

Biography
John Carrick

#12 3:00 p.m.

Rev. John Carrick is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He received his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Asbury Theological Seminary. For the last 15 years he has served internationally as a missionary to Paraguay with the Mission Society and as a Senior Pastor of the American Protestant Church in Bonn, Germany. John is married to Sandra and they have three grown children.

Statement of Faith
John Carrick

I believe in the historic doctrines of the Christian faith, which the church has articulated in faithfulness to God's Word by means of the Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed. These basic creedal formulations of the faith were hammered out to defend the essential doctrines of our faith from many errors, which persist in several forms to this day.

I believe that God has made himself known to us in a variety of ways. Preeminently, God has disclosed himself to us by entering human history through the incarnation of his Son and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Only through the incarnation can we learn of God's triune being as the eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that there is only one God, but within the unity of God is this diversity of three persons living in an eternal community of love.

God's love is the reason that he reaches out to humanity in the redeeming work of his Son. I believe the historic human person we know as Jesus of Nazareth was and is the very presence of the Transcendent God who has created all that exists. God humbled himself by becoming truly human and entered into the time and space of his own creation in order to redeem a world suffering from the consequences of sin and selfishness. Even as the incarnation reveals a God who condescends to meet humanity at our level, God's act of redemption is accomplished not through the exertion of his almighty power, but by means of his unfailing and sacrificial love. Laying down his own life for the guilty, Jesus atoned for human sin and rising from death, Jesus destroys the powers of evil as our victorious Lord.

I believe the Father and Son are present to us today by the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of our sin, calls us to repent and follow Jesus, and who cleanses us through the gracious application of Jesus' blood poured out on the cross. The Holy Spirit also gives gifts to God's people, so that the church is equipped to serve the purposes of God's Kingdom in this world.

I believe that humanity stands in a unique relationship to God as creatures made in his own image. We have been entrusted with a role as stewards over a world that God delighted to create. Our stewardship extends to the care of other persons who have suffered from evil, poverty, sickness, war and disaster; as well as, to the health and stability of the world in which we live.

I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have been given to us as a gracious gift of God working through a long process of human agency. These Scriptures bear witness to the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are the authoritative source of our Christian message, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the ground upon which the gospel continues to be preached today.

Regarding Sacraments

I believe that the only way the infinite and transcendent God can make himself known to such finite creatures, as humankind is to condescend to reveal himself on our level. This statement reflects no limitation on what God can do; but rather, the limitation of finite humanity. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is the principle means of God's condescension, making possible the human encounter with God. Other more humble means also can become avenues of God's immanent presence.

Jesus has provided us with simple and tangible means to awaken us to his presence and to reveal and offer to us God's covenantal love and promises. Jesus Christ uniquely commands the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion in the gospel narratives and the church has sought to obey Christ's commands in its ritual practices. I believe these outward signs signify an inward grace poured out by the Holy Spirit. My sacramental view of these rituals can also be applied to preaching and to the nature of Scripture. These simple human acts and words can become the means of God's grace and the mode through which God condescends to reveal himself to the human person.

I believe that baptism is an act through which the sign of God's covenant (Col. 2:11-12) in Jesus Christ is applied to the life of a child. This sign demonstrates that salvation is God's action for us, given wholly by his grace and independent of our understanding. The primary agent in baptism is the Holy Spirit, placing his seal on the child. As a covenantal agreement, there is also a secondary human response of making promises or vows to nurture and raise the child within the community of faith, learning about Christ and preparing them for the time of their own mature expression of personal faith in Christ. The human response to God's grace takes a more visible place when an unbaptized new adult believer is able to bear witness to his/her own faith in Christ. The human testimony, however, does not signify that the human action has taken the primary role. Baptism is still the gracious gift of God, signifying the new creation and redeemed life of the believer.

I respect Christian traditions, which understand baptism as having only symbolic value, and as constituting only the obedient response of a new believer. I do not believe that a person's conviction about the nature of baptism should separate or divide the body of Christ. I have served an inter-national and inter-denominational congregation, where Christians of diverse theological opinions worshipped together and allowed for the full expression of either infant baptism or believers baptism. I find the symbolic value of adult baptism by immersion of great power as it witnesses to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I believe Christians of both these theological persuasions can live and worship together without conflict.

I believe that Holy Communion reenacts and reminds Christians today of the covenantal meal in which Jesus declared the significance of his own death. As Scripture says, the meal is in "remembrance" of Jesus' suffering and death, but I believe this reminding is more than a symbolic memorial act. Holy Communion touches all five of the human senses and it carries us beyond what we can perceive by the simple senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing to the a genuine spiritual perception of God's sacrificial love in Jesus' death. I believe that Christ himself is present to us in and through the ritual, not by means of transubstantiation, but present nevertheless as the living Christ and not merely memorializing his death.