

A Basic Inspired Statement of Belief

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After completing the previous historical study, it seemed that I should compare the 1980 doctrinal statement with the earlier ones. At least that is the traditional way that people do it. This I have also done, in order to provide you with a comparison of all four of our historic statements.

But I believe that there is a better way.

True, the 1980 *Statement* omits a number of points and confuses many others,—but the previous ones were also seriously flawed. **First, all the statements are too brief and woefully incomplete. How can our important teachings and practices be put into a few paragraphs?**

Second, they were all written by fallible men. None of them are divinely inspired.

So, after prayerfully considering the matter, the thought came to mind that I should provide you with a brief, but accurate, *Basic Inspired Statement of Belief*.

You can probably produce a better one, and you are welcome to do so. But, for a few minutes, consider the one I will here present you with.

At this juncture, someone will reply, “Vance, you are making the same mistake that all the others before you have done! You are writing your own *Statement!*”

I ask that you follow along with me in what I am about to present. When I have finished, I believe you will agree with me that **here is a brief, but totally accurate, collection—which will provide you with a truly Inspired Statement which is totally reliable.**

So, in this brief study, instead of comparing the 1980 document with previous ones,—we shall bring together one that is far better—as far better as the heavens are higher than the earth!

Where shall we begin?

Let us consider our Sanctuary Message. Seriously now, friends, that cannot possibly be placed into a paragraph or two! Two or three full-

length Bible studies are required just to introduce the edges of the subject to new converts.

In order to understand our Sanctuary Belief—that is, the set of concepts that you and I and every dedicated Adventist believer *ought to know* so we can share it with others,—**we need to start with *Great Controversy*, chapters 23, 24, and 28.** After that, **we also need *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapters 4 and 30.**

In order to fill out the picture, we also need ***Great Controversy*, chapters 18 to 22.** They explain the underlying reason for the sacrifices.

Our kind Father wants to educate us, not just provide us with neat little lists to be printed in the front of our *Yearbooks*.

Someone will reply that all we need is the Bible. But not until we have read and reread the chapters mentioned above, can we begin to grasp the meaning of Exodus 25:8 and 40; Leviticus 16; Daniel 8:14; Hebrews 4 to 10; and Revelation 11:17.

Is the above list complete? No, but it has the definite advantage of being brief, accurate, and basic. We could just say, “read everything in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy,”—and few would know where to start.

We are told that, throughout all eternity, the redeemed and the angels will be studying ever deeper into the Plan of Redemption and the sacrifice of Christ to save mankind and protect the universe from a second apostasy at some distant time in the future. That ongoing research study will involve the Sanctuary Message. So we will ever be learning—and experiencing—more of what this great truth involves. But does not that make learning as much about it now—even more important?

There are so many vital facts of faith that we should consider! All of our previous doctrinal statements only touch on a meager few. You know it and I know it, and those who wrote those statements knew it also.

First, their objective was brevity, not thoroughness. Second, not one of the sentences they wrote in their lists were inspired!

This new *Statement* nicely deals with both problems. It provides adequate, basic coverage and every word is inspired.

Let us now prepare this *Brief Inspired Statement of Belief*.

This statement must include the basics of what the people of God need to know in these last days. **Strong delusions are increasingly pressing in on us from all sides. Terrible crises are ahead of us. Unless we know the truth that God wants us to know, we will be swept off our feet** and carried away in the ever-deepening flood of compromise, error, and apostasy.

The heresies, errors, entertainments, pleasures of sin, and pressures to conform are far greater now than ever before.

The Bible was sufficient in past ages. But God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that in this end-time we would also need the Spirit of Prophecy!

If we do not give personal study to the truths in these books, we declare that God erred in His thinking, that He made a mistake in also giving us those books; since all that is needed by God's faithful ones in these last days is the Bible.

By the way, have you noticed that most professed Advent believers who say they only need the Bible—hardly ever read it! Whereas, those who study the Spirit of Prophecy also read the Bible—and are proficient in both.

A special reason why the Spirit of Prophecy is so urgently needed in our time in history—is that it provides extremely important details—regarding doctrines and standards—that are not given in the Bible!

For example: the Fall of Lucifer. That is a crucially important doctrinal point. Yet about all we have in the Bible on this topic are six brief passages: Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Luke 10:18; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:7-10.

Read each of those verses. There are some other statements about Satan, but they do not refer to his apostasy in heaven. **In striking contrast, a remarkably complete panoramic view of the entire beginning of the great controversy between Christ and Satan (which is extremely important!) is given in *Patriarchs and Proph-***

***ets*, chapter 1, and *Great Controversy*, chapter 29, plus a number of other passages.** So this broader view of the fall of Lucifer in heaven must be part of our *Statement*.

Another example would be Revelation 10. Read it in the Bible. What does it tell you? Next, read *Manuscript 59, 1900*, which is in *7 Bible Commentary*, 971.

You will there learn ten doctrinal truths contained within Revelation 10, which are not clarified in the Bible: Who is the angel? When does this scene take place in human history? Why does the angel cry with a loud voice? What time period does the seven thunders refer to? Why was John told to seal up their messages? Did John actually hear what those messages were? Why did he not immediately tell it? What is the meaning of the phrase about “time”? Why is it so extremely important that we understand this truth today? What is the meaning of setting the feet on both land and sea?

—Yet new theology defenders say that there are no doctrines in the Spirit of Prophecy! They are shutting themselves out of needed light which the faithful study and cherish.

It is also important that we have a solid understanding of final events. That information is given in the **last half of *Great Controversy***, from chapters 25 through 42. But additional material is found in *Early Writings, Patriarchs and Prophets, Desire of Ages, Christ's Object Lessons, and Volume 7-A of the Commentaries*.

Along with this, we also need to understand the history which precedes the Final Crisis—in order to fully grasp the issues and avoid the pitfalls confronting us today. That information is found in the **first half of *Great Controversy*** and the books in the *Conflict Series* which preceded it.

A better, more complete—and fully inspired—*Statement of Belief* is what our people need. We need guidance that is more than a skimpy few paragraphs written by some men.

We need a *Statement of Belief* that is a *Source of Beliefs* which we can turn to, study, and point others to.

Every major doctrine, practice, and standard that we need to place our lives in accordance with—will be found in this fully inspired

source file.

And that brings us to the standards, given us by Heaven, to govern our thoughts and conduct. These standards are almost totally missing from all our previous doctrinal statements—and entirely erased from the one produced in 1980!

Both doctrines and standards of conduct are part of the basic beliefs required in the life of every Christian. No follower of Christ will long remain one if he only believes some doctrines, while adhering to no moral standards of conduct! They integrally go together. This is a major flaw in the preceding *Statements*.

Lastly, there is an aspect entirely missing in the lives of all Christians who are only mere professors. This is the aspect of personal experience. This is actual living in Christ. Many spend half—or all—of their lives as “Christians” and hardly ever enter this phase of genuine Christianity. **This is an experience that is only entered into—and maintained—through earnest prayer, continual submission, heart searching, pleading with God for help, and careful obedience to His will as revealed in ongoing study of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.** This is *real* Christianity! No hint of it will be found in doctrinal lists.

But, through the Inspired Writings, you can enter that blessed heavenly joy as you submissively, obediently make their messages your own.

Let us now put together our *Basic Inspired Statement of Belief*. For we now recognize that it is more than an expanded *Statement*; it is a *Source of Belief*!

Here it is, in brief:

First, along with the Bible (the KJV is the best!), we need *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *Desire of Ages*, *Acts of the Apostles*, and *Great Controversy*.

To that we add *Early Writings*, *Steps to Christ*, *Mount of Blessing*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*.

We also need *Volume 7-A of the Bible Commentaries*.

But in addition to this, we add *Messages to Young People*, *Adventist Home*, and *Child Guidance*.

For many of us, that will do it. But, for those who wish to fill out the picture more fully, we could add the *Testimonies* (especially *Volume 5*) and *Testimonies to Ministers*.

Those engaged in missionary work will value

Colporteur Ministry, *Christian Service*, and *Evangelism*.

Where should a person begin? I would suggest the following:

For a personal relationship with Christ, begin with *Steps to Christ*, *Mount of Blessing*, and *Desire of Ages*. *Messages to Young People* is also excellent. But do not stop there!

For a fabulously expanded understanding of the deeper meaning of Scripture, go through *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, and *Desire of Ages*. *Acts of the Apostles* is also helpful.

For the crucial truths needed to pass safely through the confusion and storms in these last days, read *Early Writings* and *Great Controversy*. *Story of Redemption* is also helpful. The last half of *Christ's Object Lessons* contains invaluable help. Important chapters will be found in *5 Testimonies*.

For families and youth: *Adventist Home*, *Child Guidance*, and *Messages to Young People*. The *Testimonies* are also filled with guidance.

For missionary work: *Christian Service*, *Colporteur Ministry*, and *Evangelism*.

Perils to avoid in church responsibilities will be found in *Testimonies to Ministers* and the *Testimonies*.

There you have it! A complete basic overview of the beliefs we need to know and experience each day.

Someone will say, “We need all the Spirit of Prophecy!” Fine, go ahead and add it all. But you would do well to start here.

As you read and reread, you will continually grasp the details better. Listen to the audio tapes (which we have at lowest cost) and read the books.

Mark the books as you travel through them. I have discovered that I do well to sideline (vertical lines in outside margins) alongside special points. This saves me the extra work that horizontal underlining would require. But some use yellow highlighters.

Keep soaking in the Word of God. Keep believing and doing what you read. As you do so, God will keep conforming you more fully to His own image. He has promised. *There are conditions to salvation, and with all your heart you want God to fulfill them in your life.*

"Do Not Tear Away the Foundations"

"The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. 'Believe, believe,' they say, 'and you need not keep the law.' But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption."—*Mount of Blessing*, 146.

"We are to receive God's Word as supreme authority. We must accept its truths for ourselves. And we can appreciate these truths only as we search them out by personal study. Then, as we make God's Word the guide of our lives, for us is answered the prayer of Christ: 'Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.' John 17:17. The acknowledgment of the truth in word and deed is our confession of faith."—*6 Testimonies*, 402-403.

"God's commandment-keeping people are described by the prophet as 'men wondered at.' We are to be a people distinct from the world. The eyes of the world are upon us, and we are observed by many of whom we have no knowledge. There are those who know something of the doctrines we claim to believe, and they are noting the effect of our faith upon our characters. They are waiting to see what kind of influence we exert, and how we carry ourselves before a faithless world."—*2 Selected Messages*, 386.

"Every position of truth taken by our people will bear the criticism of the greatest minds; the highest of the world's great men will be brought in contact with truth, and therefore **every position we take should be critically examined and tested by the Scriptures.** Now we seem to be unnoticed, but this will not always be. Movements are at work to bring us to the front, and if our theories of truth can be picked to pieces by historians or the world's greatest men, it will be done."—*Evangelism*, 69.

"Impressions and feelings are no sure evidence that a person is led by the Lord. Satan will, if he is unsuspected, give feelings and impressions. These are not safe guides. **All should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the evidences of our faith.**"—*1 Testimonies*, 413.

"Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation. Upon these foundations we have been building for more than fifty years. **Men may suppose that they have found a new way, that they can lay a stronger foundation than that which has been laid; but this is a great deception.** 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid' (1 Corinthians 3:11). In the past, many have undertaken to build a new faith, to establish new principles; but how long did their building stand? It soon fell; for it was not founded upon the Rock."—*Gospel Workers*, 307.

"Messages of every order and kind have been urged

upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. **But the waymarks, which have made us what we are, are to be preserved. And they will be preserved, as God has signified through His Word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.**"—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 52.

"We have the greatest truth and hope that were ever given to our world, and the greatest faith; and we want to represent this in its exalted character to the world. We do not want to assume the attitude as though we were passing through the world begging pardon of the world because we venture to believe this precious, sacred truth; but we want to walk humbly with God, and conduct ourselves as though we were children of the most high God, and, although feeble instruments, as though we were handling most important and interesting subjects, higher and more exalted than any temporal, worldly themes."—*Christian Service*, 226-227.

"When the power of God testifies as to what is truth, that truth is to stand forever as the truth. No aftersuppositions, contrary to the light God has given, are to be entertained. Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. The truth for this time, God has given us as a foundation for our faith. He Himself has taught us what is truth."—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 31-32.

"Never, for one moment, let the impression be left upon anyone that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he might not be so highly honored if his principles were known.

"It is no time to be ashamed of our faith. We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan."—*5 Testimonies*, 526.

"There is to be no change in the general features of God's cause. It is to stand out as clear and distinct as prophecy has made it. We are to enter into no confederacy with the world, supposing that by so doing we could accomplish more . . . **No line of our faith that has made us what we are is to be weakened.**"—*8 Testimonies*, 160.

—Oh, my friend, let us stand true to the end! The angels of heaven will cooperate with us!

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