

# Santa Fé Statement

*April 2001*

The Council of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, meeting in Santa Fé, New Mexico, in April 2001, calls upon the Church to rethink completely its practice and understanding of mission.

Our hearts burned within us as our Canadian members shared the story of how the Anglican Church of Canada embraced and implemented the government's policy of assimilation of indigenous peoples as an opportunity to further its mission. Children were taken out of their homes and removed to distant residential schools, run by the churches. Grave injustices were committed by the Anglican and other churches, with dire consequences to the peoples and ultimately to the churches themselves.

As a Council dedicated to the renewal of liturgy and mission, we asked ourselves how the Church could have come to be an agent of the kind of "mission" revealed in this story. It prompts us to acknowledge our own inherent racism, past collusion, and present complicity in such policies. Evangelism predicated upon the conversion of individual hearts to a relationship with Jesus is insufficient to prevent such evils as the deprivation of culture, and may serve as little more than a means for achieving assimilation. The Gospel is not a possession of the Church; nor a one-way gift; nor an instrument of the power of state or culture.

Accordingly, we urge the Episcopal Church to approach with caution the proposals of the U.S. Government for "faith-based initiatives," to avoid the future occurrence of tragedies similar to those in Canada about which we heard. We further urge both churches to engage in the formation of faithful communities as signs of healing and reconciliation. We therefore call upon the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., the Anglican Church of Canada, and our brothers and sisters in other denominations, to reconsider their foundational understanding of mission, always beginning with God's purpose for creation and the reign of justice on earth.

Santa Fé, New Mexico