

Commitment to Evangelism

We, the members of Carlisle Presbytery, commit ourselves to the task of evangelism. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we accept our identity as witnesses to *Jesus* Christ in our immediate community, or country, our nation and around the world (Acts 1:8).

We affirm that we are called to reach out in word and deed to those beyond the walls of our churches and we dedicate ourselves to being hospitable and inviting within our walls.

For these reasons, we commit ourselves:

to pray regularly for the Church around the world, to pray for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and for our congregations that we might all be used as instruments for God's purpose,

to accept "A Theological Basis for Faithfulness" as our own theological statement consistent with the Reformed faith,

to develop a network of evangelism advocates,

to provide resources to congregations for assessing potential growth goals and developing action plans,

to establish goals and actions plans for redevelopment and new church development through the year 2003 e.g. "Three by 2003";

to encourage congregations to provide within the life of the congregation programs for those persons who are new to the Christian faith,

to evaluate annually our progress on this commitment, to recommit ourselves to evangelism and to make adjustments as needed.

Approved by the Presbytery of Carlisle, April 27, 1993 in conjunction with "A Theological Basis for Faithfulness."

A Theological Basis for Faithfulness

from the Report on the Task Force on Church Membership Growth

We are called by Christ.

God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be the body of Christ in this world and to make Christ known. Jesus Christ is the vine and we are the branches; apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5). Therefore health and growth in the Presbyterian body begins with calling people life in Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Human sinfulness severed the relationship with God for which humankind was created, resulting in a separation beyond repair apart from Divine initiative. Thus the urgency of the good news. God took the initiative in sending Jesus Christ to earth “to seek and save those who are lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus Christ came to call all peoples to repent and become his disciples, for “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

This good news of God's reconciling love in Jesus Christ calls for an active response of faith, which includes a personal commitment to Jesus as Savior and Lord expressed in corporate involvement in the church, his body, and obedient service in the world. Without this response the work of restoration remains unfulfilled; the branch still remains apart from the vine.. Through faith, a relationship with the living God is restored, for "by grace you are saved through faith..." (Ephesians 2:8).

The restored relationship with the living God accomplished in Jesus Christ provides the one ultimate source of joy, healing, wholeness and life. Thus the urgent calling of God upon the whole church is to proclaim in word and deed “the gospel for the salvation of humankind” (*Book of Order*, G-1.200) as the only source of abundant life and eternal hope.

The theological basis of this report is faithfulness to Jesus Christ, expressed by calling people into a life-commitment to:

The Person of Christ: “In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the church confesses that he is its hope and that the church, as Christ’s body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God.” (*Book of Order*, G-1.0100)

The Body of Christ: “The church is a fellowship of believers, which seeks the enlargement of the circle of faith to include all people, and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone.”

The Work of Christ: “The church is called to present the claims of Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of him as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples...participating in God’s activity in the world...ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless.” (*Book of Order*, G-3.0300)