

Tim Soule

Biographical Information

October 2009

I am a child of the church, born in a small Kansas community of 600 where my father was pastor of the Presbyterian Church and my mother had her life filled with caring for my older sister and me. I was baptized at two months, along with two other babies. My mother told me I was the third one to receive the sacrament that morning and as my father sprinkled the water on my head I burst into a wail. Not sure what that means but I like knowing my baptism was memorable. Two younger brothers joined my family over the next five years and we moved to the Kansas City area where my father served a new and rapidly growing congregation. I almost completed grade school there before moving south to Winfield, Kansas, the place I call my hometown. In Winfield I completed junior and senior high school, confirmed my baptismal promises, served on presbytery youth council, played on every sports team imaginable, was involved in music, student government and with many friends.

I attended and graduated from Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas in 1977. While at Sterling I met and married Debbie Hansen. She too was a Presbyterian pastor's kid, a great athlete and student. She is a trained educator and has taught school, directed an alternative high school completion program and has served for the last four years as Director of Children and Family Ministries in our present congregation. We are the parents of two wonderful sons, both who are now married, and we are grandparents to two beautiful little girls ages six and three.

Since Debbie was one year behind me in college we remained in the area so she could finish her degree. I was called to be student pastor of a fifty-five member Presbyterian Church in Arlington, Kansas. Debbie and I had been youth leaders at the Presbyterian Church in Lyons, Kansas, for a year while going to college. That congregation encouraged me to consider the ministry as a vocation. The Arlington position was a good opportunity to explore whether or not this was the path I wanted to take. After several months working with the Arlington church, I applied and was accepted to McCormick Theological Seminary, where I studied from 1978-1981.

Our first call was to Conrad, a small town in North Central Iowa Presbytery. We served there for eight and a half years, helping complete a long dreamed of addition to the church. From there a call came to Sacramento Presbytery and the community of Red Bluff, California. Eleven and a half years of ministry focused on building programs for children, youth and adults. Eight years ago we were called back to Southern Kansas at First Presbyterian Church of Hutchinson. Again we have worked to build programs for children and youth along with the development of a new service of worship with a band and much less formality. We have loved all three congregations and have received strong support from them. I believe we have been used to bring a new vitality and confidence to each of them.

Debbie and I love to be actively involved in competition. We are both big sports fans. She plays tennis and volleyball. I enjoy golf, fishing and basketball. Together we play badminton, walk, ride bikes and do yard work. We also love to attend sporting events. We usually have a small garden each summer. We enjoy singing and Debbie plays the piano for relaxation. Most of all we love to spend time with our family. We are at a point in our life where we want to travel and experience different cultures and people.

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This "statement of my faith" emerges from a life of experiences in the church and in God's world. Because experiences move and change my faith grows and adapts. This makes the journey of faith an adventure worthy of my whole life. It involves my mind, my body, my will, my imagination, and my heart. Worship of and communion with the living God continues to leave me "lost in wonder, love and praise." After all, I am, in relationship to the Almighty, a blind man searching for light. Thanks be to God who gives much light to guide me in my darkness.

The Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments, is a beacon of light for this journey and the reference point for my continuing exploration into God. It is the inspired and authoritative witness of God and to the people of God. Scripture tells of God's grace. It reveals the human response to God and God's grace at our best and at our worst. It teaches me that God is Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is creator of all things. God's providence upholds and guides the whole creation. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, to know and love God and to serve God as stewards of the creation. When we choose to go our own way, apart from God, God in free grace reaches out to call us back, first through the law and the prophets and finally and supremely through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, said, "I am the light of the world". God sent Jesus to bring us back into a right relationship with God. Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God, is the redeemer and reconciler of the world. Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the reign of God in word and deed revealing God's love and justice for all people. Jesus suffered and died for us, bearing our sins on the cross. God raised Jesus from the grave in triumph over death and thus sealed our redemption. Jesus ascended to heaven and now reigns as head of the church and judge of all creation. Jesus Christ is the light of the world! I trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord of my life. Christ illumines the way for me to proceed, however haltingly, in the direction of reverence, love, humility, and courage toward the kingdom that is, in the end, not of this world. I embrace the hope of the resurrection to eternal life with God.

The Holy Spirit is the life giver and sustainer of all things and God's personal presence with us. The Spirit inspired the writers of the Scriptures and founded the church as a community of believers in Jesus Christ. Entry into the Christian life and growth in discipleship are only possible by God's grace through the continuing work of the Spirit. The visible church gathers to worship, to hear and study scripture and to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These symbols of God's grace shed great light in our search for God.

Baptism binds us to other believers as we are grafted into the church. At the font we acknowledge our divisions and affirm the grace of God which is at work bringing forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life. Communion calls us to the table of our Lord as God's guests with all Christians of all times and places and remind us of Christ's saving work as we anticipate with great hope the coming of God's full, just, and gracious reign.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, trusting in God's grace and goodness, I will seek to share the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ in my ministry and with my life.

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