

WHY ARE YOU A Singaporean/Christian /Lutheran?



Let's say you are a Singaporean. Do you ever ask yourself the questions on why you are Singaporean and why you stick to being a Singaporean instead of changing your nationality? To be sure, there are many things not great about being Singaporean if we give thoughts to the criticisms. Singaporeans are not perfect; yet, imperfections alone are not enough reasons for us to change nationality.

being
christian

Let's say you are a Christian. Do you ever ask yourself the questions on why you are a Christian and why you stick to being a Christian instead of leaving the church? To be sure, Christians receive a lot of criticisms from non-Christians.

No matter which group you belong to (whether regarding your nationality group or your distinctive Christian community), you are bound to hear opinions that are different from yours. This is to be expected. When you hear others' opinions, you may engage with the different opinions by sharing your thoughts in meaningful discourses. However, before you can do that, you must first have a position to stand on as a reference point. In other words, you must at least understand yourself. As a Singaporean, you must understand that there are negative labels put on you. You won't be easily swept away by such labels if you have a fuller appreciation of many positive labels

you do have. The same point applies to yourself as a Christian who knows why you are one. For example, quoting from a beautiful poem by Maya Angelou:

I Am a Christian

When I say..."I am a Christian" I'm not shouting "I'm clean livin."
I'm whispering "I was lost," Now I'm found and forgiven.

When I say..."I am a Christian" I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble and need CHRIST to be my guide.

When I say ..."I am a Christian" I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I am weak and need HIS strength to carry on.

When I say ..."I am a Christian" I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed and need God to clean my mess.

When I say..."I am a Christian" I'm not claiming to be perfect,
My flaws are far too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say..."I am a Christian" I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches! So I call upon His name.

When I say..."I am a Christian" I'm not holier than thou,
I'm just a simple sinner who received God's good grace, somehow.

by Maya Angelou

*"When I say that
I am a Christian, I
am not shouting
that 'I am clean
living. I'm
whispering 'I was
lost but now I'm
found and
forgiven.'"*

*"When I say 'I am
a Christian', I
don't speak of this
with pride. I'm
confessing that I
stumble and need
Christ to be my
guide ..."*

It can be tragic if one makes a decision by taking in opinions without first being familiar with his own reason for being who he is.

As a Lutheran, I do not claim superiority over fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who are non-Lutherans. I trust the Lutheran Book of Concord not as a substitute for the Bible, but as a reliable reference source of the Reformation writings and the Christian creeds that came out of the ancient church – The Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed – for clarifying the Word of God against heresies, stating clearly the truth based on Scripture.

As a member of the LCS, I claim myself to belong to an evangelical church; i.e., while bearing the Lutheran traditions, the church I belong to subscribes fully to the teaching of the Gospel and believes in the infallibility of the Bible. While variations of opinions in interpretations

over some parts of Scripture are unavoidable, the differences do not reach down to the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith; therefore, evangelical churches are able to maintain the spirit of unity in the body of Christ and brothers and sisters of different denominational distinctives are able to maintain harmony in relationships.

Imagine that, as a Christian, someone from outside my faith circle comes to me and tell me all sorts of things that are negative, such as the fact about Christians being sinners and hypocrites, that Christian leaders are scandal-prone, that Christians are intolerant, etc. It is alright for me to hear them out and with humility to acknowledge the shortcomings of Christians and human church leaders. However, it would be grave if I do not bother to dig into a deep understanding of why I am a Christian and allow myself to be rocked in my faith by the accusations. In fact, as a Christian knowing my position of faith, recognizing my own fallibility but trusting in the infallibility of Scripture, I welcome criticisms – not to be swayed out of my faith but for their value in keeping me on my toes about my Christian testimony.

A student accepts his teachers' supplementary material as reliable illumination of the contents of a textbook even though the student may have his first choice to refer to the textbook directly if he can understand the textbook presentation of knowledge. By this analogy, the Book of Concord is like a collection of illuminating material based on the teachings in the main source (the Bible), helping us to understand the truth although Christians who can have understanding by direct reference to the Bible is not discouraged from doing so. Advocating the Reformation writings in congruence with the Bible teachings serves a good purpose in that the former would ease us into absorbing what is expounded in Scripture.



I am first a Christian; and second, a Lutheran. There is no contradiction between the two.

I have friends who are first a Christian; and second, a Methodist (or of some other Christian tradition) with their own ecumenical documents

that are good for their references to complement their direct reading of the Bible. Interestingly, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica:

*“Nicene Creed, also called Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, [is] a Christian statement of faith that is the only ecumenical creed because **it is accepted as authoritative by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and major Protestant churches.** The Apostles’ and Athanasian creeds are accepted by some but not all of these churches.”*

Singapore is fortunate to be a place where there is religious and cosmopolitan harmony. If you are a Singaporean, you must know why you are a Singaporean. If you are a Christian, you must know why you are a Christian. If you are a Christian belonging to any of the denominational distinctives, you must know why and have a good understanding of the position you stand on; so that you can have meaningful sharing of views about distinctives among brothers and sisters if it interests you to do so.

It would be undesirable if you are a Lutheran but do not know why, and then when you are approached with assorted ideas external to your Lutheran tradition, you just become perplexed.

John Lee