



The Bishop's Note

Calendar

July 20th

Diocesan Council @ 10 a.m.

July 21st

Bishop @ Good Shepherd in Reedley

July 22nd - 28th

Bishop on Vacation

July 27th

Diocesan Standing Committee @ 10 a.m.

July 28th - August 1st

Splash Junior High Camp @ Camp San Joaquin

August 2nd - 3rd

Caminemos Juntos Conference in Texas

August 2nd - 4th

Anglican Church Women's Annual Retreat at Camp San Joaquin

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Why I Am An Anglican #1

July 18, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

This morning I begin a new course with my Bishop's Notes, having completed the 39 Articles, the 10 Duties of the Laity, the 7 Deadly Sins, and the 7 Godly virtues. (Are you picking up on a theme of lists?) Today, I begin a series on the reasons why I am an Anglican.

After eighteen years of ordained ministry, and more than ten years of working to change the Episcopal Church from inside out - serving on every commission and committee I could get on to - I made the choice to leave the Episcopal Church, lock stock, and barrel. As I made my exit, I was asked many times why I wanted to be an Anglican. This question was asked most poignantly, perhaps, by my brothers - one a faithful Roman Catholic, and the other a faithful Lutheran (Missouri Synod) - who asked if I would like to join one of them.

I have to admit that my initial response to their questioning was no, of course not "I'm Anglican." They kindly asked me why, and I had to take some time to think about that - it was not sufficient simply to say, "Because that's what I have always been." I would like to share in my Bishop's Notes why it is that I am an Anglican, and perhaps some of these reasons will resonate with you; though assuredly you will have other reasons why you are an Anglican.

In order to define why it is that I am an Anglican, it is important to say that I am a repentant and redeemed sinner, made a child of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, first and foremost, I am a Christian who has his expression of Christianity in Anglicanism. That means that I am a Catholic and Reformed. This is not to say that I am undecided about whether I am Catholic or Protestant. Rather, the Anglican Church was born with the understanding and intentionality to maintain the very best of Creedal Catholic faith, depending on the revelation of the Holy Spirit through the Church Fathers and the Councils of the Church, while at the same time receiving the evangelical call of the reformers to unabashedly proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

When I speak of the Anglican Church, I am referring to the Anglican Communion world wide that uses the Book of Common

Prayer - based on the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (including the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion), which was a light revision of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer, which was largely authored by Archbishop Thomas Cramner.

Notably, the Anglican Church is estimated by Sociologists of Religion to be about 75 million strong. Of those 75 million, on any given Sunday you will find approximately 5 million in church on the Lord's Day in the "West" - Europe, North America, Australia & South Africa. You will find 40-50 million in church on the Lord's Day in what is referred to as the Global South - Africa, Asia, and South America. That statistic is remarkable, and speaks to a church that is rapidly growing and healthy in the Global South versus an anemic church in the West. You may be saying to yourself, 75 minus 55 leaves 20 million - what of those others? That number represents people who self identify as Anglican but only attend their wedding, occasionally Christmas and Easter with their grandmother, and their funeral - and some may argue that they don't attend their own funeral.

I mention this because some of the very reasons that I am an Anglican are the same reasons why the Anglican Church in North America and the churches of the Global South are growing and vibrant. Some of those reasons are that Anglicanism is: Biblical, Historical, Liturgical, Ecclesiastical, Episcopal, Ecumenical, Pastoral and Rational, to list just a few and to provide the source of my following Bishop's Notes.

May The Lord bless you!

Bishop Menees



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Bishop @ St. Martin in Fresno

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The Bishop's Note

The Bishop's note - Why I'm An Anglican #2 - Because it's Biblical!

July 25, 2013 Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ When Archbishop Cramner and the other Anglican Reformers first broke from the Roman Catholic Church, they wanted to keep the richness of the faith and the tradition of the Apostolic and Patristic periods of the church. In doing so, the Anglican reformers placed a strong emphasis on both the Word of God and the Sacraments of the Church - the 39 Articles of Religion state that, *"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."* (Article 19)

I love the Anglican Church because we recognize that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Inspired Word of God! The 39 Articles are clear in stating:

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." (Article 6)

For Anglicanism, it begins and ends with God's self-revelation through His Word. The Book of Common Prayer itself is made up of something like 80% scripture...now that is just a guess on my part, (but I'm sure someone with lots of time on their hands has already done a study) however, it is an educated guess. Look at the words of institution (the words Jesus used at the Last Supper) during Holy Eucharist, which are taken from the Gospels and Corinthians. Or take the Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer services where, for example, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and the Nunc Dimittis (Luke 2:29-32) are taken directly from scripture.

This was done in a radical move to make the scriptures accessible

to all people: rich and poor, literate and illiterate. By attending the services, the people were immersed in the Word of God. Equally, when the lectionary was put together, the intention was to allow the scriptures to be taught and learned on a Sunday by Sunday - day by day basis.

This emphasis on the Word of God has been brought into modern day Anglicanism, and has been affirmed in current documents like the Jerusalem Declaration and the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). ***"The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in the plain and canonical sense, respectful of the Church's historic and consensual reading"*** (Jerusalem Declaration)

This emphasis on The Word of God is also one of our points of separation from the Episcopal Church, which has, for a generation now, taught that the Bible contains the "words" of God but is not necessarily the inspired Word of God that is authoritative for our lives. In the Anglican Church we read, believe and follow the words of St. Paul when writing to Timothy, ***"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*** (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Our lives - public and private- are to be modeled upon the the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

As the ACNA puts together our Prayer Book and develops the lectionary, I've encouraged Bishop Thompson and his committee to reverse what the Episcopal Church did in removing large sections of scripture that they disagreed with from the daily and Sunday readings. We have a wonderful opportunity to get it right, and to make sure that we begin and end with the Word of God!

Blessings to you,

Bishop Menees

Bishop's Note



Why I'm An Anglican #3 - *Because We Are Liturgical*

This morning I'd like to continue my explanation with why it is that I am an Anglican. One of the great strengths of the Anglican Reformers was their wisdom in seeking to "reform" Catholicism, not abandon her. One area where the more Protestant churches went afoul, was with their abandonment of liturgy and all things liturgical because they appeared "Romish."

The liturgies of the church are in fact deeply scriptural both in quoting scripture but also expressing it in a most pastoral manner.

So what is liturgy? Well, it is most often described as the "work of the people." I would expand that definition to say that it is the "Work of the people in ministering to the people of God and worshiping the Lord God almighty." Liturgy is what Christians do when they gather together for worship. I always find it odd when I meet Protestants who argue that they are not liturgical. However, if you go to a service you will find a set way of organizing worship - generally speaking they gather together, sing some songs, take an offering, offer prayers, hear some scripture, listen to a sermon, sing some more and have announcements. No matter how you slice it that is liturgy.

What I love about Anglicanism is that we embrace that liturgy and seek to make it as beautiful and transformational as possible. To do that we rely upon music that is ancient and modern. These are songs of praise that speak to a deep and profound theological reality of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. When I sing those hymns I am proclaiming the Truth of Jesus Christ and worshiping God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Whether that hymn is Ode to Joy or In Christ Alone. **"Joyful, Joyful, we adore thee God of Glory, Lord of Love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee praising thee their God above."** Is it possible to read those words and not hearing Beethoven's music in their minds ear? When those verses and that music was first written in the 18th Century it was the pop music of the time but speaks to a timeless truth and reality. So too with hymns 21st

century hymns like In Christ Alone - **"In Christ alone, my hope is found, he is my life, my strength, my song."**

In the Liturgy we very intentionally take up an offering of our treasure to be used for the Glory of God, the spread of the gospel and the ministry of the church. This offering is biblical and right allowing the entire church to return to the Lord a portion, (which should be a minimum of 10%), to him in gratitude for the other 90% that we use to support our families, ourselves and our communities. Note that when we gather up the offerings we bring them to the altar and hand them to the priest or deacon who raises them up before the Lord and the congregation with one voice either sings or says words from scripture known, as the Doxology - **"Praise God from whom all blessings flow. (James 1:17) Praise Him all creatures here below.(Psalm 145:21) Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. (Rev. 5:11-14) Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen"** (2 Peter 1:11)

In the Liturgy we read the Word of God, and as I mentioned last week, if we gather for worship every Sunday over three years we will have read over 80% of the bible. However, in Anglican liturgy we not only hear the Word of God we interact with it - praying together the psalms and responding both physically (standing for the gospel and sometimes the psalms) and verbally responding to the Lector by proclaiming our affirmation to the proclamation of the Word saying **"Thanks be to God,"** a phrase given in scripture by St. Paul, among others, in his letters to the Corinthians.

In the Liturgy the Word of God is faithfully preached. This should be a challenging exposition of the scriptures read that day that include a practical application to the lives of the people gathered. Through the movement of the Holy Spirit who opens our hearts and minds this will sometimes be a very challenging and uncomfortable message, and at times a very comforting message of assurance. However, it should always be bible-based and include practical implications for life. I thank God for the preaching of my clergy in the diocese and regularly listen to them online.

In the Liturgy we offer, individually and collectively, prayers to God. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving, prayers of petition asking God for his assistance for ourselves and others, prayers for those in authority and prayers for the church. I love the fact that our liturgy forces us to look beyond ourselves and our perceived needs, wants and desires.

In the Liturgy, we proclaim our faith in the words of the Nicene or Apostles Creed. This profession of faith is so important as an affirmation of our faith and defining, for ourselves and others, who we are as Christians. Additionally, the public affirmation of our faith connects us with Christians from the first century to the present day and connects us with Christians around the world and across most denominational lines.

In the Liturgy we share in the sacraments of the church that speak into our mind, heart and soul. More on that next week.

Lastly, in Liturgy we participate in a beautiful work that through music, symbols, clothing and rituals, connect us to one another across time and across the divide of human and divine. I love the liturgy of the church because in that eighty minute time frame, give or take, I can intentionally set myself in the presence of God and have a glimpse into His Kingdom!

God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

Bishop's Calander

August 2-3 Caminemos Juntos! in El Paso, TX

August 4 Bishop @ St. Martin's Fresno, CA

August 11 Bishop @ Christ Church Oakhurst, CA

August 17 Diocesan Council

August 18 Bishop @ St. Timothy's in Bishop, CA

August 20 Ordination of Noah Lawson in Fresno, CA

October 4 Clergy Wives Retreat

October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA

November 8-9 Diocesan Convention in Fresno, CA

Bishop's Note

Why I'm an Anglican #4: Because It's Sacramental!

You will remember from your catechism class, that the traditional definition of a sacrament is: “**an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.**” I pray that, more than just remembering from catechism class, you are receiving God's Grace regularly in and through the sacraments. God's Grace is what sustains us, fills us, comforts us, equips us, and impels us forward.

Essentially, the sacraments of the Church are one of God's ways of speaking into our lives pastorally. The two primary sacraments commanded by Jesus - Baptism & Holy Eucharist - speak powerfully to Christ's sacrificial death upon the cross in the ultimate act of redemption. In the sacrament of **Baptism**, we have that outward and visible sign of water and oil in receiving God's Grace and redemption. I came to Christ as a young man, and was baptized at age 14 (though two years later I learned that the nun at St. Francis hospital in Lynnwood, CA baptized me and every child born there from 1950 - 1970... but that's another story). I was able, then, to make a public renunciation of Satan, and a public acceptance of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. That grace was signified with the symbolic washing away of my sins and anointing with oil, sealing me “**as Christ's own forever.**” My baptism was a turning point in both my life, and in the life of my family. Soon after that service, on January 2nd 1976, my parents began attending church with me, and my brother began attending church with his girl friend and soon-to-be wife. God's Grace spoke powerfully into our lives.

Holy Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, is a sacrament that speaks pastorally into our lives on a weekly or even daily basis, and, frankly, I can't imagine life without the great joy of receiving the sacrament or the privilege of celebrating Holy Eucharist. What a tremendous honor it is, for any priest, to look into the eyes of a forgiven sinner and say, “**The body of Christ. The Bread of heaven.**” At that moment, we have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet and the assurance of Christ's amazing love for us who do not deserve it, but can only receive it!

Of course, in addition to the two primary sacraments, we have Christ speaking into our lives in the other five sacraments of the Church.

Confirmation - is that moment where men and women, at an age of understanding, both renounce Satan, and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior (or confirm that acceptance). This is especially powerful for those baptized as children, who had no say in the matter. At Confirmation, men and women are set aside and empowered for ministry and leadership in the church. I have always said, and firmly believe, that the Lay Order is the most important of the church.

Marriage - is that sacrament which affirms the biblical plan of setting aside one man and one woman in the life-long partnership of husband and wife. The comfort and

care given to the couple is not meant only for them, but for their families, if God grants them the blessing of children. Marriage also gives us an expression of Jesus' relationship with us, His Church. In the marriage service, as the rings are exchanged, the couple say to one another, **"I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am and all that I have I honor you."** This is the ideal that the sacrament of marriage sets for the couple and with Christ Jesus.

Confession/Reconciliation - is that sacrament where Jesus speaks to us audibly through the priest as he pronounces absolution. Knowing that, when we come to the Lord with an humble and contrite heart, we are, indeed, forgiven of our sins. I make my confession regularly, and I am, as a forgiven sinner, always moved to hear those words, **"I absolve you of your sins: In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord has put away all of your sins. Go in peace and pray for me a sinner"**

Ordination - This is a sacrament reserved for those who are set aside for the ministries of Deacon, Priest, or Bishop. God speaks so powerfully and pastorally into the lives of individuals and the church, through the sacrament of ordination, by providing structure for the church and her ministry, and by setting aside individuals to be used for the Glory of God and the benefit of man.

Holy Unction - This sacrament of prayer, laying on of hands, and anointing with Holy Oil, is the epitome of Jesus speaking pastorally into our lives. When we are ill and sometimes at the point of death, to receive the loving prayers, the words of scripture, and the laying on of hands by a priest or bishop, speaks so powerfully of Christ love for the sick and dying - a condition, because of the Fall, that all of us have and will find ourselves in.

One of reasons that I am an Anglican is because of our emphasis on God's Word and God's sacraments, which speak so powerfully and pastorally into all aspects and times of our lives!

I pray you every blessing this week!

Bishop Menees

Bishop's Note - Why I'm an Anglican #5 - We are Evangelical and Evangelistic

This morning in the Bishop's Note, I move along to the fourth reason why I am an Anglican - because we are EVANGELICAL and EVANGELISTIC! Now, in the previous weeks I've explained that I am an Anglican because we are Biblical, Liturgical, and Sacramental. Being Evangelical and Evangelistic go hand-in-hand with the previous reasons, because it's all based on the person and mission of Jesus Christ - his life, death, and resurrection!

What does it mean to be Evangelical? The term "evangelical" comes from the Greek word (εὐαγγέλιον) *euangelion*, meaning "the good news" or the "gospel." Thus, the evangelical faith focuses on the "good news" of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ.

I love the fact that our worship from the Book of Common Prayer is Evangelical from start to finish - we boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ without holding any punches. The proclamation of the Good News was embodied by the early missionaries of the Anglican Church, who took the gospel of Jesus Christ wherever the English flag went, and sometimes where the English flag did not go. This includes China, Africa, the Eastern Coast of Central America, and especially East of Africa - where the Anglican Church is thriving. This evangelical zeal distinguishes the Anglican Church in North America (and the vast majority of Anglicans around the world) from many "mainline" denominations, which no longer teach that Jesus is **"The Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through Jesus."** (Paraphrase of John 14:6) We in the Anglican Church in North America, and here in the Diocese of San Joaquin, are proud signers of The Jerusalem Declaration, which clearly states that salvation is found in and through Jesus Christ, and him only. Here is a link to the Jerusalem Declaration http://fca.net/resources/the_jerusalem_declaration/ or you can find it on our website www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net and click the News and Events tab.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is that Jesus died on the cross to redeem man, and thus to reconcile God and Man. All who put their trust in him, all who claim Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, have eternal life. (Romans 10:9) Thus, when we take our last breath on earth, the very next second the believer takes his first sweet breath with Jesus in Heaven.

Evangelical describes our beliefs and acknowledges Jesus' call to us in the Great Commission to go to all the world **"baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."** (Matthew 28:19) This is seen in all aspects of Anglicanism, and moves us from simply being evangelical to being evangelistic - putting evangelical beliefs into practice.

Archbishop Cranmer captured our evangelical and evangelistic spirit when we wrote the collects (prayers setting the tone of that Sunday's worship) in the first Book of

Common Prayer. These collects have been passed down through the generations, and are used every Sunday in our worship. The Collect for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany reads: "**Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that thy people, illumined by the Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, now and for ever. Amen**"

What would the church be like if we lived into the beautiful image that collect sets forth? Clearly we are not there yet, but I live for the day when the Diocese of San Joaquin and all Anglican Christians see that beautiful prayer realized.

Blessings to you all!

Bishop Menees

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

Bishop's Note - Why I'm Anglican #7 - Because Of Our Episcopal Polity

I know that being a Bishop and saying, "I'm Anglican because we have Bishops," sounds a bit odd, but it's the truth. In part, I am an Anglican because our polity is based on a structure that is founded upon scripture. Said another way: Anglicanism is Episcopal.

What does that mean? It means being organized in a structure that joins multiple congregations together under a single spiritual leader known as a Bishop. The Greek term for Bishop is *episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος), or "overseer." Not overseer in the terms of a mean ruler, but rather one who oversees the ministry of congregations in a specific geographic area known as a diocese.

The ministry of a bishop is to be the Chief Shepherd of the Diocese and the Pastor to the Pastors. That means the bishop is to be the defender of the sheep and the guide to the shepherds. The best way for the bishop to defend the sheep is to be a defender of the faith. Through the centuries, the bishops have done a tremendous job of defending the faith - sometimes defending the faith by correcting one another. As the pastor to the pastors, a bishop cares for and nurtures the individual clergy. That means giving both instruction and moral support, and, when necessary, implementing discipline.

From the 3rd century onwards, bishops, as the Chief Shepherds, have presided over the sacraments of Confirmation and Ordination as the holders and transmitters of apostolic succession - without which no priest or deacon may function. Apostolic succession is an important aspect of Episcopal Polity, meaning that the bishops are the successors to the apostles, and thus serve as a living connection not only to the early church, but to the very Head of the Church herself - Jesus the Christ. Thus, the bishop forms a bridge to the past, but also, through the diocesan structure, as a bridge to one another.

Because of our Episcopal Polity, we are not congregational - each congregation on its own with clergy and laity accountable to no one. We, on the other hand, live by Holy Orders, meaning that we practice mutual accountability: The Archbishop to the College of Bishops; the Bishops to the Archbishop; the Clergy to the Bishop; and the Laity to the Clergy and the Vestry or Bishop's Committee. Living in mutual submission is practical, biblical, and a holy way to live.

God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

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

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

Why I'm An Anglican - Because We Are A Three Streams Church!

This morning I continue my series on 10 reasons why it is that I am an Anglican. So far, I've said that I am Anglican because we are: 1) Biblical, 2) Liturgical, 3) Sacramental, 4) Evangelical, 5) Rational, 6) Episcopal, 7) Ecumenical, 8) International, and 9) We Are A Three Streams Church!

What do I mean by a "**Three Streams Church?**" Generally speaking (and recognizing that books could be written on the subject), this refers to different styles of worship and theological emphases. These three streams are Anglo-Catholic, Charismatic, and Evangelical. I find it remarkable that our church embraces these three streams, and yet remains one church. This is not to say that we are without our challenges, but overall these three streams work well together, and can be found in each diocese (the Diocese of San Joaquin included) and province of the church.

Anglo-Catholic: Typically, this stream embodies a high church form of worship using liturgy as an evangelical tool. Seeing and participating in the majestic worship of the ancient church leads us to an experience of the divine. Anglo-Catholics place a heavy emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Sacraments, and they deeply honor the way that the Lord has worked through Holy Tradition and continues to unfold his redeeming work through the Church.

Charismatic: Anglican Charismatics usually emphasize the experience of God through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Charismatics place heavy emphasis on an individual's openness to being filled with the Holy Spirit and to exercise the gifts which God desires to anoint all Christians with. Anglican Charismatics argue that God the Holy Spirit is alive and well, and is performing his miraculous works daily. For Anglican Charismatics, the church that is open to the movement of the Holy Spirit is the church that embodies what it means to worship God in the fullness of faith.

Evangelical: By in large, Anglican Evangelicals embody the reformed aspect of our church. Heavy emphasis is placed upon a personal and saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and therefore they see personal evangelism as the primary responsibility of the church. The church is necessary to live out the faith, but a person may come to faith outside of the church. Among Evangelicals, the Bible is the primary source of God's revelation and He is present in His Word!

All three streams desire essentially the same thing: for people to come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and to live out our lives as His obedient disciples.

Most Anglicans are not purely any one of these streams, but rather exhibit two or three of the streams in their worship and ministry. For example, Bishop Keith Ackerman--our upcoming clergy retreat leader--embodies all three streams in his worship and ministry. As president of Forward in Faith North America, he is associated with Anglo-Catholics. Yet, when I hear him preach, he places strong emphasis on the Word

of God and a personal saving relationship with Christ which exhibits the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

As I travel around the diocese, I rejoice in seeing these three streams working in tandem with one another. I believe that we are a richer diocese, province, and communion because we experience the fullness of the Church and her faith in these three streams.

God bless you all!
Bishop Menees

September 21 Diocesan Council and Standing Committee
September 22 Bishop @ St. Augustine's in Hollister, CA
September 23 Nominations for Convention Due
September 23-24 Pastor's Prayer Summit at ECCO
September 27-29 Stewart Ruch's Consecration in Chicago, IL
October 4-6 Clergy Wives Retreat at ECCO
October 9 Bishop @ Daughters of the Holy Cross Quiet day at ECCO
October 12 Diocesan Honored Women's Luncheon in Lemoore, CA
October 18 Delegate and Meal Forms for Convention Due to Diocesan Office
October 25-27 Well North Youth Retreat at St. Luke's in Merced, CA

Why I'm An Anglican - Because We Honor Scripture, Reason and Tradition!

In the Bishop's Note over the past several weeks, I've written nine reasons why I am an Anglican - this morning's Bishop's Note will provide the tenth reason, and final one in this series. This is not meant to be an exhaustive examination, just my own musings with the people of the Diocese of San Joaquin. I've enjoyed the responses from folks in the diocese, and am glad to know that others have similar reasons for being Anglican.

OK, I've said that I am Anglican because we are: 1) Biblical, 2) Liturgical, 3) Sacramental, 4) Evangelical, 5) Rational, 6) Episcopal, 7) Ecumenical, 8) International, and 9) We Are A Three Streams Church! The last reason that I am an Anglican is because we: 10) Honor Scripture, Reason, and Tradition - the theological matrix of Anglicanism.

You'll remember, from your catechism class, what is often referred to as the "three legged stool" of Anglicanism. What the teachers were referring to is what is generally attributed to the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker... the three legged stool of Scripture, Reason, and Tradition.

Hooker wrote The Laws of Ecclesiastical Piety in the sixteenth century, providing direction and theological foundations in a time of confusion as the Church of England was seeking her identity. Hooker embodied the Anglican ethos that honors the universal and historic realities of the church and the reform that became necessary. That ethos is often summed up with Scripture, Reason, and Tradition.

Now that being said, I'm not a Hooker Scholar, but I think that the notion of a three legged stool was not Hooker's, and he'd probably be aghast at the notion. A three legged stool images three equal legs, but Hooker did not say that these were equal in authority.

What did Hooker say? "***Be it in matter of the one kind or of the other, what Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after this the Church succeedeth that which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgments whatsoever.***" (Book V, 8:2)

Rather than a three legged stool, I envision a ladder built upon the three steps of Scripture, Reason, and Tradition:

Scripture - the Word of God, that contains all things necessary for salvation (Article 6), is the foundation upon which everything else is built. Scripture is God's self-revelation - literally God Breathed - "***All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God² may be complete, equipped for every good work.***" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Reason - the God given ability to use our minds to recognize and understand, on some level, the Word of God and God's revelation in nature. God has given us the ability to think critically about Him, and about ourselves.

Tradition - while Hooker does not specifically use this term, it makes sense to me in this context. While God has given us, individually, the ability to think critically, He has collectively given us the ability to receive the Word of God, and to be the Body of Christ in the world. The revelation given in and through the Church has changed the course of history, and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, transformed and saved billions of souls.

I'm proud to be an Anglican Christian for the ten reasons that I've listed, and for a hundred others - why are you an Anglican Christian?

God bless you all!

Bishop Menees

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