

Bishop's Note: Why I'm Anglican #8 - Because We're Ecumenical

This morning I continue my explanations of 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, and Ecumenical.

Allow me to unpack what I mean by Ecumenical. A quick dictionary search tells us that the term Ecumenical comes from the Greek **οἰκουμένη** "*oikoumene*," which means "the whole inhabited world." When I think of "Ecumenical," I think of the Ecumenical Councils which took place between the fourth and eighth centuries, and which brought the church worldwide together to make decisions regarding faith, doctrine, and polity.

Unfortunately, with the split of the Western and Eastern Church, and then the many splits since, when we refer to "ecumenical," we are referring to denominations coming together to work in unity with a common mission for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe that is essential, both for the spread of the gospel and for the goal of the reunification of the church, so that we can truly be a catholic (universal) church!

We work ecumenically with other like minded Christians for the kingdom and, in doing so, fulfill Jesus' words from the gospel of Matthew: "***And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.***" (Matthew 24:11-14 ESV)

I should clarify here that Ecumenical and Interfaith are NOT synonymous - though many mainline denominations seem to think so. We can work cooperatively with men and woman of good will who are not Christian, to be sure. However, this does not mean that we change our standards or make accommodations to work with other faiths. Interfaith dialogue on issues of faith are important to gain an accurate assessment of their thoughts and beliefs, but those discussions should be followed up with a clear invitation to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

As members of the Anglican Church in North America, we have been so blessed to receive succor and support from so many Christian brothers and sisters from other denominations. When I first left the Episcopal Church, it was the kindness of Pastor Mike Law and Community Christian Church in San Marcos, CA, who offered us a place to meet, which allowed a new church to be birthed. In the Diocese of San Joaquin, we've benefited from the Baptists, Lutherans (Missouri Synod), Assembly of God, and many other denominations, who have reached out to us in love and concern.

Ultimately, as Anglicans, we embrace Ecumenism because we desire to be reunited on the common belief that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

- September 7 Bishop at Cathedral Fundraiser for Legal Defense Fund
- September 8 Last Day to Submit Resolutions for Convention
- September 8 Bishop at St. John's in Porterville, CA
- September 9 Last Day to Submit Canonical Changes for Convention
- September 9 Last Day to Submit Nominations for Convention
- September 15 Bishop at Christ Church in Lemoore, CA
- September 16 Mission Support Applications Due
- September 18 Deacon's Day at St. Paul's Church in Visalia
- September 21 Delta Pre-Convention Meeting at St. John's in Stockton, CA
- October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA