

A Place to Stand

Statement of Faith

PREFACE

The mission of the Church is, according to Jesus' Great Commission, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). In a fresh commitment to that mission, we join together in common confession of the Gospel and in a radical commitment to support one another in accordance with classical Anglican orthodoxy.

A COMMON CONFESSION OF THE GOSPEL

The Gospel and the Triune God: We rejoice in the grace of the Triune God, who has forgiven our sins and given us redemption in Jesus Christ. We proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, who became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, lived a life of perfect obedience to his heavenly Father, died on the cross to atone for the sins of the world, and rose bodily in accordance with the Scriptures. God the Holy Spirit draws us to faith in Jesus Christ, through whom alone we are justified and found acceptable by God the Father.

Christian Obedience: We confess Jesus as the Lord to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given by the Father. We commit ourselves to follow him and love him above all else and to conform our lives to his example and teaching by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Scripture: We believe all Scriptures were "written for our learning" (Romans 15:4), that they are "God's Word written," and that we are to "hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them." We commit ourselves to regular Bible study and to preach and teach only that which is in accordance with Holy Scripture.

Congregational Life. We hold corporate worship, discipleship, and mission to be interconnected and indispensable aspects of our response to God as he revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ. We are committed to being sacrificially involved in all three aspects of congregational life.

Mission and Missions. The Risen Lord commissioned his disciples to preach the gospel and to follow his commandments. The mission of the Church includes both evangelistic proclamation and deeds of love and service. We commit ourselves and our resources to this mission, both locally and to the uttermost parts of the earth. We affirm our particular responsibility to know, love, and serve the Lord in our local settings and contexts. Since the biblical pattern of witness moves from the local to the global, we will endeavor to be well-informed about our local communities and active in church planting, evangelism, service, social justice, and cross-cultural, international mission, with particular concern for the poor and the unreached peoples of the world.

Historic Faith, Ecumenical Vision. We affirm the Faith of the Church as it is set forth in the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds and in the classical Prayer Book tradition, including those documents contained in the "Historical Documents" section of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (BCP p.863). We further affirm the principles of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (BCP p.876) as an expression of the normative authority of Holy Scripture and as a basis for our present unity with brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion and for the future reunion of all the divided branches of Christ's one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

CONTEMPORARY IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL

Christian mission is rooted in unchanging biblical revelation. At particular times, however, specific challenges to authentic faith and holiness arise which require thoughtful and vigorous response. We therefore speak to the following issues of our time and culture.

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ. While religions and philosophies of the world are not without elements of truth, Jesus Christ alone is the full revelation of God. In and through the Gospel, Jesus judges and corrects all views and doctrines. All persons everywhere need to learn of him, come to know and believe in him, and receive forgiveness and new life in him, as there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Church and State. Biblical social commandments and Christian ethical principles are foundational to the well-being of every society. Recognizing the call of Christians to be faithful witnesses and a challenging presence in society, we are committed to seek ways to express these commandments and principles in all spheres of life, including the public life of the nation.

Sanctity of Life. All human life is a sacred gift from God and is to be protected and defended from conception to natural death. We will uphold the sanctity of life and bring the grace and compassion of Christ to those who face the realities of previous abortion, unwanted pregnancy, and end-of-life illness.

True Inclusivity. In grateful response to Christ Jesus, in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, we will extend the welcome of the Church to every person, regardless of race, sex, social or economic status, sexual orientation, or past behavior. We will oppose prejudice in ourselves and others and renounce any false notion of inclusivity that denies that all are sinners who need to repent.

Marriage, Family, and the Single Life. God has instituted marriage to be a life-long union of husband and wife, intended for their mutual joy, help, and comfort, and, when it is God's will, for the procreation and nurture of children. Divorce is always contrary to God's original intention, though in a fallen world it is sometimes a tragic necessity. The roles of father and mother, exercised in a variety of ways, are God-given and profoundly important since they are the chief providers of moral instruction and godly living. The single life, either by call or by circumstance, is honored by God. It is therefore important for unmarried persons to embrace and be embraced by the Christian family.

Human Sexuality. Sexuality is inherent in God's creation of every human person in his image as male and female. All Christians are called to chastity: husbands and wives by exclusive sexual fidelity to one another and single persons by abstinence from sexual intercourse. God intends and enables all people to live within these boundaries, with the help and in the fellowship of the Church.

SUPPORT OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We desire to be supportive of congregations, dioceses, provinces, and the national structures of the Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion. However, when there arise within the Church at any level tendencies, pronouncements, and practices contrary to biblical, classical Anglican doctrinal and moral standards, we must not and will not support them. Councils can err and have erred, and the Church has no authority to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written (*Articles of Religion* XIX, XX - BCP p.871). When teachings and practices contrary to Scripture and to this orthodox Anglican perspective are permitted within the Church - or even authorized by the General Convention - in obedience to God, we will

disassociate ourselves from those specific teachings and practices and will resist them in every way possible.

INVITATION TO ASSOCIATION

We invite all members of the Episcopal Church who concur in this classical Anglican perspective, to stand with us for mutual enlightenment, encouragement, mission, and ministry, and, where necessary, for protection of the right to live and minister in obedience to Scripture, Anglican tradition, and conscience. We further invite all persons who share this faith to stand with us.

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