

*The Montreal Declaration of Anglican Essentials is the founding document of the Anglican Essentials movement in Canada. It was developed and approved at the founding Anglican Essentials Conference in Montreal in June, 1994. Three biblically-based organizations in the Anglican Church of Canada co-sponsored that Conference--Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada, Barnabas Anglican Ministries and the Prayer Book Society of Canada. These organizations committed themselves to work together to bring the Church back to Biblical Christianity through what became Anglican Essentials Canada. Anglican Communion Alliance came out of Anglican Essentials Canada as the successor organization within the Anglican Church of Canada.*

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## **The Montreal Declaration**

**"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." - St. Augustine**

This declaration was adopted at a national conference of Anglicans from across Canada in June 1994 and serves as the theological basis of those involved in this on-going movement. As members of the Anglican Church of Canada from every province and territory, and participants in the Essentials 1994 Conference in Montreal, we unite in praising God for his saving grace and for the fellowship we enjoy with our Lord and with each other. We affirm the following Christian essentials:

**1. The Triune God** There is one God, self-revealed as three persons, "of one substance, power and eternity," the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For the sake of the Gospel we decline proposals to modify or marginalize these names and we affirm their rightful place in prayer, liturgy, and hymnody. For the Gospel invites us through the Holy Spirit to share eternally in the divine fellowship, as adopted children of the God in whose family Jesus Christ is both our saviour and our brother. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21. Cf. Article I of the 39 Articles, Book of Common Prayer [BCP], p. 699.)

**2. Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier** The almighty triune God created a universe that was in every way good until creaturely rebellion disrupted it. Sin having intruded, God in love purposed to restore cosmic order through the calling of the covenant people Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ to redeem, the outpouring

of the Holy Spirit to sanctify, the building up of the church for worship and witness, and the coming again of Christ in glory to make all things new. Works of miraculous power mark the unfolding of God's plan throughout history. (Genesis 1-3; Isaiah 40:28; 65:17; Matthew 6:10; John 17:6; Acts 17:24-26, 28; 1 Corinthians 15:28; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 21:5. Cf. Article I.)

**3. The Word made Flesh** Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, sinless in life, raised bodily from the dead, and now reigning in glory though still present with his people through the Holy Spirit, is both the Jesus of history and the Christ of Scripture. He is God with us, the sole mediator between God and ourselves, the source of saving knowledge of the Godhead, and the giver of eternal life to the church catholic. (Matthew 1:24-25; Mark 15:20-37; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 17:20-21; Acts 1:9-11; 4:12; Romans 5:17; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 1:2; 9:15. Cf. Articles II-IV; the Nicene Creed, BCP.)

**4. The Only Saviour** Human sin is prideful rebellion against God's authority, expressing itself in our refusing to love both the Creator and his creatures. Sin corrupts our nature and its fruit is injustice, oppression, personal and social disintegration, alienation, and guilt before God; it destroys hope and leads to a future devoid of any enjoyment of either God or good. From the guilt, shame, power, and path of sin, Jesus Christ is the only Saviour; penitent faith in him is the only way of salvation.

By his atoning sacrifice on the cross for our sins, Jesus overcame the powers of darkness and secured our redemption and justification. By his bodily rising he guaranteed the future resurrection and eternal inheritance of all believers. By his regenerating gift of the Spirit, he restores our fallen nature and renews us in his own image. Thus in every generation he is the way, the truth, and the life for sinful individuals, and the architect of restored human community. (John 14:6; Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-33; 4:12; Romans 3:22-25; 1 Corinthians 15:20-24; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 4:14; 5:11-12. Cf. Articles II-IV, XI, XV, XVIII, XXXI.)

**5. The Spirit of Life** The Holy Spirit, "the Lord, the Giver of life," sent to the church at Pentecost by the Father and the Son, discloses the glory of Jesus Christ, convicts of sin, renews the sinner's inner being, induces faith, equips for righteousness, creates communion, and empowers for service. Life in the Spirit is a supernaturalizing of our natural existence and a true foretaste of heaven. The loving unity of Spirit-filled Christians and churches is a powerful sign of the truth of Christianity. (Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:2-5; Psalm 51:11; John 3:5-6; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 6:19; 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 4:4-6; 5:22-26; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 2 Timothy 3:16. Cf. Article V; The Nicene Creed.)

**6. The Authority of the Bible** The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are "God's Word written," inspired and authoritative, true and trustworthy, coherent, sufficient for salvation, living and powerful as God's guidance for belief and behaviour. The trinitarian, Christ-centred, redemption-oriented faith of the Bible is embodied in the historic ecumenical creeds and the Anglican foundational documents. To this basic understanding of Scripture, the Holy Spirit leads God's people and the church's counsels in every age through tradition and reason prayerfully and reverently employed. The church may not judge the Scriptures, selecting and discarding from among their teachings. But Scripture under Christ judges the church for its faithfulness to his revealed truth. (Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 40:8; 55:11; Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35; 14:26; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:17-19; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21. Cf. Articles VI-VIII, XX.)

**7. The Church of God** The supernatural society called the church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is the community of believers, justified through faith in Christ, incorporated into the risen life of Christ, and set under the authority of Holy Scripture as the word of Christ. The church on earth is united through Christ to the church in heaven in the communion of the saints. Through the church's ministry of the word and sacraments of the Gospel, God ministers life in Christ to the faithful, thereby empowering them for worship, witness, and service. In the life of the church only that which may be proved from Scripture should be held to be essential to the faith and that which is non-essential should not be required of anyone to be believed or be enforced as a matter of doctrine, discipline, or worship. (Ephesians 3:10-21; 5:23, 27; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 3: 14-17. Cf. Articles XIX, XX and XXI.)

**8. The New Life in Christ** God made human beings in the divine image so that they might glorify and enjoy their creator forever, but since the Fall, sin has alienated us all from God and disorders human motivation and action at every point. As atonement and justification restore us to fellowship with God by pardoning sin, so regeneration and sanctification renew us in the likeness of Christ by overcoming sin. The Holy Spirit, who helps us practice the disciplines of the Christian life, increasingly transforms us through them. Sinlessness, however, is not given in this world, and we who believe remain flawed "in thought, word and deed" until we are perfected in heaven. (Genesis 1:26-28; 3; John 3:5-6; 16:13.; Romans 3:23-24; 5:12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 3:17- 18; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 2:1-5; Philippians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:10-13. Cf. Articles IX- XVI; Book of Alternative Services, p. 191.)

**9. The Church's Ministry** The Holy Spirit bestows distinctive gifts upon all Christians for the purpose of glorifying God and building up his church in truth and love. All Christians are called in their baptism to be ministers, regardless of gender, race, age, or socioeconomic status. All God's people must seek to find and fulfil the particular form of service for which God has called and equipped them. Within the priesthood of all

believers we honour the ministry of word and sacrament to which bishops, priests and deacons are set apart by the Ordinal. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:11; 12:4-7, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:1, 12-13; 5:17; Hebrews 2:11; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10. Cf Articles XIX, XXIII.)

**10. The Church's Worship** The primary calling of the church, as of every Christian, is to offer worship, in the Spirit and according to truth, to the God of creation, providence, and grace. The essential dimensions of worship are praise and thanksgiving for all good things, proclamation and celebration of the glory of God and of Jesus Christ, prayer for human needs and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and self-offering for service. All liturgical forms --verbal, musical, and ceremonial -- stand under the authority of Scripture. The Book of Common Prayer provides a biblically-grounded doctrinal standard, and should be retained as the norm for all alternative liturgies. It should not be revised in the theologically-divided climate of the contemporary church. The Book of Alternative Services meets a widely-felt need for contemporary liturgy, and brings life and joy to many Anglican worshipers. No form of worship can truly exalt Christ or draw forth true devotion to him without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer, public and private, is central to the health and renewal of the church. Healing, spiritual and physical, is a welcome aspect of Anglican worship. (John 4:24; 16:8-15; Acts 1:8; 2:42-47; Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:7; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 5:19. Cf. The Solemn Declaration of 1893, p. viii, BCP; Articles XXV, XXXIV.)

**11. The Priority of Evangelism** Evangelism means proclaiming Jesus Christ as divine Saviour, Lord, and Friend, in a way that invites people to come to God through him, to worship and serve him, and to seek the empowering of the Holy Spirit for their life of discipleship in the community of the church. All Christians are called to witness to Christ, as a sign of love both to him and to their neighbours. The task, which is thus a matter of priority, calls for personal training and a constant search for modes of persuasive outreach. We sow the seed, and look to God for the fruit. (Matthew 5:13-16; 28:19-20; John 3:16-18; 20:21; Acts 2:37-39; 5:31-32; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 15:2-4; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 5:20; 1 Peter 3:15.)

**12. The Challenge of Global Mission** Cross-cultural evangelism and pastoral care remain necessary responses to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. His command to preach the gospel world-wide, making disciples and planting churches, still applies. The church's mission requires missions. Christ and his salvation must be proclaimed sensitively and energetically everywhere, at home and abroad, and cross-cultural mission must be supported by praying, giving, and sending. Global mission involves partnership and interchange, and missionaries sent by younger churches to Canada should be welcomed. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 10:2; Romans 15:23-24; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 9:22-23; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 8:1-4, 7; Ephesians 6:19-20; Philippians 2:5-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8.)

**13. The Challenge of Social Action** The gospel constrains the church to be "salt" and "light" in the world, working out the implications of biblical teaching for the right ordering of social, economic, and political life, and for humanity's stewardship of creation. Christians must exert themselves in the cause of justice and in acts of compassion. While no social system can be identified with the coming Kingdom of God, social action is an integral part of our obedience to the Gospel. (Genesis 1:26-28; Isaiah 30:18; 58:6-10; Amos 5:24; Matthew 5:13-16; 22:37-40; 25:31-46; Luke 4:17-21; John 20:21; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; James 2:14-26; 1 John 4:16; Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10. Cf. Article XXXVIII.)

**14. The Standards of Sexual Conduct** God designed human sexuality not only for procreation but also for the joyful expression of love, honour, and fidelity between wife and husband. These are the only sexual relations that biblical theology deems good and holy. Adultery, fornication, and homosexual unions are intimacies contrary to God's design. The church must seek to minister healing and wholeness to those who are sexually scarred, or who struggle with ongoing sexual temptations, as most people do. Homophobia and all forms of sexual hypocrisy and abuse are evils against which Christians must ever be on their guard. The church may not lower God's standards of sexual morality for any of its members, but must honour God by upholding these standards tenaciously in face of society's departures from them. Congregations must seek to meet the particular needs for friendship and community that single persons have. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-24; Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-12; Luke 7:36-50; John 8:1-11; Romans 1:21-28; 3:22-24; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 13-16; 7:7; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; 3:2-4, 12.)

**15. The Family and the Call to Singleness** The family is a divinely ordained focus of love, intimacy, personal growth and stability for women, men and children. Divorce, child abuse, domestic violence, rape, pornography, parental absenteeism, sexist domination, abortion, common-law relationships, and homosexual partnerships, all reflect weakening of the family ideal. Christians must strengthen family life through teaching, training, and active support, and work for socio-political conditions that support the family. Single-parent families and victims of family breakdown have special needs to which congregations must respond with sensitivity and support. Singleness also is a gift from God and a holy vocation. While single, Christians are called to celibacy and God will give them grace to live in chastity. (Psalm 119:9-11; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 John 3:14-15.)

**The New Beginning** Together we reaffirm the Anglican Christianity that finds expression in the historic standards of the ecumenical creeds, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Solemn Declaration of 1893, and the 1962 Book of Common Prayer. Respect for these standards strengthens our identity and communion. In humility we recognize we have often been ashamed of the gospel we have received and disobedient to the Lord of the Church. God helping us, we resolve to maintain our heritage of faith and transmit it intact. This fullness of

faith is needed both for Anglican renewal and for the effective proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We invite all Anglicans to join us in affirming the above as essentials of Christian faith, practice, and nurture today. In this declaration we believe that we are insisting upon only what is genuinely essential. In regard to non-essentials, we should recognize and respect that liberty and that comprehensiveness which have been among the special graces of our Anglican heritage.

Participants in Essentials '94, with the Sponsoring Bodies:

Anglican Renewal Ministries of Canada Barnabas Anglican Ministries The Prayer Book Society of Canada

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