

The other day I was speaking with a friend about God and Faith, stuff like that, and he asked a seemingly innocent question: "If there is only *one* Bible why are there so *many* religions?" What he was asking is why there are so many schisms and divisions within the Christian faith. That is the 64 million dollar question: to which I gave a very modest and seemingly unsatisfying answer. For about a thousand years there was only one Christian Church; for another 500 years there were two: one headquartered in Rome, called Roman Catholic, the other occupying regions further east, called Eastern, or "Orthodox." In a few days we will celebrate Halloween, which was ^{originally} ~~actually~~ a Christian holiday; it also happens to be Reformation Day; ^{Now} since the success of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, there are tens of thousands of denominations just within the Christian religion, and countless divisions within other religions as well, some of them continue to foster bitter differences, like between Sunni and Shiia Muslims.

So, if religion is supposed to make people better rather than worse, why does it ~~so~~ often seem to divide people?

Here in Humboldt County I am glad to say that some practitioners of differing religions and denominations DO come together to share fellowship, compare beliefs, and try to make our community a better place to live. I'm talking about a group called the Eureka Interfaith Fellowship; we meet every third Thursday of the month at various houses of worship. We're not trying to save the world or start a revolution, neither are we trying to create a super religion out of our different beliefs. We simply come together to fellowship, pray, and plan for events like the annual Thanksgiving Sing, and semi-annual Humboldt Peace Prize. ~~In the future we hope to~~ implement an ecumenical work party in our Community and invite each other to participate more fully in mutual understanding of our ~~respective~~ faiths.

Eureka Interfaith Fellowship will soon be holding ^{their} ~~our~~ annual Thanksgiving Sing. This sing will take place ^{Tues.} November 18th at 7:00pm at the First Presbyterian Church of Eureka; it will include choirs and musical groups from the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations including Lutherans, Methodists, ^{Pres.} Congregationalist, Episcopalians and Presbyterians: along with Bahai, Sufi, LDS Church, Synagogue, Temple Beth El, and others. Last year's Thanksgiving Sing was hosted by Father Eric Freed at the St. Bernard's Church in Eureka. Sadly, Father Eric was murdered on New Year's Day by someone who had just been released from the county jail. We will honor Father Eric with a moment of silence.

Granted, our accomplishments may not always make headlines. We have a long ways to go, but we have at least begun the journey to embrace the diversity of faiths and beliefs within our community ~~and in eating lunch at the same table,~~ ^{Sometimes} we are also finding out that we have more in common than our religious differences ~~might~~ suggest.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment