

This tract is addressed to ordinary lay men and women who worship in the Anglican tradition, as well as those on the outside who may have questions but no one to ask.

WHEN THEY ASK

From time to time most faithful churchgoers get asked about their Church. As a member of the worldwide family of Anglicans, what do you tell them?

May I encourage you to be like a good Boy Scout: be prepared. Salesmen, in advance of going for a sale, learn a few ‘talking points’ about their product. Churchmen should do the same. Here are three things you might say ‘when they ask’.

SOME TALKING POINTS

Ours is a Biblical Church. Nothing can be taught as necessary to eternal salvation which is not in the Bible. With that said, we don’t use the Bible like the Bartlett’s *Book of Familiar Quotations* – plucking out a verse here or there to suit our fancy or prove a point. Instead, we strive to interpret the parts in light of the whole of the Biblical story, and all in light of Christ.

Ours is an Anglican Church. Our roots are in the Church that arrived on British soil not many years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our faith is therefore ancient and apostolic. “We take the greatest care to hold that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all,” to quote a Christian leader from the

Fifth century. But, our Church also owes much to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. We take pride in being a Reformed Church. At that time, English Church leaders sought to rid the church of beliefs and practices that had grown up in the Middle Ages which did not seem to square with Scripture. At the same time, they sought to reaffirm teachings that had been obscured or neglected in the medieval Church, in particular, the teaching of the Apostle Paul that sinners (that’s all of us) are put right with God through faith in Christ only.

Anglicans in the United States are also called Episcopalians. This term came into use following the American War for Independence. It comes from *episcopos*, a Greek word meaning ‘bishop’ or ‘overseer’. Even so, Episcopalians remain Anglicans, and thus are a part of the third largest family of Christians in the world today.

Ours is a contemporary Church. Our faith is ancient, but we are not a historical society. Rather, we seek to bring the ancient faith into the modern world, not by trying to be more ‘hip’ than the church down the road or by ditching the God-centered worship of our spiritual fore-bearers for me-centered entertainment (as some have done) but by explaining it and living it in today’s world, a world in which many are looking for roots and meaning. The real Gospel does not have to be made attractive, relevant and contemporary: it already is. All it has to be is announced and lived.

TELL ME MORE

But, just suppose that after giving your inquirer these three points, he says: Please tell me more. Some additional points might include:

- The Anglican Church values beauty in worship, architecture and language.
- The Anglican Church encourages participation. You don’t sit like a bump on a log in our services. You are a player on the field and expected to catch and throw the ball, e.g., “The Lord be with you . . . *And with thy spirit.*”
- The Anglican Church gives you room to think. While clinging tenaciously to the central truths of the Christian faith, room is left to think about secondary matters, matters not nailed down in Scripture.
- The Anglican Church does not split apart ‘saving souls’ and service in the world. Both are seen as springing from a living Faith in Christ and as part of the Christian’s calling in his Baptism.

A CHURCH YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

You are part of a Church you can believe in. Don’t be bashful about telling others about it. Be enthusiastic and inviting because it is none other than God’s household and God’s family.

OUR MARCHING ORDERS

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you always, to the close of the age. *Matthew 28:19,20 (RSV)*

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID

Show us some truth in the Bible that we are not teaching, and we will teach it. Show us something we are teaching that is denied in the Bible, and we will stop teaching it.

Stephen Neill, 20th century Anglican Bishop, missionary and scholar

I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England.

John Wesley, 18th century Anglican priest and father of the Methodist movement

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A Canterbury Tract

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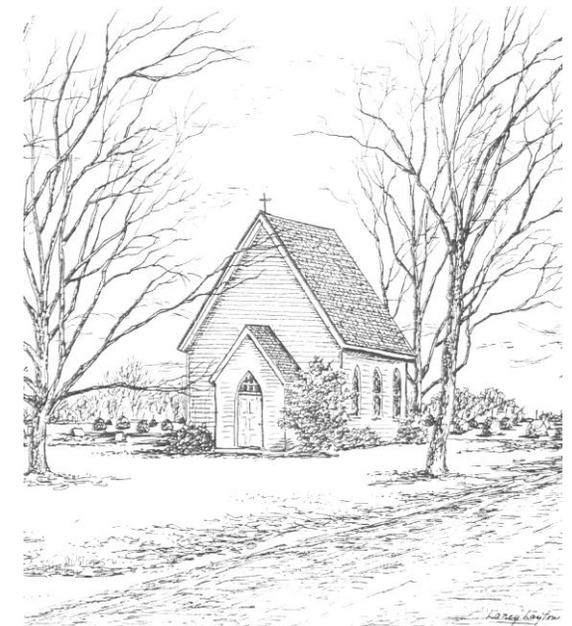
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Grant, we beseech thee, merciful God, that thy Church, being gathered together in unity by thy Holy Spirit, may manifest thy power among all peoples, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.



*The Compass Rose
Symbol of Worldwide Anglican Family*

*So, tell me
about your
church . . .*



Some talking points for
Anglicans / Episcopalians