

## Statement on Theology by Charles E. Brown

*Taken from Lay Theology, John B. Cobb Jr.*

*"The situation in local congregations is similar. When they face the need to make decisions they have no history of theological reflection on which to draw. Hence the members draw on their personal and professional experience. Their discussion involves little serious engagement with the resources or demands of the Christian faith. Or if someone does speak for a particular action in the name of faith, others may be intimidated into agreeing even against their better judgment. Few are prepared to challenge such an argument theologically."*

*"The result has been a wide spread preference for a mindless love of God"*

My relationship with God and Jesus Christ can best be articulated by referencing a song that we sing in my church. The words of this song express my feelings about my relationship with Jesus in a few short verses.

The title of the song is "Victory in Jesus", written in 1939 by Eugene M. Bartlett. This song appears in the African American Heritage Hymnal.

*"I heard an old story, how a Savior came from Glory, How He gave His life on cavalry to save a wretch like me: I heard about His groaning, of his precious blood's atoning, and then I repented of my sins and won the victory."*

Refrain: *"O victory in Jesus, my Savior, for ever! He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood: He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him – He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."*

“I heard about His healing, of His cleansing power revealing, How He made the lame to walk again and caused the blind to see: And then I cried Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit, and somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory.”

I believe that God and Jesus Christ have been in my life for all of my life. I believe that God works in my (our) life even when we least expect it or when we don't necessarily want God in our lives.

I believe that prayer works, because it has worked for more on more than on e occasion. Prayer works for me when I ask God to help me to say the things I need to say in times of stress and in times when I have no idea what I should or shouldn't say.

I believe that God has lifted the addiction of alcohol from me in a very special way. I drank for many years and in 1983 the need to drink was lifted from and I have not had a drink since. This is a miracle considering how much I used to drink and after stopping I had no withdrawal or after affects from the drinking.

Since I knew that God could keep me from drinking I decided to pray that God would lift my addiction to cigarettes. In 1988 I stopped smoking have had not had a cigarette since. I know that God works in my life.

I believe that God is a kind and compassionate God. I believe that God works in our lives. I believe that God cares about us and wants us to do well. I believe that God wants us to care for others and to be our brothers and sisters keepers.

I know that there is a God because I am here today. Many years ago after a very bad (drunken) car accident my mother told me that the reason I survived the accident was because “God had a better plan for me”.

God does have a better plan for me and for all of us, we just have to listen and hear that plan.

I have in recent years as a result of the Lay School of the WRA had opportunities to take classes that have stretched our intellect and called us to think about our God and who this God is in our lives.

Prior to these classes I never thought much about who God was and what God did for us. The Lay School courses have created a sense of question, not about the glory of God but about who God is in my life.

I am pursuing this path to ministry because of what I had heard preached by a friend of mine some years ago. I did not feel worthy to be a minister because of my past, but Rev Leslie Taylor (Columbus, Ohio) preached from 1 Timothy: 12- 17.

*12 I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the foremost. 16 But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

This scripture really describes my venture into the ministry. I believe that considering Paul's' past transgressions that if he can do it, so can I.

So much of this may not sound very scholarly, but it is how I feel about my God and who that God is to me.

Charles Brown

## Profile Section 4: Statement on Ministry

### Statement On Ministry

Scripture:

*1 Timothy 1:12 - 17*

<sup>12</sup> I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, <sup>13</sup> even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup> But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup> To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen

### Faith Journey - Summary

The scripture from 1 Timothy best describes my faith journey; from a boy who went to church every Sunday to a young adult who never went to church, to an adult that has been saved, who is recovering from alcohol and drugs, and has been sober for the past 23 years and is now an active member and participant in the work of the church.

### Faith Journey

I grew up at Mt. Zion Congregational United Church of Christ. My parents and grandparents were members at Mt Zion. I always like to say that Mt Zion is 142 years old this year (2006) and my family has been there at least 140 of those years.

I grew up in the church and was involved in all of the activities as a youth member; from choir to PF (Pilgrim Fellowship). However after I went away to college and upon my return I got married and going to church didn't seem as important.

One of the major hurdles in my life was my increasing use of alcohol and therefore my decreasing attendance at church.

On march 23, 1983, I joined Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and have been sober ever since.

My recovery from addiction is based on a spiritual foundation of God and Jesus Christ in my life. God (and Jesus Christ) is the only reason I am sober today.

After I got sober there was a change in me that others seemed to see. Often at gatherings, both church and otherwise I was asked to pray. What a surprise because I had never been asked before. I was told that people saw something in me that I didn't see.

I joined the Deacon Board at Mt Zion in 1988 and have been a Deacon ever since. The responsibility as a Deacon and the work that we do is most rewarding.

I considered seminary but I didn't feel worthy, because of my past, to minister to others. The Rev Leslie Taylor preached from 1 Timothy and I realized that based on Paul's background and who and what he was, that my ministering to others would be OK.

I look forward to the opportunity to minister to others in a parish setting.

### Theology

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Refrain: "O victory in Jesus, my Savior, for ever! He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood: He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him – He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood."

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### Faith Focus

My faith focus is to reach peoples hearts by providing help and hope to men, women and children in need, to proclaim the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ and to offer a Christian discipleship program promoting personal and spiritual growth.

### Leadership Style.

Prophetic vision - Believe that visioning the possibilities for a church is one of my strengths. Able to lead by presenting ideas and concepts that are spiritually based after praying for guidance.

Passion for impact – The church must be able to impact the community and create spiritual opportunities that make a difference in the community.

Entrepreneurial ability – Able to run a church by making decisions based on sound business judgments and on spiritual principals.

Collegial - Willing to work with others and am open to ideas, even solicit ideas, knowing that others besides myself can contribute significantly to the progress of the church.