

Questions from the Audience

Answers from the St. Michael’s Discipleship Task Force, The Rev. Al Zadig Jr.,
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1. How do we avoid the criticism of being too self-righteous in the Anglican/Episcopal debate?

This is a danger – always. We always need to be watchful – especially when we think we are right. But the charge can be leveled at all parties in any dispute. So anyone using that charge needs to beware that it doesn’t apply to them as well. Such a charge must not be used to silence dispute, but to temper the way each responds to the other.

2. Why is TEC using the Book of Common Prayer if they don’t believe what the prayers say?

Jesus’ enemies were always saying great prayers, and reading great liturgies. His test was always not “How sincere are you in your prayers?” but what fruit in your lives is shown by the way you worship. A tree is known by its fruits.

3. How can the TEC try to take over churches and call that Christian?

TEC has convinced itself that it is recapturing church properties that have essentially been “stolen” from them. They think that by alienating ourselves from the messages that have been coming out of TEC over the past couple of decades, and distrusting that their leaders are following the truth of the gospel, we have “left” the club. The trouble is that when you look at the very positions they were taking only a couple of decades ago (e.g. we are against same-sex marriage, and against clergy in same-sex relationships) it is they who have moved, not we.

4. Is there any chance for reconciliation?

No. Perhaps mediation; but not reconciliation. TEC has “gone over the waterfall.” You cannot put the water back at the top. Remember this all comes down to worldview and our over-under understanding of scripture.

5. What makes a person go to hell?

A person chooses to go to hell by refusing the gracious offer of forgiveness that God has made them through Christ. John 3:19 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already.”

6. How can we combat/contend with change in a culture so confused about human sexuality and other realities?

With great difficulty. We need to see that Christians have lived through the centuries in many cultures that were hostile to what they believed. This is nothing new. We just had it too easy for too long. The Catholic Archbishop of Chicago recently said: “I believe that I will die in my bed. But I believe that my successor will die in prison. And I believe that his successor will die a martyr.”

7. How can we unmistakably take the word of God through interpretations of inherently sinful and fallible men to be 100% truthful and without prejudice?
We believe that the Holy Spirit will, as Jesus promised if we are open to Him, lead us into all truth. If we rely on God's Word, rather than man's word, we will be given discernment when we hear something that is filled with error.
8. In tonight's talk the Catholic Catechism was referred to many times. What if we took the position of not accepting the Catechism, how would the argument be different?
As Anglicans, we believe that the Catechism is simply a means to teach Biblical truth in an orderly way. It keeps us unified especially as the winds of time and change seek to redirect the church in other directions. Without a central catechism it becomes every person for themselves which brings us into chaos.
9. Knowing that there is a judgment after death how can we know that we are saved any more than a nonbeliever?
We are not judged on the basis of the good or bad things we have done. Otherwise the thief on the cross next to Jesus would never have been told: "Today you will be with Me in Paradise." We are judged on how we have responded to God's gracious gift of Himself as the "lamb that takes away the sin of the world."
10. How do we address and discuss the question of homosexuality in an effort to be helpful?
We begin by saying that there is a difference between sexual desire and sexual practice. A person may have same-sex desires and not act on them, just as many people have heterosexual desires and do not act on them. What we want to do is help those with unwanted same-sex desires to be healed – beginning with their relationship with God, then with those who may have hurt them (parents, siblings, friends, etc.) and finally with the rest of society. This may or may not cure them of all same-sex desires, but it will enable them to live fruitful, godly lives that benefit themselves and the whole of society.