
The Conference of North American Cathedral Deans In Salt Lake City

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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Each year, on the weekend of the Third Sunday of Easter, deans of cathedrals from North America gather together for an annual conference. The conference rarely conducts any sort of formal or canonical business. Rather, the several days away provide time for mutual conversation, for learning, and for support of each other's various ministries.

You may know that the cathedrals of the Episcopal Church are quite a diverse group. Some of our cathedrals are quite large and public, like the National Cathedral in Washington; those cathedrals are supported primarily not by parishioners, but by special gifts and endowments. Other cathedrals, like ours here at St. Philip's are actually thriving and large parishes; it is our community and parish generosity that keeps us alive. Still other cathedrals do not have a large parish, but they do have large financial endowments (at least they did two years ago). Finally, many other cathedrals in the United States are quite small in all respects. Some struggle to keep open their doors.

In short, the cathedrals of the United States and Canada probably represent a fairly accurate cross-section of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. Some are large; some are small. Some are thriving; some are struggling. Thus, the deans of all those cathedrals are just as various. Whatever the state of our cathedrals, however, deans and their spouses have made some good friends over the years.

Last week, the North American Deans' Conference met in Salt Lake City, Utah, at St. Mark's Cathedral. It always falls to the hosting dean and cathedral to present a program which might highlight some local feature of his city. For instance, when the conference met here in Atlanta in the 1990's, St. Philip's showcased the upcoming 1996 Olympics!

So, what should the cathedral in Salt Lake City showcase? Of course! The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sometimes known as the Mormons. I was glad to spend some time with the welfare and humanitarian projects of the Mormon Church, to hear from some of their leaders, to tour various facilities in Temple Square, and even to hear one of their present twelve apostles. We were honored to be there. (You will have to talk with me privately about my theological impressions.)

However, I was especially impressed with the ability of the Episcopal Church to make a witness in Salt Lake City. The Episcopal Church, along with their good friends in the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, are a distinct minority in Salt Lake City. As a minority, their identity is probably more pronounced and probably stronger than it might be in other cities. (Many at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral are apparently former Mormons.)

So, I tip my hat this week to all Episcopalians, and to any other Christians, who find themselves a minority in their local situations. You might be in the Middle East. You might be somewhere in the Far East. You might be in Atlanta. You might be a minority in your own neighborhood. Sometimes, the minority is a place to learn strength and identity. It is a place to learn what authentic service and ministry might be. May God be with you!

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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