

CHAPTER III**G-3.0000****THE CHURCH AND ITS MISSION**

- G-3.0100
Form
- The mission of the Church is given form by God's activity in the world as told in the Bible and understood by faith.
- G-3.0101
God's Activity
- a. God created the heavens and the earth and made human beings in God's image, charging them to care for all that lives; God made men and women to live in community, responding to their Creator with grateful obedience. Even when the human race broke community with its Maker and with one another, God did not forsake it, but out of grace chose one family for the sake of all, to be pilgrims of promise, God's own Israel.
- God's Covenant
- b. God liberated the people of Israel from oppression; God covenanted with Israel to be their God and they to be God's people, that they might do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Lord; God confronted Israel with the responsibilities of this covenant, judging the people for their unfaithfulness while sustaining them by divine grace.
- G-3.0102
God in Christ
- God was incarnate in Jesus Christ, who announced good news to the poor, proclaimed release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, let the broken victims go free, and proclaimed the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; in his life and death for others God's redeeming love for all people was made visible; and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ there is the assurance of God's victory over sin and death and the promise of God's continuing presence in the world.
- G-3.0103
The Holy Spirit
- God's redeeming and reconciling activity in the world continues through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who confronts individuals and societies with Christ's Lordship of life and calls them to repentance and to obedience to the will of God.
- G-3.0200
The Church as the Body of Christ
- The Church of Jesus Christ is the provisional demonstration of what God intends for all of humanity.
- a. The Church is called to be a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ.
- b. The new reality revealed in Jesus Christ is the new humanity, a new creation, a new beginning for human life in the world:
- (1) Sin is forgiven.
 - (2) Reconciliation is accomplished.
 - (3) The dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

c. The Church is the body of Christ^a, both in its corporate life and in the lives of its individual members, and is called to give shape and substance to this truth.

G-3.0300
The Church's
Calling

a. The Church is called to tell the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Lord, proclaiming in Word and Sacrament that

- (1) the new age has dawned.
- (2) God who creates life, frees those in bondage, forgives sin, reconciles brokenness, makes all things new, is still at work in the world.

Present Claims
of Christ

b. 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.

Christ's Faithful
Evangelist

c. The Church is called to be Christ's faithful evangelist

(1) going into the world, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all he has commanded;

(2) demonstrating by the love of its members for one another and by the quality of its common life the new reality in Christ; sharing in worship, fellowship, and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;

(3) participating in God's activity in the world through its life for others by

- (a) healing and reconciling and binding up wounds,
- (b) ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless,
- (c) engaging in the struggle to free people from sin, fear, oppression, hunger, and injustice,
- (d) giving itself and its substance to the service of those who suffer,
- (e) sharing with Christ in the establishing of his just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world.

G-3.0400
Called to Risk
and Trust

The Church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ.

G-3.0401
Called to
Openness

The Church is called

a. to a new openness to the presence of God in the Church and in the world, to more fundamental obedience, and to a more joyous celebration in worship and work;

b. to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races, and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity;

c. to a new openness to the possibilities and perils of its institutional forms in order to ensure the faithfulness and usefulness of these forms to God's activity in the world;

d. to a new openness to God's continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world.