**Statement of Faith**

**John Crisman Woodring**

In a box, somewhere in my basement lies a statement of faith. It begins and ends with two words, "I believe." In between are 7 or 8 paragraphs that somewhat follow the example of The Apostles' Creed. It was the Statement of Faith I defended at my examination (for 45 minutes!) for ordination by the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley 34 years ago. I dis-covered it year or so ago and found that I still agree with everything I wrote, but I also find it inadequate.

The root of the word faith and the word believe in Greek is the same. When we are asked what we believe, or for a statement of faith, we often reply, as I did, with a list of statements or affirmations. But as I shared in a baccalaureate address recently:

“John Killinger writes about a friend of his who owned a tenant farm in Kentucky. On a visit to the farm, he was walking with the tenant, an old man of deep faith from a rigid Pentecostal background. The tenant 's blonde-headed grand-daughter, three or four years old, was running about them as they walked Whenever something came up that the old man didn’t believe, he made as point of saying, so the little girl could hear, "We don 't believe that, do we? " It was always the same, whether it was the subject of smoking, or dancing, or working on Sunday, or giving equal rights to women: "We don 't believe that, do we? " As the three of them approached the farm pond, they discovered that one of the ducks had hatched her eggs and was now surrounded by a dozen scurrying, cheeping balls of cute yellow fluff The little girl ran up after them squealing with delight, trying to get her hands on them when she suddenly turned to her grandfather and said, "Granddaddy, do we beweeve in ducks?”

But I think that the word faith or belief is better understood in English as trust.

So, do not ask me what I believe, for you will probably get the same answer from 30-some years ago.

Rather, ask me whom I trust.

I trust in Jesus even and especially when I don't understand him, or my world.

I trust that even when I fail to follow his example, or even simply do what he says, he still loves me and calls me his own. I don't have to understand it or explain it in order to trust, no more than I can explain the mystery of why my wife loves me and chooses me and blesses me every. .. single. .. day.

I trust in God, whose primary expression towards us is love, as expressed in the life and death of Jesus, and also through the gift of the presence of God's Spirit. This we celebrate at baptisms and communion.

Because of this, I trust that we are not alone. As the Brief Statement of Faith in our Book of Confessions states: "In life and in death, we belong to God."

Because of this, I trust that there is nothing that can separate us from God's love through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Because of this, we can entrust those we love to God's never-failing care, both in this life and the next.

Because of this, I live my life as a thank you to the God I love and serve.

And yes, because of this, I do believe in ducks.