



Bishop's Note

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church #1 "Let Brotherly Love Continue."

1 "Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. 5 Keep your life a free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;

what can man do to me?"

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not "be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them." (Hebrews 13:1-9 ESV)

Over the next eight weeks in the Bishop's Note, I would like to begin to explore this familiar scripture from the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 13:1-9). In these nine verses, the author of this letter gives profound and practical advice to the church - advice that is as good today as it was in the first century, when this was written.

The author of the epistle does not identify himself, though we do know he was friends with Timothy (13:23) and that the church he's writing to had suffered persecution, including the confiscation of property and imprisonment (10:32-34). Scholars also believe that this church was made up of Jewish Christians who were tempted to leave the life of Grace and return to the old familiar life under the law of Moses. Hebrews speaks to the church of the first century and of the twenty-first century, with principles that apply directly to the Diocese of San Joaquin.

"Let brotherly love continue" (vs. 1) The church of the first century was marked by "brotherly love" (φιλαδελφία (philadelphia). The church of the twenty-first century should also be marked by brotherly love - the kind of love that gives without expectation of anything in return. Jesus said, ***"A new commandment I give to you, that***

you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. " (John 13:34-35) That brotherly love is not limited to those in our families, or even to those in the church. In fact, Jesus was clear that his love was not only for the 99 sheep in his fold, but also for the 1 that was lost. (Luke 15:3-7) The Church, as the body of Christ, must display that same love for the lost - those who do not yet know Jesus and don't even know that they need him. That love for the lost must be the distinguishing characteristic of the church.

This week, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet the Most Rev. Ben Kwashi the Archbishop of Jos, Nigeria, along with a group clergy and church planters, in Chicago. Archbishop Kwashi spoke of the persecution, pain, and poverty that Anglican Christians have experienced over the past decade. When asked what we could pray for, Archbishop Kwashi did not ask for money, or even for peace. Archbishop Kwashi asked us to pray for a resurgence of love in the church. He explained that Christian Love transforms and defeats violence and terrorism. Secondly, Abp. Kwashi asked us to pray for honesty, because all poverty is the result of dishonesty.

Brothers and sisters of the Diocese of San Joaquin, join me in praying for love and honesty in the Anglican Church of Nigeria, and in the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin!
God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

October 4-6 Clergy Wives Retreat at ECCO
October 6 Bishop @ Grace Anglican in Turlock, CA
October 9 Bishop @ Daughters of the Holy Cross Quiet day at ECCO
October 10 Bishop @ St. Mary's in Fresno, CA
October 10 Bishop @ St. James in Lindsey, CA
October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA
October 18 Delegate and Meal Forms for Convention Due to Diocesan Office
October 18-26 Bishop @ GAFCON II in Nairobi Kenya
October 19 Diocesan Council
October 20 Sequoia Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at St. Paul's in Visalia, CA
October 25-27 Well North Youth Retreat at St. Luke's in Merced, CA
October 26 Yosemite Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at Grace Anglican Church in Turlock, CA

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church #2 "Do No Neglect To Show Hospitality To Strangers"



Last week in The Bishop's Note, I introduced a new series on the Instructions to the Church from the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author of Hebrews closed the epistle in the thirteenth chapter by giving a charge to the church that began with this foundation: ***"Let brotherly love continue."*** (13:1) He builds upon that declaration by describing acts that demonstrate that love, including verse two, which states: ***"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."*** (13:2)

Hebrews states that a clear sign of "brotherly love" is showing hospitality to strangers. In the first century, the virtue of hospitality was held in the highest esteem. Travel was dangerous, and Christians had to assist one another. Prior to the conversion of the Emperor Constantine (AD 312), the danger level for Christian travelers was even higher than for pagans. Thus the early church, which met primarily in secret, would put out the Christian symbol of the fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ (Ichthys), which served as an acronym for "Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ", (Iēsous Christos, Theou Yios, Sōtēr), and which translates into English as "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior". (Wikipedia) This fish would be on the side of a building like graffiti, with the fish's nose pointing in the direction where the underground church would meet. Thus Christian visitors in a city would have a road map of where to go in order to worship with brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Receiving those strangers was then, and is now, of the highest priority.

Hebrews tells us that, in welcoming the stranger, we may never know when we are entertaining angels. This may be a reference to the story in the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, where Abraham and Sarah welcome three strangers into their midst, who turn out to be three angels (or as some argue the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

We need to be intentional about welcoming the visitors to our churches. This means that we must have well trained greeters meeting people at the door as they come to visit. We need parishioners ready to sit with them in order to help them navigate the liturgy if they are not familiar with it, and to invite them to coffee hour afterwards.

I suspect we've all been to churches where we were warmly welcomed, and to churches where we were present but not seen. Just reading these words probably brings back memories for you. For me, I will never forget being in Alexandria, Virginia several years ago. I arrived at the service early, took a bulletin off the table in the foyer, and made my way down towards the front of the church. Minutes prior to the service, an usher came forward with a family and politely asked me to move. "Of course," I said and slid over toward the end of the pew to make room. The usher said, "Oh I'm sorry, this is a family pew; we have pews in the back for visitors." I politely got up and walked out of that church, never to return.

What a tragedy, if anyone visiting one of our churches would not be warmly welcomed and invited into the fellowship for worship, prayer, and the opportunity to become a valued part of the body of Christ in the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin!

God Bless you all!

Bishop Menees

October 10 Bishop @ St. Mary's in Fresno, CA 9:30am
October 10 Bishop @ St. James in Lindsey, CA 3:00pm
October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA
October 18 Delegate and Meal Forms for Convention Due to Diocesan Office
October 18-26 Bishop @ GAFCON II in Nairobi Kenya
October 19 Diocesan Council
October 20 Sequoia Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at St. Paul's in Visalia, CA
October 25-27 Well North Youth Retreat at St. Luke's in Merced, CA
October 26 Yosemite Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at Grace Anglican Church in Turlock, CA

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church

#3 "Remember Those Who Are In Prison."



This morning I continue my examination of Hebrews Chapter 13 verses 1-9, which offers instructions to the Church in a time of oppression and persecution.

Over the past two weeks we looked at verses 1-2: ***"1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"***.

Verse 3 continues giving us a concrete example of what "Brotherly Love" is: ***"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body."***

Hebrews speaks into a situation that we in the USA have a very difficult time identifying with. In the First Century, Christians who refused to utter the words *"Caesar is Lord"* and offer a pinch of incense before a statue of Caesar, were imprisoned, publicly flogged, and humiliated. This often meant economic disaster for the individual and, of course, the family, along with public embarrassment and loss of friendships. Jesus told the disciples, and us, that we are to pick up our cross and follow Him. (Matthew 14:24) When a brother or sister was imprisoned, the church came to their aid and the aid of the family. This was unique in the first century, and continues to be unique in the twenty first century - it is a mark of what it means to be the Church of God and the body of Christ.

Tomorrow my wife and I travel to Kenya for the GAFCON conference, just weeks after the terrorist attack at the Mall in Nairobi. Needless to say, a good deal of nervousness arose in us following the attack and we wondered to one another, "should we go?" Two weeks ago I participated in an international conference call hosted by Archbishop Peter Jensen of Sydney, Australia. Archbishop Jensen stressed the importance of standing with our Kenyan brothers and sisters in their hour of need - just as Hebrew's encourages the church to do - and thus made the decision all the more easy to make.

But what about us in the Diocese of San Joaquin? How do we fulfill this command of scripture to express brotherly love? By sharing the gospel with those in prison, and ministering to their families. KAIROS Prison Ministry is an up and coming ministry in

the diocese, and a wing of the national prison ministry. KAIROS (Greek for God's time as opposed to CRONOS - earthly time) is a four day retreat for prisoners that seeks to introduce people who have done very bad things and known the depth of sin and despair, to the love, grace, and transforming power of Jesus Christ. As I write this Bishop's Note, Christine Miller of Trinity, Bakersfield, is serving on a KAIROS retreat at the Women's Prison in Chowchilla. The Women's Prison at Chowchilla is one of two prisons in the Valley that have a KAIROS retreat - the other being the Men's Federal Prison in Atwater. Dcn. John LaMar, Chaplain Edwin Peraza, and I are working with KAIROS national to establish a KAIROS ministry at Pleasant Valley Men's Prison, which we pray will begin in 2014.

Over the years, I've had the great honor of serving on KAIROS retreat weekends, and have had the blessing of witnessing some of the very worst people come to Christ and have their lives transformed. While still serving their time in prison, they've become counselors, lay chaplains, and mentors to hundreds of other prisoners. These were not "jail house conversions," but truly and utterly transformed lives of Grace and Love.

This is not a ministry that all can participate in first hand, but it is a ministry that all can aid through prayer, writing letters, making place-mats, and through financial gifts. Information about KAIROS Ministries will be available at the Diocesan Convention November 8-9.

When we ***"Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them,"*** we discover that not only do we bless our brothers and sisters, but we are blessed ourselves.

God Bless you all!

Bishop Menees

October 18 Delegate and Meal Forms for Convention Due to Diocesan Office

October 18-26 Bishop @ GAFCON II in Nairobi, Kenya

October 20 Sequoia Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at St. Paul's in Visalia, CA

October 25-27 Well North Youth Retreat at St. Luke's in Merced, CA

October 26 Yosemite Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at Grace Anglican Church in Turlock, CA

November 8-9 Annual Diocesan Convention at St. James Cathedral in Fresno, CA

November 10 Bishop @ St. Matthias in Oakdale, CA

November 16 Diocesan Council

November 17 Bishop @ St. Phillip's in Coalinga, CA

December 9-11 Clergy Retreat at ECCO

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church

#4. "Let Marriage be Honored Among All."



In the first century, the Church catholic was under attack from every side: the Roman pagan government viewed Christians as a non-conforming oddity; Jews viewed Christians as sacrilegious pretenders; and within the church there were struggles between orthodox believers and proponents of Gnostic religions who were trying to insert themselves into the church.

In the midst of that struggle, God brought forth brave men and women to lead the church and proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was inspired by the Holy Spirit to instruct and encourage the Church to be strong, faithful, courageous, and loving.

In this morning's Bishop's Note we continue our examination of Hebrew's Chapter 13:1-9, and take up the issue of marriage. Hebrew's states: ***"1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."***

While written in the first century, this exhortation for the church to honor marriage and to maintain biblical sexual morality is absolutely vital to the life of the church and our society. We live in an environment that is increasingly like that of the first century. Marriage is challenged in the courtroom and in the classroom. The political and social emphasis is on acceptance and affirmation, rather than on honoring marriage and biblical morality. The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and the Diocese of San Joaquin oppose these innovations, and even though the courts legalize same sex marriage, I will not permit a priest in this diocese to preside at such a service.

However, that being said, the greatest threat we have to marriage is not from homosexuals challenging the laws of the land -- it is from the Church's own failure to maintain the sexual morality that we've been called to practice. Recent studies sadly point out that American Christians have nearly the same divorce rate as do non-Christians. (March 2008, Barna Research Group) The number of people having extra marital affairs is nearly the same for Christians and Non-Christians, and the same holds true for the number of men who regularly look

at internet pornography. George Barna, who conducted the divorce study, said:
"There no longer seems to be much of a stigma attached to divorce; it is now seen as an unavoidable rite of passage." Interviews with young adults suggest that they want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility. There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life."

While not taught in the church, this statement reflects a growing attitude among Christians in the church. If we want to honor marriage and practice biblical sexual morality, we need to get serious about biblical teaching in the church. We need to empower parents to teach their children, in word and example, the importance of marriage as a gift from God, meant to be lived out in a life long relationship between one man and one woman. Christians are to remain celibate prior to marriage, and chaste within marriage.

We will see a mighty strengthening of the church when we begin to practice what we preach!

God Bless you all!

Bishop Menees

October 25-27 Well North Youth Retreat at St. Luke's in Merced, CA

October 26 Yosemite Deanery Pre-Convention Meeting at Grace Anglican Church in Turlock, CA

November 8-9 Annual Diocesan Convention at St. James Cathedral in Fresno, CA

November 10 Bishop @ St. Matthias in Oakdale, CA

November 16 Diocesan Council

November 17 Bishop @ St. Phillip's in Coalinga, CA

December 8 Bishop @ St. Anselm's in Elk Grove, CA

December 1 Bishop @ St. Lukes in Merced, CA

December 9-11 Clergy Retreat at ECCO

January 2-5 Bishop @ Anglican 4th Day Weekend at ECCO

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church

#5. "Keep From the Love of Money."



This morning we continue with our study of Hebrew's 13 and God's instructions to the church. So far, we've looked at the need for the church to: Continue in Brotherly Love (13:1), Show hospitality to strangers (13:2), Remember those in prison (13:3), and Honor Marriage (13:4). This morning we continue with a scriptural imperative: Keep from the Love of Money (13:5-6).

"Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

I write this Bishop's Note from Nairobi, Kenya where I have been meeting with Anglican Leaders from around the world at the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) 2. There are 331 Bishops and Archbishops, and we've been meeting in a separate workshop on Leadership. I have been so very struck by the constant refrain from bishops in the Global South that the Love of Money is as difficult a burden and as great a sin in their churches as it is in the wealthy West and North. I should not be surprised since St. Paul warned his apprentice Timothy that, ***"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs."*** (1 Timothy 6:10) And Jesus himself was quick to point out that ***"You cannot serve God and money"*** (Mt. 6:24)

St. Paul was clear to say that money is not evil, but the Love of Money is a root for evil. As Christians, we are called to be counter cultural and not be in love with money or the power that comes with it. The love of money makes us fearful - believing that we will not have enough - and that hurts our stewardship. There is no question that if everyone in our congregations followed the biblical principle and tithed 10% of their income, then there would never be a question about being able to provide for the poor, the children, our outreach programs, or providing for our clergy. That fear is what Satan exploits in us when that little voice in our head says "there is no way you can tithe...you do great giving 2% - that's a heck of a lot better than the other people are doing."

When Florence and I were first married, I struggled with this. I was making \$1,800 a month before taxes, Florence was a full-time student and not working, and I wondered how we would make ends meet. When it came time to fill out our pledge card, I put down \$100 a month. Florence looked at that and asked if that was a tithe (knowing full

well it wasn't). I said, "Well no, but with our bills how can we make it if I add another \$80 a month to the church?" She responded that God would be faithful, and that, if we were obedient to God and returned to him, we'd be fine. Well, my wife was absolutely correct. Since 1990, we have given 10% of our income to the church, and more beyond that to outside organizations. In that time, we've never hurt, never been without, and - most importantly - we've learned to be content with what God has provided us as individuals and as a family.

How tragic and beautiful it has been here at GAFCON, to hear Bishops speak of the incredible pressures that they are under and the temptations that they receive from the liberal churches in the US and England to accept money to assist their diocese, but in accepting that money the strings of supporting a false gospel are attached. Likewise, how inspiring it has been to hear how they have remained faithful to Christ and rejected those offers. One bishop from Tanzania told my small group that he had been tempted, but that he believed in Jesus' promise that God's desire is to provide for his children all their needs (Mt. 6:25-34). While they rejected that support, God has provided for them, their diocese has grown, they've built a Cathedral and Diocesan Center, and built 14 Churches in the last 7 years. When I heard of his faith and God's provision, I was humbled at the times I have worried for myself and the diocese.

These African Bishops have learned, as have Florence and I, that God is good and faithful - that he desires to give to his children, always providing for our needs, though not necessarily for our wants. The problem is that we confuse our needs and our wants.

In our own diocese, we have seen demonstrated again and again that we have a faithful God who provides. We stepped out in obedience and separated from the Episcopal Church (Ephesians 5:7), and we have now come very close to raising the needed funds for our trial. In the mean time, it has been rough with our monies frozen, but we've learned to be content with what we have and to trust in The Lord! And to that I say AMEN!

God Bless you all!

Bishop Menees

**Open Casket Viewing and Vigil for
The Rt. Rev. John-David Schofield**

**Friday November 1 at 7:45 a.m. through
Saturday November 2 at 8:00 a.m.**

**St. James' Cathedral
Chapel of the Holy Innocents
4147 E. Dakota Ave.
Fresno, CA 93726**

Vigil services on Friday, November 1

7:45 a.m. Matins and Traditional Service

6:00 p.m. Contemporary Service

7:00 p.m. Spanish Service

Funeral service date and location pending please check the website for updates

November 10 Bishop @ St. Matthias in Oakdale, CA

November 16 Diocesan Council

November 17 Bishop @ St. Phillip's in Coalinga, CA

December 8 Bishop @ St. Anselm's in Elk Grove, CA

December 1 Bishop @ St. Lukes in Merced, CA

December 9-11 Clergy Retreat at ECCO

January 2-5 Bishop @ Anglican 4th Day Weekend at ECCO

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church

#6. "Remember Your Leaders."



This morning we continue our journey with the author of the book of Hebrews, studying the instructions that the Lord has given us for the church. So far we've examined the need for the church to: Continue in Brotherly Love (13:1), Show Hospitality to Strangers (13:2), Remember Those in Prison (13:3), Honor Marriage (13:4), and Keep from the Love of Money (13:5-6). This morning we continue with a scriptural imperative to: Remember your Leaders (13:7). Specifically, we are to:

"7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."

The author of Hebrews is telling the people of the church to remember those leaders who have faithfully taught the Word of God to them. These are the ones who shared the Good News of Jesus Christ and whose lives reflected that same grace and love that Jesus shared with his disciples. We are not only to listen to their words, but to honor them by imitating their way of life and, most importantly, their faith.

As I write this Bishop's Note, it has not even been 24 hours since I received the news of Bishop Schofield's death. How appropriate it is, then, that today I write on verse 7 of chapter 13, because it is so easy for me to think of one such leader - the Rt. Rev. John-David Mercer Schofield, IV Bishop of the Diocese of San Joaquin.

I first met Bishop Schofield in 2009, when I had the great privilege of sitting at the feet of his teaching when he came to San Diego to lead the San Diego Anglicans clergy retreat. The theme of the retreat was Forgiveness, and I found myself instinctively knowing that I was sitting under the teaching of a truly godly man. How impressive it was that he could teach for two hours a session, regularly quoting scripture, and never look at his notes or the Bible. His teaching was straight forward, passionate, well illustrated, and grounded in the Good News of Jesus Christ. Bishop Schofield's ability to teach was clearly a gift of the Holy Spirit - I knew, when listening to him, that I was not only getting a glimpse into his life, but that God was using him to speak directly into my life. Of course each person present at that retreat felt the same way - that is the mark of an anointed leader.

While I had met Bishop Schofield a few times after that retreat and prior to my being

called to be his successor, it was in those first months of being in the diocese that I fell in love with +John-David as a father in God and a brother in Christ. I'll never forget the fall of 2011. I had been in the diocese only a week or so, and I was on the football field at my son's elementary school watching the end of his football practice. I struck up a conversation with another dad, who turned out to be a local pastor, Jymme Foote, who was also relatively new to the Fresno and trying to get his feet wet. He explained how he had, that day, realized he had come into his own. Pastor Foote shared that he knew he had made it as a pastor in this city because he had received an invitation to dinner with Bishop Schofield. "Have you heard yet of Bishop Schofield?" Pastor Foote had asked. All I could say at that moment was, "Who hasn't?"

Over these past two years, as I've attempted to follow in the footsteps of +John-David Schofield, I have prayed that the Lord will give me the grace to pray with the same intimate knowledge of our Lord and Savior; that I'll preach and teach with the same passion and grounding in the scriptures; that I will pastor my clergy with the same measure of true and sincere love; and that I will laugh with the same gusto, both at myself and at the marvelous ways God works all things to his Good. (Romans 8:28)

I will always remember Bishop Schofield as a leader among leaders, and as a man whose ministry I hope to imitate - secure in the knowledge that nothing, in this life or the next, can separate our brother +John-David or us from the Love of Christ. ***“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor “height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*** (Romans 8:38-39) All I can say is, Amen to that!

God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

November 10 Bishop @ St. Matthias in Oakdale, CA

November 16 Diocesan Council

November 17 Bishop @ St. Phillip's in Coalinga, CA

December 8 Bishop @ St. Anselm's in Elk Grove, CA

December 1 Bishop @ St. Lukes in Merced, CA

December 9-11 Clergy Retreat at ECCO

January 2-5 Bishop @ Anglican 4th Day Weekend at ECCO

Bishop's Note: Instructions to the Church:

#7 "Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday and Today and Forever"



This morning we continue our discussion of Hebrews Chapter 13 and the author's instructions given to the church:

"Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;

what can man do to me?"

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:1-8 ESV)

Verse 8 is the key to this passage, to our redemption, and to our future. As Anglican Christians we believe in ONE God in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, the prologue to the Gospel of John - ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."*** (John 1:1-3 ESV) - speaks of Jesus who has been from the beginning of time, and will be at the very end. As Jesus refers to himself in the book of Revelation: ***"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*** (Revelation 22:13 ESV)

Why would the author of the Letter to the Hebrews make this point to the church? Because throughout time, men have tried to make God in our image rather than having the humility to accept the reality of the opposite - we are created in God's image. From the Gnostics of the first century, to the Arians of the fourth century, to modern day heresies, the argument is that God is doing a new thing. Of course, this new thing is actually the old thing. In the first century, the desire was to make Jesus less divine and to make ourselves more divine. That same desire continues today as people push for

respecting or accepting the "god within." Of course, they argue that the way to respect or accept that "god within" is to seek pleasure.

However, when we accept the reality that Jesus is, in fact, who he says he is - **The Alpha and the Omega** (Rev. 22); **the Word made Flesh** (John 1); **God Incarnate** (John 3); **The One who was, and is, and is to Come**" (Rev. 1) - then, and only then, can we receive the redemption that he gave his life to secure for us. This foundation of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior is attested to in Holy Scripture.

Ultimately, it comes down to the simple decision of accepting Jesus on His terms and not mine. Personally, I thank God that I have accepted him and seek to mold my life after His, and not vice versa. The peace that comes when we can turn our lives over to Jesus is wonderful. The joy of knowing that he is the unmovable rock of our lives - not changing with every wind or tide - gives my life meaning and hope, not simply for today but for every day, until he comes back again or calls me home!

God Bless You All!

Bishop Menees

November 16 Diocesan Council

November 17 Bishop @ St. Phillip's in Coalinga, CA

November 23 Standing Committee

December 1 Bishop @ St. Lukes in Merced, CA

December 7 Missions Board Meeting

December 8 Bishop @ St. Anselm's in Elk Grove, CA

December 9-11 Clergy Retreat at ECCO
(<https://eccoyosemite.powweb.com/reservation.htm#fallclergy>) Scholarships available

December 15 Bishop @ St. Andrew's in Mariposa, CA

December 22 Bishop @ St. Nicholas in Atwater, CA

January 2-5 Bishop @ Anglican 4th Day Weekend at ECCO