

Bishop's Note: Why I'm Anglican #9 - Because We're International

This morning, I continue my series on why it is that I am an Anglican. So far, I've said that I am Anglican because we are: Biblical, Liturgical, Sacramental, Evangelical, Rational, Episcopal, Ecumenical, and International.

In May of 2012, I was blessed to attend an FCA (Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans) meeting in London, where the international flavor of Anglicanism - which had always been theoretical to me - became real. How powerful it was for me to have dinner with the Archbishop of Chile, the Bishop of Iran, and a Bishop from Uganda. We shared a meal together, prayed together, and spoke of our faith in Christ. As we did, it became clear that while we came from very different cultures and backgrounds, we shared the same Christian Culture - based on a common understanding of Christ, the Church, and our Mission in the world.

We have the evangelical spirit of the English Reformers to thank for our international flavor and expression - for a truly catholic (universal) church. In short, where the English Navy and economic traders went, so went the Church of England. This missionary zeal took extra focus with the formation of the Church Mission Society in the eighteenth century, under the leadership of many evangelicals, not least of whom was William Wilberforce. In a short time, the CMS began to focus on Africa and India. They then focused on the South Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand. Today, millions of men and women have come to Christ through the efforts of those original missionaries and their successors.

However, the focus was not only calling individual people to conversion, but also engaging the culture, with the intention of transforming all of society. This engagement of the culture is meant to Christianize the culture by injecting moral values which we want to see present, whether or not everyone is Christian. William Wilberforce's leading of the church to engage the sin of forced slavery is an example that affected people in England, Africa, and the entire world.

In short, Anglican missionaries struggled and sacrificed to humanize and affect the culture through Christian morality in the education, health care, and legal systems. Unfortunately, this heritage is currently being challenged from within, by liberal Anglicans who argue that influencing culture with Christian morals, education, etc., etc., is oppressive. I say "huye" to that line of thought, and point to the amazing ministry, at great personal cost, that is being carried out day in and day out around the world by modern Anglican missionaries.

I love being a part of a church that speaks as many languages as exist on the earth. A church that expresses her love for Christ in hundreds of different cultures, but all with a similar church-culture and style of worship based on the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. Last Sunday, while I celebrated Holy Eucharist in Porterville, a similar and familiar worship was offered in Lima, Toronto, Nairobi, Sydney, Calcutta, Vientien,

and Singapore.

Over the next two weeks, I'll wrap up this series of the Bishop's Notes with an examination of the Three Streams and the Three Legged Stool!

God bless you all!
Bishop Menees