

# Our Christian Heritage

## Confederation, National Symbols and Emblems

Canada's coat of arms, adopted in 1921, stands upon the Latin phrase "A Mari Usque Ad Mare," which when translated means "from sea to sea" a reference to Psalms 72:8. The present design of the arms of Canada was drawn by Mrs. Cathy Bursey-Sabourin, Fraser Herald at the Canadian Heraldic Authority, office of the Governor General of Canada, and faithfully depicts the arms described in the words of the Royal Proclamation dated November 21, 1921. The present design was approved in 1994 and shows a ribbon behind the shield with the motto of the Order of Canada, "Desiderantes meliorem patriam" which translates "They desire a better country" which stems from Hebrews 11:16. This version replaces a former design drawn by Mr. Alan Beddoe.

Canada's official motto "A Mari usque ad Mare" meaning "From sea to sea" is based on Psalms 72:8, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." The first official use of this motto came in 1906 when it was engraved on the head of the mace of the Legislative Assembly of the new Province of Saskatchewan. The wording of the motto came to the attention of Sir Joseph Pope, then Under Secretary of State, who was impressed with its meaning. He later proposed it as motto for the new design of the coat of arms, which was approved by Order in Council on April 21, 1921 and by Royal Proclamation on November 21, 1921.

Before the fall of 1983, July 1 was called "Dominion Day" which was a recognition of the sovereignty of God. With only twelve Members of Parliament present, the private members bill that proposed changing "Dominion Day" to "Canada Day" was passed. The Canadian Parliament changed the name to "Canada Day" within five minutes and without debate. On October 27, 1982 with the granting of Royal Assent it became official.

## Canadian's In History

In 1533, Jacques Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence River to Montréal. To commemorate the founding of Montréal, Cartier wrote in his diary "...we all kneeled down in the company of the Indians and with our hands raised toward heaven yielded our thanks to God."

The "Father of New France," Samuel de Champlain, wrote in his diary about the natives, "... (the aborigines are) living without God and without religion... I thereupon concluded in my private judgement that I should be committing a great sin if I did not make it my business to devise some means of bringing them to the knowledge of God."

In 1886, William Howland ran for Mayor of Toronto. During his campaign, Howland would urge voters, "Let us keep the city, a God-fearing city, and I would rather see it thus than the greatest and richest city in the continent". He won and became Toronto's 25th Mayor.

David Thompson, explorer and statesman, developed maps from his surveys between 1784 and 1812. Many of his maps are still being used today. Thompson's words give the reason he endured the physical hardship of exploration "so that these physically impenetrable barriers may be traversed and the Gospel be spread."

Sir Samuel Leonard Tilley, Premier of New Brunswick and one of the Fathers of Confederation, rose each morning to start his day with prayer and Scripture reading. As the 33 fathers gathered in Charlottetown to discuss and draft the terms of the British North American Act, there were many suggestions on what to call this new “United Canada.” That morning, as Tilley read from Psalm 72:8, he became so convinced that Canada should be a nation under God, that when he came down to the Conference session, he presented the inspired “Dominion of Canada.” The other Fathers readily agreed and accepted. Today, The following words hang in the corridor near the confederation Chamber in Province House: “In the hearts of the delegates who assembled in this room on September 1, 1864, was born the Dominion of Canada. Providence being their guide they builded better than they knew.”

## The Education System

Bishop John Strachan, a leader who helped form our public education system, stated that “the church must continue to play a central role in education. You cannot divorce religion from education because schools will inevitably reflect the philosophical and religious or (irreligious) biases of those who direct them.”

Egerton Ryerson, father of public education in Canada, wanted a “common patriotic ground of comprehensiveness and avowed (or maintain) Christian principles.” He wrote the textbook First Lessons in Christian Morals which was published in 1871. Ryerson clearly said that the Ontario school system was to be a “Christian public school system.”

Many of our greatest Canadian universities were founded as denominational seminaries to educate future church leaders:

- King’s College in Nova Scotia, now known as Dalhousie University, was founded by the Anglicans.
- The University of Ottawa, founded by the Roman Catholic Church, and one of Canada’s first bilingual Universities. (Corrected as of December 14, 2010)
- McMaster University, was founded by the Baptists.

The Ontario Public School Act of 1896 stated that “It shall be the duty of every teacher of a public school to teach diligently and faithfully all of the subjects in the public school course of study; to maintain proper order and discipline in his pupils in his school; to encourage his pupils in the pursuit of learning; to include, by precept and example, respect for religion and the principles of Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues.”

## The Laws of The Land

In 1960, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker introduced the Canadian Bill of Rights. It begins with, “The Parliament of Canada, affirming that the Canadian Nation is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God...” The Canadian Bill of Rights can be found [here](#).

In 1981, Pierre Elliott Trudeau signed his name to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter begins with, “Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of the law.”