

A Resolution for the Church

Mr. Zachary Groff | originally published on reformation21.org

Of the making of commitments there seems to be no end. Having formed any number of New Year's Resolutions, we find ourselves bombarded by new pressures from within and without—and after a month, perhaps we have already decided to call it quits.

But what if we take a moment to step back from our personal goals, hopes, and dreams for 2021, and consider a biblical resolution fit for the church in our day? That resolution would echo the familiar Edwardsian formula: "Resolved, that we will make disciples."

It is no mystery that the resolution put forward above is grounded in the "Great Commission" text of Matthew 28:18-20. These verses are particularly well suited to motivate us as the church in the difficult tasks of evangelism and discipleship in a hostile culture. Especially now that the very act of gathering together is maligned by those whom we desire to love with the love of Christ, what might we glean from the Great Commission to propel us forward in faith?

Each of the Gospel accounts weaves together a variety of literary genres in presenting the earthly ministry of Christ Jesus. Though Matthew's Gospel favors didactic material, the narrative passages are detailed and extensive. Identifying the genre of Matthew 28:18-20 presents certain difficulties. Does the Evangelist present these verses as a simple narrative, the concluding action of Christ's earthly ministry? Do these verses teach the proper constitution of Christian discipleship? As the popular "Great Commission" designation suggests, is this passage exhorting the disciples to action?

Having limited the passage to verses 18 through 20, it is best to understand it as an exhortation, for the discipleship mandate of the church's apostolic leadership is the central concern of the passage. Christ's authority in v. 18 is the basis for the mandate delivered in the first half of v. 19. The second half of v. 19 and the first half of 20 indicate the substance of the mandate. At the end of v. 20, Christ declares and promises the spiritual power that ensures the success of the mandate, fully resourcing those responsible for executing it in every age.

Not only is the mandate weighty in and of itself, but it is surrounded by literary elements that underscore its importance. Perhaps most significantly, the mandated activity of discipleship would attend the apostles' going forth, even as Christ Himself accompanied them. The statement of Christ's active presence is emphatic in the declaration in v. 20 "I Myself am surely with you."

The indwelling presence of Christ by His Spirit is not only the source of the church's comfort, but also the only power by which the church may justify her confidence in carrying out the discipleship mandate in every age.

Note that Christ's presence is continuous and enduring in the words "always, even to the end of the age." We could render this element of Christ's active presence as, "each and every day, even unto the consummation of this age." Christ's words are an ever-constant support to the church, even when individual believers cannot sense His comforting presence.

Though the assurance given in Matthew 28:20 should encourage us as individual believers, it is much more concerned with the church as a collective whole. The emphatic quality of Christ's final words in Matthew's Gospel goes far beyond a simple statement of fact. Christ presses the reality of His abiding presence with the church on earth into the souls of His hearers with emphatic and undeniable insistence. Christ personally guarantees the success of the church's mission.

We seem to be facing uniquely global pressures to abandon, to minimize, or otherwise to dilute the discipleship mandate Christ has given to His church through its Apostolic leadership. Yet, Christ's words ring out. They ring out with authority over us, as He alone reigns supreme as Head of the church. If He directs us to make disciples, then that is what we should do, no matter the obstacles or opposition we may face from circumstances beyond our control. This is as true in 2021 as it was in 1921, 1621, or 121. Christ's words ring in our hearts with a beautiful tone of comfort and assurance. The selfsame Savior Who translated us out of darkness and into His marvelous light has guaranteed the success of our efforts, however opposed or stilted they may seem in our limited views.

As the church entering a new year shrouded in uncertainty, let us stand resolved to make disciples.

Announcements

- Prayer Meeting this Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.
- To volunteer to help clean the church property, please contact the church at info@antiochpca.com.

Vision

Our vision is to see the historic Antioch Presbyterian Church revitalized as a worshipping community to be a blessing to every man, woman, and child in the growing residential hub west of Woodruff and south of Reidville, to the glory of God.

Mission

Our mission as a parish church at the crossroads of Greenville and Spartanburg Counties is the gathering and perfecting of God's people through biblical worship, evangelism, and pastoral care.

Areas of Ministry Focus

Expository Preaching

Biblical Worship

Parish Evangelism

Pastoral Care

Discipleship

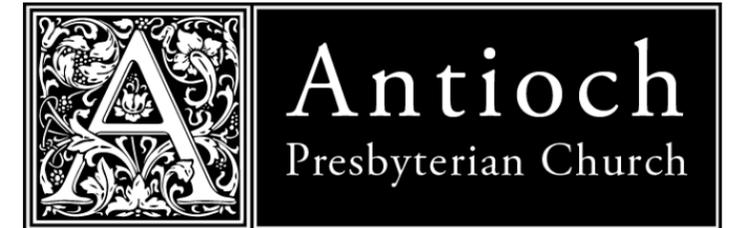
Leadership & Accountability

As a *mission work*, Antioch Presbyterian Church (PCA) is governed and overseen by a *provisional session* of elders serving as a *commission* of Calvary Presbytery. The six men appointed to the *provisional session* are active elders within the bounds of Calvary Presbytery, and they have graciously agreed to serve "above-and-beyond" to encourage the revitalization of Antioch. They include:

Dr. Chipley Bennett, Ph.D. – Ruling Elder, Providence Presbyterian Church
Dr. E. Todd Buchner, D.Min. – Pastor, Reidville Presbyterian Church
Mr. Richard Hollifield – Ruling Elder, Roebuck Presbyterian Church
Mr. William Johnson – Ruling Elder, Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church
Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., Ph.D., D.D. – Professor of Systematic & Applied Theology, President Emeritus, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary;
Organizing Pastor & Moderator of Session, Antioch Presbyterian Church
Pastor Richard Thomas – Senior Pastor, Mount Calvary Presbyterian Church;
Clerk of Session, Antioch Presbyterian Church

Church Staff

Mr. Zachary Groff – Ministerial Assistant
Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. – Organizing Pastor & Moderator of Session



The Lord's Day
February 7, 2021

"The Dignity & Duty of the Church"
1 Timothy 3:14, 15
Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr.

Worship – Sunday, 5:00 p.m.
Prayer Meeting – Wednesday, 6:00 p.m.

3600 SC-417 | Woodruff, SC 29388
864.519.3604 | info@antiochpca.com | antiochpca.com

The Lord's Day

February 7, 2021

Meditation

1 Corinthians 3:16; Psalm 84:1

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts!

*Call to Worship

*Congregational Commitment

Minister: Congregation, in whom is your confidence?

Congregation: Our help is in the Name of the Lord, Who made the heavens and the earth.

*Salutation

*Hymn of Adoration

No. 29A

Now unto the LORD, All You Sons of the Mighty
WILLOW GROVE

*Prayer of Adoration & Invocation

*Revelation of God's Will

Revelation 3:14-22

*Confession of Sin & Supplication for Grace

O our God! We are often ashamed to lift up our faces before You; for our iniquities are higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached unto the heavens. We were sinful at birth, even from the time our mothers conceived us. We are by nature children of wrath; we have corrupted our way, and we have turned aside from Thy holy laws. You are not in all our thoughts; we have often forgotten You, the God who formed us. We have lived for ourselves, indulging the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But O our Father, we repent. We grieve over ourselves and turn from our sins, calling on You to forgive us and to renew a clear heart and mind within us, through the merit and mediation of Your sinless Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool."

Offering

No. 237

When All Your Mercies, O My God
(stanzas 1-4)
MANOAH

*Prayer of Thanksgiving & Supplication

Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn of Preparation

No. 119N

Your Word Sheds Light upon My Path
CANONBURY

*Prayer for Illumination

*Old Testament Reading

Psalm 87

*New Testament Reading

Ephesians 2:11-22

*Congregational Response

Leader: Faith comes by hearing,

Congregation: And hearing by the Word of God!

Sermon

"The Dignity & Duty of the Church"

1 Timothy 3:14, 15

Prayer of Application

*Hymn

No. 200

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness
(stanzas 1, 2)
SCHMÜCKE DICH

Confession of Faith

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into hell;
the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic[†] church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Communion

*Hymn of Response

No. 200

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness
(stanzas 3, 4)
SCHMÜCKE DICH

*Benediction

*Doxology

No. 117B

Praise the LORD God, All You Nations
REGENT SQUARE

*Silent Prayer

"The Dignity & Duty of the Church"

1 Timothy 3:14, 15

Main Proposition

The church as the household of God is to be the pillar and support of God's truth.

Outline

- I. The Dignity of the Church
- II. The Duty of the Church

* Congregation standing, unless physically hindered

† "Catholic" means universal; that is, there is one church across all times, places, and peoples (see WCF 25.2).