

Bishop's Note - Why I'm an Anglican #6 - We Honor Intellectual Inquiry and Pursuit

In the late 1980's and the early 1990's there was an ad program that the church put out that had a picture of a coat rack in the Narthex of a church with the caption that said, "Check your hat not your brain at the door." I agree with that sentiment and the Anglican church is at her best when we acknowledge the natural intelligence that God has given us and then work on developing that intelligence with rigorous study of the Word of God and the Doctrines of the Church.

Anglicanism is a rational form of Christianity and thus a rational form of pastoral care, why? Because we take questions and intellectual curiosity seriously. Within the Anglican fellowship if you have problems or difficulties you are not immediately squelched or kicked out - your thoughts will be taken seriously within the church - you may ask any question raise any problem. If on the basis of your study of scripture you want a new way of expressing a biblical truth - the Anglican way is to discuss it and debate it to sort out whether you are on track or off track. In the ACNA we are keen in learning how to express age old Biblical Truths in a manner that can be understood by a modern pagan culture.

Secondly, it has always been the way of Anglican leadership to keep in touch with the world of thought and intellectual pursuits. It is important to note that the English reformers were highly educated Oxford and Cambridge men. A founding principle of the Anglican church is to examine the surrounding culture through the lens of Scripture, Reason and Tradition which is often referred to as the "three legged stool." That examination is not simply done in a laboratory or library but in order to engage and confront the culture - thus making the church a cultural influence intellectually.

By engaging the culture we take a risk of being overly influenced by the culture and I would argue that too many of the mainline denominations have simply given into the surrounding culture- embracing and blessing the culture. This is a danger and requires us to be extra vigilant and intentional but it doesn't mean that we should simply withdraw from the challenge of transforming the culture by the power of God. On the other hand some denominations have sought to withdraw from the world seeking to be the Lord's people in an alien land but Anglicanism seeks to engage the world with the aim of converting it and transforming it. If we read Acts chapter 17 this is the model of St. Paul - to engage and transform. I believe that the Anglican way is more apostolic, more scriptural and more intellectually honest.

God Bless You All!

Bishop Menees