



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • Fourth Quarter 2015



How Should We Respond to Terror?

BY THE REV. CANON PHIL ASHEY,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Commemoration against terrorist attacks, on November 18th, 2015 at Republique place in Paris, France

How should Anglicans respond to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and to the ISIS crisis in the Middle East, in spite of the feelings that we have: fear, anger, horror at the kinds of absolutely cruel acts of violence inflicted on innocent civilians in the most unspeakable ways?

As Christians, we are drawn back to that unspeakable act of violence that was committed against our Savior as he was dying on the cross. The very first thing that he said on the cross in the face of that violence and that unspeakable cruelty that was being thrown at him is recorded in Luke 23:34: "Jesus said, 'Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'" This he did in spite of the fact that these people did know exactly what they were doing. On the one level, as Roman soldiers, they'd done this many times.

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Navigating Church Revitalization

BY THE REV. CANON STEVEN SAUL,
DIRECTOR OF CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Our Church ReVitalization team works with priests and lay leaders who want to plant, transplant and revitalize local churches. In conversations with leaders on what we offer there are usually questions about what to expect and what might clergy and lay leaders hope to take away from the investment of time, energy and participation in an American Anglican Council (AAC) Church ReVitalization seminar. What's encouraging, and what proves to be most helpful, is a willingness on the part of leaders to be vulnerable and explore ways they could build stronger foundations. The time also allows each participant to identify initial steps toward revitalizing their congregation. Taking these steps and reaching interim goals helps to build confidence in the community of faith where the leaders serve.

Making a Difference...

Churches needing revitalization should have what I like to call an “improvement team.” Every leader in the church should be on this team even if it requires some change on their behalf. Requiring every leader in the parish to invest in the “improvement team” helps prepare them for a season of change which enables them to better define steps toward a stronger congregation. The question to ask the “investors” is the following: “If you could impact your church for the next season of ministry and could definitely see signs of progress early on – would you be willing to take the needed steps for success?” If the answer to this question is “yes,” then the next important step is to embrace the benefits of Church ReVitalization.

Steps for Growth when roadblocks seem overwhelming

The greatest aspect of Church ReVitalization improvement is the point when leaders (clergy and lay) join together to determine (with the Lord's guidance) the way forward. In many cases, the road (though experiencing congestion, and sometimes detours) is usually passable with the help of healthy and strategic planning initiatives. Congregational and Clergy Coaching through the AAC is another important resource that proves to compliment the transformation process and guide the church to the desired destination. Like a Global Positioning System (GPS), there are great benefits to charting a course early on. We want to be a resource to you as you move forward with strategic initiatives for the new year.

Church ReVitalization is currently working with local churches and larger dioceses to navigate routes for health, strength, and strategic mission and ministry. It is important to use this time for the Lord and not get stuck in the traffic of confusion and detours that end up detracting from our best presence in the local community or the diocese. If your plans for the New Year include building a strategic position for growth, please contact the AAC's Church ReVitalization team at SSaul@AmericanAnglican.org. We want to listen and support the work of your leadership and the vision of your ministry. †

Photos: Clergy from the Anglican Diocese of the South recently took part in an AAC Clergy Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) at the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, GA. (top left) Along with Church ReVitalization Seminars, the AAC's Clergy Leadership Training Institutes are another offering to leaders looking to strengthen their parishes. Photos courtesy Richard Norris.



Renewing Orthodox Anglicanism





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They were hardened, insensitive and just as brutal as the terrorists that killed civilians in Paris and yet Jesus had it within him, in his heart, to recognize that they did not know what they were doing. They were lost. Jesus speaks a word of profound understanding about this problem that we are facing all over the world and that is that ours is not a problem of who has the best military or most vigilant police force. The problem is one of human sin and twisted hearts and the only answer to that is Jesus. Only Jesus, who said these words on the cross, has the power not only to pronounce that forgiveness but for that forgiveness to actually penetrate into a person's soul and spirit in such a way that even the dead in conscience becomes alive.

What we as Christians have to do in response, in the midst of the feelings of fear and anger and retribution that come so naturally in the wake of something like this, is to say, “what

can we do to reach such people with the transforming love of Jesus Christ?” We know that Muslims all over the world are coming to Christ in supernatural ways - literally through visions and dreams. There are missionaries all over the world who are quietly sharing, often covertly, Christ to Muslims. We need to pray for them and resource them. Bishop Michael Nazir Ali, former Bishop in the Church of Pakistan, has said that one of the places where Muslims frequently become radicalized is in prison. What are we doing to support prison ministries that can reach imprisoned Muslims with the transforming love of Jesus Christ? These are the things we need to realize and where our greatest efforts should be in responding to terrorism. We wage war not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places that have insinuated themselves into the minds and hearts of hardened people. Terrorists, and yet people who can be transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.†

The American Anglican Council is a network of individuals, dioceses, parishes and ministries who affirm biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion. By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, the mission of the American Anglican Council is to build up and defend Great Commission Anglican churches in North America and worldwide through advocacy and counsel, leadership development and equipping the local church. *Encompass* is a quarterly publication of the American Anglican Council.

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