



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • Third Quarter 2016

What Should We Expect from Our Bishops?

BY THE REV. CANON PHIL ASHEY
PRESIDENT & CEO

Somewhere tucked away my basement in an old Ashe family album there is a picture of the bishop visiting in our home. It must have been around 1960, when my father was rector in a new posting, and I was just a toddler. In this old black and white photo the bishop is on all fours with me on the carpet, smiling and inspecting one of my toys. In many ways, that picture represents what we would love to expect from bishops: kindness, gentleness and the ability to step down from their office and relate to us on our level. Bishops should demonstrate the love of Christ in a gentle and caring way.

But is that all we should expect, all we should want in a Bishop?

The Bishop in that picture was James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop of California. He was the bishop whose theology involved the rejection of central Christian beliefs. In his public preaching, teaching, speaking and writing the central Christian beliefs he rejected included the virgin birth, the Trinity and the doctrine of Hell. At that time my father was among the pioneers of the Charismatic renewal in the Episcopal Church. He told me how Bishop Pike wrote a pastoral letter to the clergy of the Diocese of California warning them not to associate with any one “speaking in tongues” because glossolalia was associated with the devil. As we later discovered, Bishop Pike was even then beginning to associate with “mediums” to contact and reconcile with the spirit of his son, who had committed suicide. Later, in September 1967, Pike participated in a televised séance with his dead son through the medium Arthur Ford, who was ordained as a Disciples of Christ minister. Pike detailed these experiences in his book “The Other Side.” Tragically, Bishop Pike died wandering in the Judean desert—some say, still searching to contact the spirit of his dead son.

Gentle, kind and caring Bishops can be seriously mistaken. They can be false teachers. They can be so spiritually misguided that they lead themselves and others away from Christ rather than to him.



So what should we expect of our Bishops beyond kindness, gentleness and “generous pastoral accommodation”? Here are some of the standards we should expect Bishops to live up to in their lives and their ministries:

From the Bible: “An overseer (bishop) must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” (Titus 1:9) Within the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) this and other Biblical citations (I Peter 5:2-3, I Tim. 3:1-7 and 5:17) have led us to state in our Canons that a Bishop is, above all, a faithful teacher of the people of God entrusted to his care, “called to propagate, to teach and to uphold and defend the faith and order of the Church...” (Can. III.8.1)

From Thomas Cranmer, the BCP 1549, “Consecration of a Bishop”: during the examination, the candidate is asked “Will you call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of [the Holy Scriptures], so as ye may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?” and “Be you ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all strange and erroneous doctrine contrary to God’s word, and both privately and openly encourage others [sic] to do the same?”

From the Book of Common Prayer 1662 and its Ordinal, recognized as a standard for doctrine among most Churches of the Anglican Communion—Almost the same language from Cranmer’s BCP 1549: “Will you faithfully exercise yourself in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same, so that you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome Doctrine...to banish and drive away from the Church all strange and erroneous doctrine contrary to God’s word...”

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20 Years of Faithful Witness



The American Anglican Council's 2003 "A Place to Stand" conference in Plano, TX was a milestone moment for Orthodox Anglicans in North America. Above, from left to right is (then) Father Martyr Minns, Mrs. Elizabeth Harmon, Father John Yates and Bishop Bob Duncan. Below, at the podiums, are Canons David Anderson (left) and David Roseberry. Each of these individuals and many more who attended that 2003 AAC meeting would go on to be leaders in the Anglican renewal movement in North America and worldwide.

The American Anglican Council has just entered its 20th year of ministry! It was August, 1996 when Biblically faithful Episcopalians incorporated this non-profit to give them a place to stand in a Church that was no longer standing on the clarity and authority of God's word. "A Place to Stand" was the statement of common faith organizational meetings adopted. This confession, if you will, was in the tradition of the great Anglican Reformers and the 39 Articles of Religion. Hundreds of years ago, as now, followers of Jesus Christ in the Anglican Way saw what was at stake—the Church was losing its Scriptural moorings and its Gospel voice.

Perspective on the AAC's Beginnings: August 1996 was before the Lambeth 1998 Conference of Anglican Bishops and their resolve to uphold Biblical teaching on human sexuality, marriage and Holy Orders. August 1996 was seven years before the consecration of Gene Robinson, a non-celibate homosexual bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire. August 1996 came over a decade before the Global Anglican Future

Conference (GAFCON) in 2008 and the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in 2009. It was before lawsuits and loss of church properties. In 1996 the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was a 40-year-old Vicar in the Church of England.

Years before these milestones and turning points occurred, Biblically faithful Episcopalians founded the American Anglican Council and its "A Place to Stand" confession of faith. The new organization sought to return The Episcopal Church USA (TEC) to its apostolic, Biblical and Reformational Anglican roots. We must never forget the lessons we have learned over the last 20 years in Anglicanism.

Focusing on Anglicanism in North America:

While our vision and mission at the American Anglican Council hasn't changed, we have adapted to the needs of Anglicans today in North America. Our number one priority is to build a society of Great Commission Churches in North America. We do this by developing faithful leaders at every level of the ACNA—in our Bishop's Training, our Clergy Leadership Institutes, our upcoming Summit for Rectors leading multi-staff congregations, lay leadership training and more. Through our Diocesan, regional and local church revitalization workshops, and with follow-up coaching we help Anglican congregations across North America to renew their unique, God given vision to help people find and follow Jesus in their communities. Through our teaching resources such as Anglican Perspective videos on the 39 Articles, we provide congregations with resources to help grow followers of Jesus Christ in the Anglican Way.

You will hear us in the months ahead focusing more on developing Biblically faithful leaders, equipping local churches to fulfill Christ's Great Commission, and renewing what it means to follow Jesus Christ in the Anglican way here in North America. I'm convinced that the best way to strengthen Biblically faithful Anglicanism worldwide is to begin by strengthening it here in North America. Please join us and support us in our work, the great adventure of building a society of Great Commission churches in the Anglican Church in North America—and beyond! †



Conflict Management – The True Builder of Leaders and Teams

THE REV CANON STEVEN SAUL, DIRECTOR OF REVIVE (CHURCH REVITALIZATION AND COACHING)

Recently, I was visiting with a lay leader regarding vision for his church. He spoke with excitement about the proposed vision of the church leadership and with a little hesitation he said, “But we’re not all in agreement. There are two leaders who do not want to move forward (at all) with our plan for ministry.” Soon after that came the pressing question. “How do we move forward from here? This is messy and one of the leaders is unwilling to discuss this plan any further.”

My response to him was that conflict is a tool that can help this leadership team move forward. And I could hear in his voice that my support for conflict in church was not the answer he was looking for. I shared with him that conflict was not the problem – but managing the conflict “as a team” was the number one criteria for their growing vision and mission.

Dr. Jim Osterhaus of Tag Consulting serves as a coach for corporations, government agencies, small businesses and church denominations. One of Dr. Osterhaus’ key training sessions is titled: “People Are Allergic To Conflict”. At least they think they are. In his session on Conflict in the Church, Osterhaus asks his participants an important true/false question: True or False, conflict in teams is good? The answer is Absolutely true! Osterhaus writes:

“Every decision that a team of leaders makes will have adaptive elements (uncertain pieces or unknowns) that need to be wrestled with by the stakeholders, and that will invariably involve conflict.”

To some degree conflict may be a healthy indicator that leadership is stepping out of maintenance or a plateaued posture and is seeking to grow or make changes that bring greater health to the organization. We must see conflict as a resource for growth and not a problem that must be avoided. Conflict allows a healthy team to wrestle with potential issues before ministry is launched. Conflict can also give a team the strength through wisdom, discernment, and fellowship to

approach bumps in the road with confidence that our team is working together and we are open enough to challenge new ideas and outdated methods because we want the best (God’s best) for our church.

Is there such a thing as healthy conflict?

Osterhaus writes specifically about conflict that is ineffective (Red Zone Conflict) and conflict that is most productive (Blue Zone Conflict). In a Red Zone framework, conflict is a “fire” that makes the struggle personal and emotions are also fully charged. In the “Red Zone” the team member is focusing on self and his/her behavior reflects the personal investment and agenda of the individual and not the team.

In Blue Zone Conflict (and this is where healthy conflict resides), the position of the team member is on the mission of the church/organization (not on selfish gain or personal position.) The team members (even in disagreement) are focused on what is best for the church and personal/individual emotions are acknowledged and managed by the team member – putting the goals and objectives of the team first.

When team members manage conflict in the Blue Zone, there is an important self-awareness that makes up the structure and functioning of the team. Osterhaus writes: “Blue Zone [Conflict management] is the continual refusal to shift responsibility for our actions to anyone or to any institution or system. Accepting responsibility for our own behavior allows us to change the behavior that is inconsistent with our most personal values. And the inverse is also true! Accepting responsibility for our own behavior protects us from accepting responsibility for other’s behavior.”

No one ever said that conflict is easy or enjoyable. But carrying a team-oriented and Christ-like approach to the leadership meeting at church could absolutely change the hearts of the leaders and the success of the church and ministry. †

For more information on Conflict Management and Revive (Church ReVitalization Workshops and Coaching), contact: The Rev’d Canon Steven Saul at SSaul@AmericanAnglican.org.

Characteristics of bad conflict (Red Zone) and good conflict (Blue Zone)

The AAC teaches these and similar principles to Revive participants. Learn more about Red Zone/Blue Zone in Dr. Jim Osterhaus’ 2015 book *Red Zone, Blue Zone: Turning Conflict into Opportunity*.

Red Zone

- This conflict is personal – Is about me!
- Emotions rule though they are not acknowledged
- I must protect myself, because I’m feeling weak.
- Emotions are denied in self, therefore “projected” on others.
 - The situation escalates.

Blue Zone

- This conflict is professional – Its about the business.
 - The mission of the organization rules.
 - I must protect the church’s mission.
- Emotions are understood and acknowledged in myself.
- The situation is reframed into a more useful construct.



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Note: This language is the basis for the Examination of Bishops in the proposed Ordinal of the ACNA.

The principle responsibility of the Bishop is to proclaim and teach what the Bible teaches. The flip side of that is the responsibility to guard the faith and order of the Church by “banishing strange and erroneous teaching contrary to God’s word written.” It is nothing less than the teaching Jesus gave in John 10 on the Good Shepherd who drives away the wolves, and in John 21, His charge to Peter the Apostle to “feed the sheep” with wholesome food. Whether the bishop is kind, gentle, caring and “pastorally generous” in doing so is not the issue. Faithfulness is the issue.

Some of you will remember the words of former Episcopal Presiding Bishop John Allin who is reported as saying before he died, “I fear I have loved the Church more than I have loved the Lord of my Church.” Are we faithful to Jesus—Bishops, Clergy and Laity alike and together? Two different groups of bishops will be meeting in the next few months. In October, Primates and Bishops of the Global South will be meeting. In the coming months, the House of Bishops of the Church of England will be meeting to consider the results of the “Shared discussions” and the recommendations to bless same-sex partnerships. Please pray that they may be faithful to Jesus, and not ordain or bless anything contrary to God’s word written. †

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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