

# Personal Statement of Faith

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I was raised in a Christian home and can't remember a time in my life when I didn't believe in God. However, as I grew, I realized that I had to make a personal decision to accept His gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. This was something of a struggle, as I wanted to make it logical so I could understand it. But God is patient, and in addition to Godly parents, He placed some very important people in my life.

One of these was my next door neighbor. He was a straight talking, no nonsense man of God. I loved and respected my parents, but sometimes children hear the same thing differently from a source other than their parents. Bill Waits was and is a very imposing figure that, while tough as nails, is also gentle of spirit and knew exactly how to communicate with me. He challenged me from the time I was six years old to know more about God and the importance of a relationship with Him. While he wasn't the one to kneel with me when I gave my life to Christ, he certainly planted the seeds and was a major part of my discipleship and introduction into a life of service for the Kingdom.

When I was 14 years old, I felt God calling me into music ministry. I was already performing at school when Bill Waits, already my spiritual mentor, asked me to play piano and sing with his Southern Gospel group, the Glorybound Singers. While touring with them through high school, I was also active in school with various bands and choirs as well as starting a Christian band with friends. I knew this was God's plan for my life.

After high school, I pursued a degree in Music Education and Church Music from Taylor University, Upland, Indiana, and the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida. Throughout my life, I have worked either full or part time in music ministry, including touring ministries, planting churches, serving as Worship Director/Leader, recording and producing Christian music, directing stage productions, and mentoring worship leaders.

I can't imagine what life would be without these experiences and so many more. As I wrote earlier, there has never been a time in my life when I didn't believe in and feel connected to God. I feel His presence in my life every day and enjoy the love and companionship with the Creator of the universe through prayer, reading/studying of the Scripture, and the ever present indwelling of the Holy Spirit in my life.

It is easy to praise God in the good times, but some of my most profound experiences with Him have been those times when things aren't going so well and, like a hurt and angry child, I go to Him in a less than reverent way and spill my guts, rather loudly at times, and implore Him for a reason why things aren't going my way. And like a very patient father, He listens intently and gently reminds me that He is still in control. Sometimes that feels like warm words of comfort. Other times, it feels more like the swift rod of discipline necessary for an unruly child. In either case, His response is exactly what I need and continues to overwhelm me with the thought that the God of all creation wants to have a personal relationship with me.

My personal theology can be summed up in the words of the Apostle's Creed as well as the My Beliefs page available on my website at <http://www.lrmisp.com/resume>. In Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus gives us the directive to go and make disciples of all nations.

God has called me to a life of worship ministry and evangelism. It is my constant prayer to be used by Him for His purpose and glory and that I will get out of the way so He can speak through me to reach the lost and suffering. My mission statement for ministry is to spread the unchanging message of Christ in a constantly changing world. Today's church needs to employ a multi-sensory approach to Worship as well as incorporate technology with traditional methods of evangelism in order to reach more people for Christ while not watering down the message. If we in ministry are to remain relevant and approachable to a lost and suffering world, we must be fluid in these areas while never compromising our faith.