

Why Anglicanism?

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I was raised on the old Book of Common Prayer – the words, canticles and cadences settled themselves into my mind and heart, and those early years have had a great impact on my faith. Since those days, I have learned more and more about our Anglican heritage, our heroes, our highs, and lows. I find my theological home in the Anglicanism of Cranmer, Whitfield, Simeon, and Stott. I am grateful for our rich and varied heritage.

Every church is different. The Baptists have their great traditions; the Methodists have their great strengths; the Roman Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, they all have such strengths. But we're Anglican, and we're grateful for it, because it's something very, very special.

- **Anglicanism at its best is biblical.** It finds its life and its teaching rooted in the Word of God. We believe the Word of God is true; not just that the Scriptures contain the Word of God, but that they become the Word of God spoken to us. We believe the Scriptures have authority and they're true, and we want to be biblical Christians.
- **Anglicanism is sacramental.** We value the sacraments, particularly of baptism and Holy Communion. We believe in the real presence of Christ in our midst. We don't think that we're just playing around with bread and wine and water. We believe that Christ is present in and through these elements, and we view them as a holy part of our life together. We're sacramental Christians.
- **Anglicans, when they're at their best, are also evangelical.** That means they're people who proclaim the good news of Christ to people who don't know the Lord. And every good Anglican church is seeing a little steady stream of new people coming in, who are coming to new faith, and finding new life in Jesus Christ.
- **Anglicanism is charismatic.** That means we believe in, and we're dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the community of the church is to be a healing community, it's to be an exorcising community, and we believe in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are taught in the Holy Scriptures. We want them all to be manifest.

- **Anglicanism at its best is liturgical.** That means that when we come together and worship God, we just don't do the latest fad that they're doing down the street. The way we worship God is rooted all the way back in the earliest days of the church. When Christians came to England in the first century and started worshipping God there, and laid roots in how we worship God, it was done in a particular Anglican way. The way our services are laid out, they're built on those early forms of worship. We are committed to doing it the way it has been done through the ages. We bring new flavors to it, new emphases, but it's rooted in history.
- **Anglicanism is prayerful.** Historically, Anglicans have met every day to pray to God. Anglicans go forward on their knees.
- **Anglicanism loves children** and Anglicanism is committed, not just to baptizing babies, but to beginning to work with them and make them disciples from the cradle to adulthood.
- **Anglicanism at its best is a community of grace.** There's something about Anglicanism that is particularly gracious. In 60 years of being part of the Anglican family, my experience has been that when we're together, we don't take ourselves so darn seriously. We are humble before God because we know we're all sinners. We know that we all kneel at the foot of the cross, and the ground is level there. And we know that God is doing such bigger things than we're doing. We're just a little part of it, and we believe the best of one another. We're not negative; we're gracious when we're at our best.
- **Anglicanism engages the society and the world around it.** We're not about being in our own little 'holy huddle.' We're about being involved in politics; we're about being involved in the issues of the community; we're about serving on school boards; and working in clinics and working in food kitchens. We're about society.
- **Anglicanism is worldwide.** We're a catholic church. We're committed. We want to be linked closely to our brothers and sisters in the Two Thirds World. It's not just about us, it's about us together. We're a worldwide catholic church.
- **Anglicanism is about accountability.** We have bishops; we believe in bishops, we want bishops. We want them not only to teach us and pastor us; we want them to hold us accountable, to tell us when we're gone astray, and to hold us up to our best.
- **Anglicanism at its best is musical.** We love good music; the best of ancient music and the best of modern music.

- **Anglicanism also has a love for beauty.** We've always appreciated the value of aesthetics in Anglicanism. God catches our imagination through aesthetics. He speaks to us through beauty, and we learn to know God through the beauty of worship. So we're committed to reverence and beautiful aesthetics in worship.

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