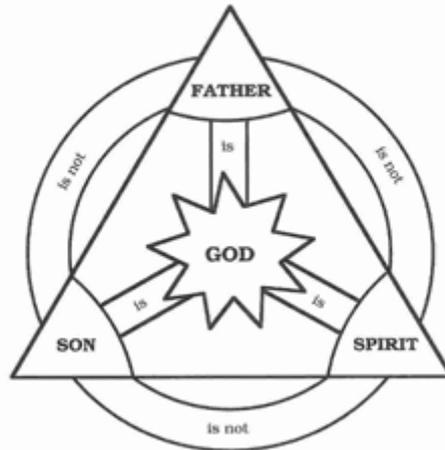
The doctrine of the Trinity asserts that there is one God in three persons. While the word 'trinity' is never used in Scripture and never explicitly explained, it is implicitly present in the Old and New Testaments.

There are three essential elements of the Trinity:

- There is only one God.
- The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct and separate persons.
- Each of these person is fully God.

We believe in one God who is one in essence (John 10:29-30) but three in persons (Matthew 28:18-20). This is not three independent Gods existing as one, but three persons who are co-equal, co-eternal, inseparable, interdependent and eternally united in one absolute divine being.

The Trinity seems like a contradiction – how can we believe in one God, and yet at the same time, three individual persons who are all fully God? No human mind can fully understand or explain the Trinity. It may be hard to make sense of, but it is essential to our creation and salvation. Our understanding of a trinitarian God is what sets Christianity apart from all other religions.



An ancient diagram seeking to illustrate the unity and diversity of the Trinity.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name (Jesus), he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I (Jesus) have said to you.”

John 14:26

The Trinity in Scripture

1. According to these New Testament verses, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each God. Why is this so important?
 - The Father: John 6:27, Romans 1:7 and 1 Peter 1:2

- The Son: John 1:1, Romans 9:5, Colossians 2:9 and 1 John 5:20

- The Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3-4 and 1 Corinthians 3:16

2. From the beginning, there were indications that God was more than one (Genesis 1:1-3, 26; 3:22 and 11:7). How is the Trinity being progressively revealed from the Old Testament to the New Testament?

3. In what ways are the three persons of the Trinity distinct from each other (Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 22:42, John 3:16 and 14:26)?

4. How did Jesus' life and teachings affirm the Trinity and impact his apostles? How should it impact us (Matthew 3:16-17 and 28:18-20; Acts 2:1-4)?

The implications of the Trinity

5. In what ways is the doctrine of the Trinity pivotal to all aspects of our salvation (John 10:28-30, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 4:30 and 1 Peter 1:1-5)?

6. It is impossible for the human mind to fully comprehend how one God can be three distinct persons. How do you understand the Trinity? What does it tell you about God? Revisit the diagram in the introduction.

Application

7. How should human relationships reflect what we see in the Trinity (Genesis 2:21-25, John 17:21-23, Ephesians 4:11-16 and Hebrews 10:24-25)?

8. How would it affect your life as a Christian if any person of the Trinity were less than God?
 - The Father
 - The Son
 - The Holy Spirit

Study 3

GOD THE FATHER

From our Statement of Faith:

3. God the Father initiates creation and redemption.

God our creator – *Genesis 1:1-31*

As people living in this world, we may subconsciously assume that this world has gone on forever! However, there was a time when *nothing* existed. There was a time when God brought forth this world from nothing for his purposes. In this study, we will see what these purposes are and what they tell us about our creator.

1. What do the repeated words and phrases emphasise about God?

2. What do we discover about God's purposes for creation?

God our redeemer – *Ephesians 1:3-14*

As broken people living in a broken world, we may also sometimes assume that our brokenness will last forever! However, there was also a time when God acted to restore his corrupted creation. We will see what his purposes are in redemption and what they tell us about our redeemer.

3. What are the roles of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? How does each person of the Trinity work together in redemption?
4. What do the repeated words and phrases emphasise about God's purposes for redemption?

Putting it together – *2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23*

5. How do God's acts of creation and redemption come together in the person and work of Jesus Christ?

Living it out

6. In light of God's purposes for creation, how should we see his purposes for our lives?

7. What stops us from praising and glorifying God for creating and redeeming us?

Study 4

GOD THE SON

From our Statement of Faith:

4. Jesus Christ, God the Son, is sent by the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human.

(Statement 4 addresses the *person* of Christ, while Statement 9² addresses the *work* of Christ.)

From early on in church history, there have been many challenges around who Jesus is. Some New Testament letters were written to correct heresies about Jesus, including Colossians, John's letters and Jude (specifically verses 3 and 4).

The apostles and early Christians recognised that the person and the work of Jesus was central to the gospel, so they taught clearly and defended Jesus' true nature. We can be thankful that they did not waste a lot of time explaining what the heresies were, but spent their energies clarifying the truth.

1. Identity is a big issue in today's society. What difference does a strong identity make to you and others?

² Statement 9 – Salvation is by grace through faith alone in our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His perfect life, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection, all who believe in Him are forgiven their sins, declared righteous and granted eternal life.

Jesus is human – *Matthew 1:18-25*

2. What are some details about who Jesus was? What is their importance for our faith today?

Jesus is God – *John 17:1-5 and Psalm 2*

3. What does it mean that Jesus is God's Son?

Putting it together: the incarnation – *Philippians 2:5-11 and Hebrews 2:14-18*

From a biblical perspective, we believe that Jesus Christ has both a human and divine nature united in one person. Christians use the term 'incarnation' to describe the act of God the Son taking on a human nature while retaining his divine nature.

4. What is the purpose of incarnation? Why are both Christ's humanity and divinity necessary for our salvation?

Study 5

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

From our Statement of Faith:

5. God the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, bear witness about Jesus, give us new birth, and dwell within every believer.

We will look at the person and the work of the third person of God – the Holy Spirit. As we grow in our understanding and appreciation of the Holy Spirit's important work both in believers and unbelievers, we shall grow in the way we relate to and depend on the Holy Spirit in our lives.

The person of the Holy Spirit

1. Jehovah's Witnesses is one group (among many) who insists that the Holy Spirit is just a power or God's active force, but not the person of God. How would you respond to that statement based on these verses?

- Matthew 28:19
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

- John 16:13
- Acts 5:3-4
- John 14:26
- Acts 16:6

2. What does the statement “God the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son” mean? What are its implications (John 14:15-17 and 16:7, 13-15)?
3. How does our understanding of the Holy Spirit as a person of God inform the way we relate to him? How does our knowledge of how the Holy Spirit relates to God the Father and God the Son influence the way we relate to one another?

The work of the Holy Spirit

4. Read John 16: 8-11. What did Jesus mean in these verses?

- “Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me” (verse 9). See *also John 3:17-18, 36 and 12:44-46*

- “Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer” (verse 10). See *also 1 John 4:2-3 and Titus 3:4-7*

- “Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged” (verse 11). See *also John 3:19-21; Colossians 2:13-15 and Hebrews 2:14-15*

5. The New Testament records the many things that the Holy Spirit does in the life of a believer. What do these verses say about the work of the Holy Spirit?

- John 3:6-7 and 6:63

- Titus 3:5-6

- Romans 8:11

- Acts 1:8

- 1 Thessalonians 1:5

- Galatians 5:22-23

- 2 Thessalonians 2:13

- Acts 13:2

- Romans 8:16

- 1 John 3:24

6. How does our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit inform how we relate to non-Christians? How does our knowledge of the work of the Holy Spirit encourage us in our spiritual walk with God?