

Viewpoint: What It Means To Me To Be Anglican

Bitsy Rubsamen

Those who know me well could detect if I spoke someone else's words when describing Anglicanism. So in writing this, knowing that I have always been under the mighty wings of the Anglican Church — naturally gentle and genuinely orthodox — I can only describe what being an Anglican means to me.

I grew up in the church that we came back to over 23 years ago - Christ Church. In 1963 Rollins and I had returned from being gone from San Antonio for five years and, at that time, joined St. Mark's where he had been raised. But even while we were living away, we were always part of an Episcopal church. We knew that is where we felt comfortable because to attend a church without a liturgical setting, celebrating the Eucharist, would have been like not worshipping at all. After 18 years, our children grown, we felt a calling to be a part of Christ Church where we had been married by the beloved Sam Capers with Harold Gosnell assisting.

When I was growing up, clergy were not called "priests." They weren't called "pastors" either, but simply "ministers," and in Sam Caper's case, everybody knew him as "Sam" and Christ Church was endearingly called "Sam's Church" by some. I knew that Christ Church was considered "low church" as opposed to others who had "bells and smells, and were "high church." The atmosphere was familiar, just another part of "home" for me.

As we entered the "Faith Alive" era in the early 70s, things for me began to take a dramatic turn. To see and hear ordinary laymen who might be dressed in casual clothes like a bright yellow jump suit, in one case, stand in the pulpit and witness to their love for Jesus seemed different, to say the least. God's Spirit became very much alive and believable for me. Allowing such a movement to come into our churches gave meaning to the Anglican belief in the priesthood of all believers and not to some literal interpretation of the Scriptures.

As for me, on Sunday, October 21, 1971, this rather skeptical mother of two teenagers who was highly involved in the Junior League heard the Good News, felt indescribable joy, and gave her life to Christ. I've not been the same since; in the words of daughter Ann, who was learning how to drive at that time, and as she announced to the car full of students, I had "gone ape over Jesus!"

I would describe myself as being contemplative, evangelical to the core, and charismatic — all good Anglican traits to have while working with my devoted friends at the Christ Healing Center where wonderful healings happen. And I don't remember ever talking about being an Anglican until recently, but I'm glad I am one. The topic just never came up. I have just been busy trying to sort out the meaning of being a Christian and seeking ways to serve my Lord Jesus Christ.

Bitsy Rubsamen is a member of Christ Church, San Antonio. She is active in the healing ministry.