



Presbyterian Aged Care

NSW & ACT

Our Mission and Values

14 April 2008

Consistent with a priority of our 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, Presbyterian Aged Care (PAC) has updated its Mission and Values Statements. The PAC Committee approved the new Mission and Values Statement, replacing all other existing local Mission and Values Statements, at its April 2008 meeting.

Our Mission Statement says why we exist – what our key purpose is.

Our Values Statement says what we believe in – how we will behave.

Mission

The Presbyterian Aged Care Mission Statement (our reason to exist) is:

To provide care and accommodation for older people, with a commitment to excellence inspired by the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Values

The Values Statement (what we believe in) is:

Presbyterian Aged Care values:

- ***The dignity and worth of every person created in God's image,***
- ***Showing compassion and love by caring for and nurturing the whole person – physical, social, emotional and spiritual,***
- ***Supporting community life, where people can live together in harmony, safety and security,***
- ***Acting justly and fairly, ensuring equity of access to care and accommodation, including for those in poverty or need,***
- ***Honesty and ethical behaviour,***
- ***Good stewardship of the resources that are our responsibility, and***
- ***Our staff and volunteers, supporting them to develop their skills and achieve satisfaction in serving others.***



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A Biblical Basis for Aged Care Ministry

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14 April 2008

Presbyterian Aged Care is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church. Hence, an important part of considering our Mission and Values is to understand from God's word the Biblical basis as to why and how we should care for older people.

There are several reasons why the church should be engaged in the ministry of aged care. The first reason should be because of a desire to love others arising out of gratitude for what God did in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem us from the power of sin and death (1 John 4:9-11). Since God so loved us, our mission, as individuals and as a church, should be to show his love to those in need, including older people, as reflected in the nature of our ministry including our core values.

A second reason is because we are called, as God's people, to reflect God's particular concern to defend the cause of the fatherless and the widow (Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 68:5-6). God's concern for the aged is expressed in passages such as Isaiah 46:4 where He promises to sustain and rescue those of old age and grey hairs (Isaiah 46:4). Naomi in the Book of Ruth is an excellent example of how God cared for a widow in dire straits. Indeed, both in the Book of Ruth and in the New Testament we see that God has called His people, as well as family members, to take responsibility for the widowed and aged and make provision for them (cf. 1 Timothy 5:3-10). One of the most powerful examples in Scripture of the Lord's care for older people is John 19:25 where despite the agony he was suffering on the cross, Jesus provides for his mother's needs by asking the Apostle John (a non-relative) to take his mother into his home. It is the Lord's example here which provides a model for Christian care to older people and their families as we minister to the needs of non-relatives and strangers who come to our churches or to live in our church-run aged care facilities.

How then, should the church be engaged in aged care? What kind of principles or guidelines are provided in Scripture? A starting point is to understand that all people, including older people, no matter how incapacitated they are physically, mentally or emotionally, are made in God's image and should be cared for and loved as if we were serving the Lord himself (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 25:40). We all have intrinsic worth in the eyes of God, and that does not diminish with age or infirmity.

Indeed achieving old age is celebrated in the Bible. When people like Abraham (Genesis 25:8) and David (1 Chronicles 29:28) achieve advanced old age, the Biblical writers say this indicates God's blessing on them.

Consistent with this principle is that those in our care should be treated in a holistic manner. God created men and woman with a body and a soul, which correspond

with the outer and inner person. This is clear from passages such as Matthew 10:28 and 2 Cor 4:16. Why is this Biblical category important? Paul makes it clear that while the outer body may be wasting away, the inner person can still be inwardly renewed. This highlights the importance of providing spiritual encouragement as an essential ingredient of care. Also, we need to acknowledge that diseases of old age can impact on the spiritual motivation and behaviour of people. Alternatively, a person's spiritual condition can also have a significant impact on the person's physical health, especially via psychosomatic illness. This body/soul dichotomy, evident in the Biblical definition of a person shows that holistic care of older people is essential if we are to care for the elderly in a Biblical manner. We can't afford to ignore either the medical or the spiritual aspect of care if we are aiming to please our Lord. It is the focus on holistic care that sets PAC apart from other secular or non-religious aged care providers.

One other associated Scriptural principle is that we are called to minister to a segment of the population who are prone to suffering. As a result of the fall, we live in a world of chaos and decay. All of us face the deterioration of our bodies, including sickness and death as well as the effects of sin. Older people, in particular, face losses in their lives as they face death of loved ones, declining health, leaving their homes and loved ones. For example, Barzillai says to King David, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is good and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?" (2 Samuel 19:34-35) Older people deserve excellence in medical, spiritual and emotional care and should be given every encouragement to grow spiritually and mentally in the face of suffering, as they are able, and to understand and experience the love of God as expressed through Christ and those who serve him (1 Peter 4:1-2; 2 Cor 10:10; Romans 5:3-11).

Helping those in need is a core Christian value. Below are some Biblical references for each of our values, showing how each of them is based firmly on God's Word.

Presbyterian Aged Care values:

- ***The dignity and worth of every person created in God's image¹,***
- ***Showing compassion and love by caring for and nurturing the whole person – physical, social, emotional and spiritual²,***
- ***Supporting community life, where people can live together in harmony, safety and security³,***
- ***Acting justly and fairly, ensuring equity of access to care and accommodation, including for those in poverty or need⁴,***
- ***Honesty and ethical behaviour⁵,***
- ***Good stewardship of the resources that are our responsibility⁶,***
and
- ***Our staff and volunteers, supporting them to develop their skills and achieve satisfaction in serving others⁷.***

¹ Genesis 1:27; Colossians 3:10

² Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 4:1-2

³ Genesis 48:4; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:16

⁴ Exodus 23:6; Proverbs 31:8-9; James 1:27

⁵ Exodus 20:15-16; Deuteronomy 25:13-16; Romans 13:7, Titus 2:10

⁶ Matthew 25:14-30

⁷ Luke 10:7; Romans 12: 3-8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17