



**DIOCESE of**  
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**Pastoral Guidance for the Clergy of the Diocese of Christ Our Hope**  
Bishop Steve Breedlove with the Canons and Staff of the DCH

**\*CONFIDENTIAL\***

Dear Brothers and Sisters –

How blessed and privileged I am to work among you! I<sup>1</sup> thank God for your determination to cling to the Lord, to the authority of his word, and to the hope of the gospel; and I am thankful for your determination to genuinely love the people of your churches and communities. Further, I am profoundly blessed by your zeal, faithfulness, integrity, and trustworthiness.

These last few days have been challenging due to responses and media conversations triggered by the Pastoral Statement on Sexuality and Identity from the ACNA College of Bishops, published January 19, 2021. If you have not read it, I urge you to print and read it carefully, referring interactively to the paragraphs and sections that I mention in this letter.

[Sexuality and Identity: A Pastoral Statement from the College of Bishops](#)

In particular, the conversation significantly escalated throughout the ACNA world with the publication of a letter entitled “Dear Gay Anglicans” (subsequently removed from the web by the author). In case you did not see that, [here is a link where you can find that letter](#).

In our Diocese, responses to the Bishops Statement have been calm but mixed. I have received hearty thanks and expressions of relief from clergy and laity, including some who have battled same-sex attraction for life. I have also received statements of confusion and concern from clergy, plus alarm and disagreement from lay people who struggle with same-sex attraction.

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<sup>1</sup> In this letter, I use singular pronouns, “I, my, mine,” etc. However, this letter has been vetted by Suffragan Bishop Quigg Lawrence and all the DCH Canons: Art Going, Alan Hawkins, Teresa Kincaid, Jeff Bailey, and Ben Bowman. They’ve added and clarified, and ultimately endorsed, what you are reading. In addition, Coms Director Robert Hocutt and Rev Tommy Hinson have contributed. But rest assured, this letter is fully mine and emerges from my ministry as the Bishop Ordinary. We pray God will strengthen you for mission and ministry through this letter of Pastoral Guidance.

It's important to note that no one I've talked to – or read about from within the ACNA – has disagreed with the substance of the content RE: sexuality within the ACNA Statement. All have agreed with the vision for sexual behavior described in Paragraphs 3-6 of the Preamble and all of the section entitled "Same-Sex Relationships and Scripture." The controversies over the statement have been between people who, as far as one can tell, all hold a traditional, orthodox, biblical position RE: human sexuality.

So what's the problem? The tensions center on the Bishops' positions in the section entitled Identity and Language and the section entitled Conclusion. Secondly, tension has arisen over the authority of the College of Bishops and questions of the practical meaning of the "recommendations, requests, and instructions" embedded in the document.

"What do we actually have to do as a result of this Statement?" is the question I am addressing in this letter to you.

My attempt to summarize and recap the questions triggered by the Bishops Statement and media responses quickly grew tedious. In order to give you direct access to the concerns being raised, I've linked several articles and reports about this specific moment in the ACNA as well as similar controversies in the PCA, a denomination that, like us, seeks to faithfully hold the teaching of Scripture and genuinely love and serve people struggling with same-sex attraction. Each paper offers perspectives, fears, concerns, and answers RE: the issue of same-sex attraction and orthodox, faithful Christian life. Several of the papers present a different take on key practices (including especially the issue of Identity and Language) than those of the ACNA Bishops. The last link takes you to a paper that directly addresses the authority of the ACNA bishops to offer teaching that shapes the ministry practices of all clergy and bishops in the Province. Just prior to that is a link to a reflection on singleness and celibacy by a woman who serves on the Parish Council of a DCH church. It speaks beyond the particular issue of same-sex attraction and is worth including in any consideration of sexuality and identity.

[Reflections on the ACNA Pastoral Statement \(by Mark Yarhouse\)](#)

[Weariness \(by Wesley Hill\)](#)

[Thoughts on Revoice, Unnecessary Division, and the PCA \(by Scott Sauls\)](#)

[PCA Sides with the Nashville Statement Over Revoice's Approach \(by Christianity Today\)](#)

[The PCA is now the PCUSA: Lessons from Revoice \(by Warhorn Media\)](#)

[C4SO Pastoral Guidance on the ACNA Statement on Sexuality and Identity \(by Rt. Rev. Todd Hunter\)](#)

<http://thewell.intervarsity.org/reflections/my-soul-waits-lord-celibacy-and-christian-witness>

[Do the Bishops of the ACNA Have Teaching Authority When They Speak or Not? \(by The American Anglican Council\)](#)

If you read some or all of these links, you'll see a plethora of questions and ideas about proper understanding of and ministry to/with those with same-sex attraction. Plus, you likely have your own very real ministry-and-life-related questions. So how do we find a way forward that has fidelity to God's word and faithfulness to people who struggle to follow Christ in terms of this culturally critical question?

I believe the best approach is to begin with gospel convictions that should shape our pastoral and missional response to congregants and unbelievers struggling to understand God's good truth concerning fundamental questions of human identity and transformation, including the issue of sexuality. I want to do so in a way that combines Scripture, the Bishops Statement, and genuine love and respect for the people we serve as pastors and missionaries of the gospel.

### **Preliminary Perspective Toward the Bishops Statement**

Let me say, I have read and reread the Bishops Statement multiple times. I've printed it, written questions and comments in the margins, found answers to my own questions within the Statement, sought to understand its vision for gospel ministry and its tone toward people, etc. (I urge you to do the same.) My perspective can be summarized in the following comments.

I voted for it from the outset because my first instincts were supportive. Today, almost two months later, the more I read it, the more I hear its teaching as comprehensive, correct, humble, commendable, and compassionate. I, too, am under authority, so the fact that I support it is not a primary factor in my receiving its teachings. "Support and acceptance" doesn't mean "jot and tittle infallibility." It doesn't preclude "wrestling with how to integrate this into ministry and mission." I always have to measure my perspectives against God's Word and the teachings of the faithful Church, in prayer. I also have to consistently ask questions about mission and pastoral ministry. But having done exactly that at the beginning, and now far more thoroughly over time, I'm on board.

I'm on board because the Statement leaves room for (in fact, pushes us toward) the very kind of discussion represented by this letter, among our clergy and within our parishes. It invites us to wrestle with how to anchor our faith in an unshakable biblical message and earnestly care for – and speak to – those outside the faith, as well as those walking alongside us as growing disciples of Jesus. Its fundamental call is to be faithful agents of Good News and hope.

I realize this posture will have to be "translated" so people who do not see the gospel as gracious good news and hope are able to see it as that. It will have to be prayed and loved into receptivity, as much as is in our power as ambassadors of that Gospel. There will be all sorts of individual and personal questions and conversations, countless opportunities to listen and love well, and plenty of sermons and classes that call for our best, most earnest work and prayer. Being faithful gospel leaders calls for nothing less.

I'm also on board because it is written most directly for bishops, pastors, teachers, and counselors, as a guide for faith and ministry. Its direct requests are aimed specifically for application in the Province's official, public written communiques and oral presentations. Fundamentally, it is **teaching** – to be examined and received and understood by those charged with stewarding and continuing to teach the Good News. It is strong, direct, and unequivocal, but it calls us to live into something ourselves, something we in turn offer to

others. It does not answer every question we will face in local ministry and mission. That's the work we are called to do.

Receiving it (as I have) now pushes me, as your bishop, to join you in figuring out how to live and minister in light of the biblical truths embodied in the Statement. That's our work together. An ordinand in the Diocese wrote this week, assuring me of his prayers. He quoted St. Augustine's statement on the anniversary of his being elected Bishop of Hippo: "Where I'm terrified by what I am for you, I am given comfort by what I am with you. For you I am a bishop, with you, after all, I am a Christian. The first is the name of an office undertaken, the second a name of grace; that one means danger, this one means salvation." Amen.

## **Vision of Transformation**

The vision of redemption throughout the Scriptures is also a vision of lifelong transformation. The Bishops Statement frequently affirms this, reinforcing God's redemptive story throughout Scripture. The calling and hope of transformation by grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is the nature of the life and ministry God has kindly given us.

This past week we read Exodus 2 in our daily readings. In vv. 16-17 God describes Israel's redemption as a continuum between deliverance from Egypt (slavery) into "a land flowing with milk and honey." That was a promise of cosmic, national, cultural transformation, and it took a generation to accomplish – *sort of*. Israel continued to need deep transformation throughout her history. Any individual could "get it and enter into the fullness of the grace of that covenant." But as a whole, Israel never fully lived into the change God offered. Nevertheless, his covenant love for them was steadfast and unwavering.

The grace poured out for us on the cross of Christ changed everything in terms of actualized transformation. The key is that, through the blood of Christ, we are forgiven and fully reconciled to God, given a new identity in Christ, and given the indwelling Holy Spirit. The difference between agreeing that that this is our hope and assenting to the process of actualized spiritual transformation is night and day:

- We have the sure promise of completed transformation into the image of Christ: Romans 8:28-29.
- We have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to give us the means of daily transformation: 2 Corinthians 3:16-18; Galatians 5:16-24; Romans 8.
- While we know this process of increasing Christlikeness will not be completed until we see him face to face, we are on a journey of lifelong spiritual transformation, of realizing our truest identity in Christ. We can expect to grow in our awareness and understanding of that identity, and we can aspire to live now as we will be then: 1 John 3:1-3; Colossians 3:1-17; Philippians 3:7-21; 2 Peter 1:1-12.

This is who we are and how we are called to live as followers of Jesus – recipients of this gospel deliverance, this gospel hope, this gospel transformation. We preach the gospel to ourselves every day. Therefore, we always offer an invitation into a life of transformation through the grace of Jesus Christ to all – to those outside the faith, to those within the faith, and to ourselves. This is how we live, preach, teach, and pastor everyone who

stands outside, and everyone who is in the process of experiencing the transformative power of Christ's grace.

2 Corinthians 5:14-6:1 is the best text I know to inform and shape our posture as ambassadors for Christ and spokespeople for this Gospel. I encourage you to read the Bishops Statement looking for these same themes of grace, gratitude, humility and hope. I find that it fully comports with this biblical perspective of grace and transformation.

### **The Greater Missional Challenge We Face**

At the same time, this gospel message, translated into specific conversations about identity and lifestyle, often falls on deaf ears. The Bishops Statement acknowledges that identity and desires, especially sexual desires and orientation, have become the fixed, unquestionable source of identity in the minds of people outside (and even inside) the Church.

I actually don't think the Bishops Statement goes far enough in acknowledging the depth of this missional battle. Carl Trueman's book, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*, explores this in deeper, more systemic terms. The fruit of centuries of anthropocentric thinking has led us to what Trueman (quoting Philip Rieff) calls "a Third World society." Fundamental to this "Third World life" is the rejection of an identity given to us by God, family, community, culture, mores, or duty, in favor of the freedom and right to name our own identity. We name and identify ourselves internally and personally, at will. The idea of an identity rooted in anything outside ourselves and our desires is anathema: it would be considered the *loss* of self. Therefore, how a person with same-sex attraction names his/her identity is basically "none of your business." The only adequate response is "accepting what he/she says on this matter."

As a result, without a movement in the soul, our "Good News (2 Cor 5:16-17) is Bad News" to the ears of many. Even people who come to genuine faith in Christ may come as people thoroughly formed and shaped by this Third World sense of identity. It can take a lifetime of wrestling to come to see the goodness of this most profound implication of the Gospel, "we are a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, all things are new."

On one hand, we must ask ourselves, *Isn't this the journey every one of us is on?* Since the unfolding of the message of the gospel of Christ, coming to grips with a new identity and living into that identity have always been the core work of discipleship. Otherwise, why would this be such a major theme in New Testament discipleship teaching?

On the other hand, for some converts and returnees to the Christian faith, accepting a new identity in Jesus Christ is a longer journey, a steeper climb, than for others. People coming out of a radically different culture and mentality -- for instance, Muslims, Hindus, or people from the LGBTQ+ life -- often face a particularly arduous journey as they come to grips with a new identity and inhabit a new community with new beliefs and values. The experiential cost of discipleship for people on such a journey can include being disowned by one's family and friends, or laying aside years of certain rhythms and patterns of life, or facing a lifelong battle to live a celibate life.

We've always had the challenge of learning, realizing, and living into the image of Christ. Perhaps the bridge to that new country is longer than it used to be for some people in our world. But it's still the same bridge, and it's always been a journey. What is our attitude

toward those standing on the far edge, afraid to take a step? How do we encourage them toward the beautiful land we inhabit, that can seem to them a place of loss and death? Surely this challenge calls for our best pastoral wisdom and work, our sacrificial love for others, our earnest commitment to our Lord who longs to “rename” all of us with our true and deepest identity!

### **Heart of the Bishops Statement**

While I am driving this toward a broader application than the Bishops Statement, nothing I am saying in terms of missional and pastoral sensitivity differs in heart from what is found there. The compassion and empathy of the Statement RE: the struggle over identity that is fostered by life in a Third World culture emerges as a dominant theme of the message.

### **Direct Pastoral Guidance**

Getting practical, then, what does this mean? We have members of our churches who experience same-sex attraction and yet are deeply committed to living in line with the biblical vision of sexuality and identity. These fellow Christians are full and valued members of our family, essential participants in the growth and mission of the Body of Christ. There are also people throughout our community not yet in the faith, who are valued and loved by Christ even if they never come to share our faith. So how do we think and talk about these matters with these people we are called to love and serve?

Assuming that, as clergy of this diocese, you agree with the fundamentals of the Preamble and the section entitled Same-Sex Relationships and Scripture, the basic call is to hold firmly to that ideal and to pastorally offer the biblical vision of “a redeemed identity in Christ and lifelong transformation into his image.” We speak invitationally, graciously, and kindly, but steadily, without wavering. We hold to the anchor, but our pastoral ministry mirrors St. Paul’s comments about his own pastoral ministry in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, especially vv. 11-12: “We exhorted or counseled you (*parakalountes*) and encouraged or comforted you (*paramouthoumenoi*) and charged you – or better, witnessed to you (*marturomenoi*) – to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.” What a vision for steady, unyielding, but tender and kind pastoral ministry as a way of life for all of us!

### **What does this say practically about . . .**

#### Our interactions with non-Christians?

We listen well, with empathy, as they tell their story. To the degree that they lay claim to a particular identity, we work with that in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. This passage is often misunderstood. Paul speaks of meeting “Jews, those under the law, and those without the law” on their own terms in order to win anyone he can to Christ. In this context, “Jews” is a designation of a group proverbial for ethnic prejudice (what we’d call “racism”). “Those under the law” are Jews and proselytes with religious pride and legalism. Paul is not saying he became a racist to the Jews or a legalist to the Pharisees. He did not change his theology or his essential message. He certainly did not become a drunkard or hedonist to those without the law: check out vv. 24-27 in terms of his own disciplines in matters of food and drink.

In all these things, Paul laid aside his rights – including (look at context!) the right to insist that others accept his knowledge about spiritual truth before he engaged them with the gospel. He understood the truth about racism, legalism, and hedonism, but in his preaching the good news, his aim is not that non-Christians adopt his “correct terms” and then hear the gospel message. Instead his intention is to serve people where they were in order to win people to Jesus. He did not demand that they see the truth about these crucial matters before he shared the Gospel and invited them to begin their journey with Jesus.

Therefore, I should not push back on someone who introduces himself as “a gay man” with, “Oh, that’s not who you really are.” I know the biblical truth about his *created* identity. I empathize with the struggles of his *sin-marred* identity (because I lived with commensurate struggles myself). But in order for him to ultimately experience his *redeemed* identity, I know there is something more important to talk about at this time – Jesus Christ, the Cross of Christ, and the testimony of my own life in Christ.

We must be nimble and prayerful, listening well to the Spirit and to those with whom we talk . We must be ready at the Spirit’s prompting to move in and out of the discussions of identity at the right time, in the right way, while anchoring ourselves, our faith, and our hope in the transformative grace of God.

Our interactions with Christians who desire to hold to language RE: same-sex attracted people that is contrary to that recommended by the bishops?

I had two hard discussions in recent weeks with people who appealed to me to back down from the position of the Bishops’ Statement RE: use of public language. They both hold strongly to the same beliefs RE: sexuality that I hold, that are stated by the bishops, but they identify as “gay Christians” or “gay Anglicans.” Each pushed – even insisted – that I should use that same language, or at least sanction and bless its use.

First of all, I did not correct either person’s self-identification. I am not his pastor. If I were, my initial concern would not be the language he currently uses but the deeper issue of his understanding his identity in Christ and his participation in transformative discipleship into the image of Christ. Depending on his starting place in terms of understanding identity, that could take a long, long time. I would willingly walk slowly, but my goal doesn’t change.

Second (following the teaching of the Bishops’ Statement), I am unwilling to confuse the topic by using adjectives to moderate my identity in Christ in terms of my public teaching or personal conversation. I am a Christian who happens to be American, male, older, short, white, “of Welsh and Irish descent,” etc. But I never associate those descriptors with my fundamental identity as a Christian. “I am a Christian who . . .” I find the Bishops Statement on this matter of language RE: same-sex attraction convincing in terms of the potential confusion created by using these descriptors as adjectives. The risk is too great for me as a pastor/bishop to be unclear in my public language, especially my teaching and preaching.

I find this in line with the witness of Galatians 3:28, where the defining categories of Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, or female are all laid aside. These descriptors might be important in understanding and ministering to an individual (or group). To wit, it is likely crucial to our ministries to know that someone we minister to is male or female, black or

Hispanic or white, same-sex attracted, etc. These descriptors are all part of a story we each bear, to which the Gospel speaks. But these descriptors are also sublimated in favor of “[but we are] Christ’s [person], Abraham’s children [i.e., born by faith], heirs according to promise” (Galatians 3:29).

Pastorally, RE: Christians who are biblical and orthodox in terms of human sexuality but who want to refer to themselves as “gay Christians,” my initial move is toward meeting them without disputing their language but without baptizing it by my language. My questions instead turn to, “Where are they in the process of transformation into their true identity in Christ? Where am I in terms of pastoral ministry in their lives? How can I be like St. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12? What is my own witness of transformation?”

A pastor in the diocese wrote me this week with this story embedded in his email:

*I think that the CoB statement's hope that a gay person would choose to identify as a "Christian who experiences same-sex attraction" is actually a good one, but, in my judgment, this is likely a decades-long process that is led much more by the Holy Spirit than by me. In Richard Hays' well-known chapter on this issue, his friend Gary, toward the very end of his life, says something like, "I really don't think of myself as gay anymore, just a child of God." That's a great vision, but it took decades of love and support from Christians who were fine meeting him where he was . . .*

As long as the clergy of our diocese do not baptize the adjectival use of “gay” (or any of the LBGTQ+ identifiers) with our teaching and language, I believe we can enter into evangelism and discipleship effectively with the tools given us in Scripture, the truths affirmed by the Bishops Statement, and the Spirit who gives us wisdom.

Our diocesan team will not operate as “language police,” checking up on your personal conversations and public teachings. If you believe you have a reason for a different practice in these matters, I trust you will talk it out with me or one of our diocesan canons. We will try to persuade you to follow these guidelines, but we also promise to listen.

#### Our public teaching and preaching?

The answers to this question are implied or stated in my previous comments. I would urge all public teaching within the congregations and missions of our diocese to reflect and affirm biblical language concerning our identity in Christ. I encourage you to do so without wrangling but with clarity, humility, grace, and empathy. Here are some texts that can shape our ministries clearly in this regard: 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Peter 1:13-19.

I am sure this does not answer every specific question you may face, but I trust you will not seek ways to get around these instructions because a specific contingency is not addressed. We do not need a handbook for how to live this out, but a heart.

#### About specific questions, specific people?

“This seems like poor timing, if nothing else, especially in light of the recent election, 500,000 deaths from COVID, and the events of January 6 at the capital.”

- There was a statement from the Archbishop in response to January 6. I also recorded a video and sent it to our mailing list on January 6.
- Pastors and leaders throughout the ACNA are slowly unpacking the implications of the national election. The lessons learned will take years to understand and teach, but in this season, many of us simply need a break from the intensity of that crisis. For sure, we likely need more time and distance to come to wise understandings of all that happened.
- COVID-19 will likely change our lives for a decade or more. Our hearts ache with those who have lost loved ones or had their own lives severely disrupted by this illness. However, this is not going away. We must learn to live as normally as possible while adjusting constantly to the shifting landscape of this long-term pandemic.
- As the Statement itself says, it has been a year in the writing, and it came to fruition in this moment. I'm honestly not sure that there would have been "a good time" to unveil this, and the issue in this discussion is current, crucial, and timely.

"Was this Statement written in reaction to people like Wesley Hill, the Spiritual Friendship blog, the Revoice Movement, etc?"

- I was not on the subcommittee that drafted the statement, so I cannot report on the internal discussions and motivations for this statement. I do know that, in the public discussions at the beginning or at the conclusion of this process, Dr. Hill, his blog, Revoice, or other "gay Christian" voices were never referenced. No criticism or correction was leveled toward any of those voices.
- Personally, I am sad that this can be heard as shutting down conversation. As I have shared in this paper, it does not need to. It does teach a way of witness and teaching that calls all of us to find our full identity in Christ. I believe Dr. Hill completely agrees with that, and as far as his terminology, he is not responsible to accept any of the recommendations and requests of this Statement.
- There are a variety of resources from different voices that you may find helpful to frame the issues, understand the questions, and face our own brokenness. My appeal is simply this: Whenever you lead, stand and teach a consistently biblical, Christocentric, gospel-transformation message. Call people to find their identity in Christ. Walk with people, leading them with humility and strength. Help people parse these issues with grace.

"How do we understand or respond to the confusion that surrounded the publication of the 'Dear Gay Anglicans' letter?"

- Prior to its publication, I spoke with the author personally. As far as I understand, he holds biblical convictions and practices concerning sexuality. His purported mission is to help churches care for and welcome people who struggle with same-sex attraction without lessening the clarity of a biblical stance on sexuality. I sincerely hope that is his true desire. As we talked, he and I did disagree over the issue of essential identity and how leaders within the church should describe people with same-sex attraction. Nevertheless, I listened to his reasoning, and it was an irenic conversation.
- However, his subsequent actions were highly divisive. The most significant issue is that this individual, who is an aspirant for ordination, rejected the authority,

guidance and oversight of the leaders of the ACNA as “teachers of faith and practice.” Most basically he rejected the direct teaching of the Statement (emphasis added):

- “To **insist** on the adjective ‘gay,’ with all of its cultural attachments, is problematic to the point that we cannot affirm its usage in relation to the word ‘Christian.’”
- “As reflected in this statement, we **commend** the usage of ‘Christians who experience same-sex attraction.’”
- I cannot judge his heart and motives but we know these things for sure:
  - Several comments and implications in the letter were misleading. For someone who purports to agree with its fundamental teaching, the author viewed the words of the Bishops Statement in the most negative light possible. He ignored the pastoral appeal of the Statement and its encouragement for working out the teaching in missionally sensitive, local ways under the pastoral guidance of diocesan bishops.
  - He implied that he consulted with leaders in the Province, thereby sending out his letter with knowledge and approval. In fact, that was not true. Instead, he rejected the appeals of some ACNA bishops to “cease and desist” before publishing the letter on the web. Subsequently, it took intense pressure and a direct injunction from his bishop to remove the letter from the web.
  - Within a day of publication, his letter (with implied provincial approval) created confusion and damage among international Anglican partners of the ACNA.
  - Since it has been removed from circulation, the author has continued to maintain online discussions of “safe/unsafe” ACNA leaders based on their acceptance or rejection of the appeal contained within the “Dear Gay Anglicans” letter.
- What about the fact that a number ACNA leaders -- even some bishops -- signed the letter before it was removed?
  - Clergy and lay people could easily have signed this letter in good faith without taking the time to realize its implications. That is one of the dangers of trying to have significant discussions about faith and practice through online media instead of doing the work of actual conversation and study.

#### Can I publish this pastoral letter (or any portion of it) online?

- The answer is no, not without permission from me. This a personal letter to the clergy of our Diocese from your bishop, offering pastoral guidance. You are free to **discuss** it with me, with our team of canons and staff, with one another, and with lay leaders or other key staff in your churches. You are free to adopt and adapt any wisdom you gain from this letter for your own ministries. **But do not publish it, post it, print and distribute it (even internally for your staff and leaders), read it publicly, etc., without my permission.**
- In fact, while I’m on that topic, I urge you to not work this issue out online **at all**. Call people. Speak with people. Email people personally. When you find yourself tending to criticize someone, reach out to them; if you can’t do that, pray for them. We should have learned by now that lobbing grenades across our divides through the internet rarely sheds any light but often raises the heat.

Finally, I strongly commend you to this [website](#), the ministry of Rev Vaughn Roberts. It offers a wealth of resources. Many of you will remember Vaughan for his teaching in 2015 and 2020. He is a pastor who has faced lifelong same-sex attraction, is celibate, and whose life and ministry reflect the teachings and encouragement I am seeking to communicate.

Thank you for wading through this. It has taken a long time to write and collaborate with other leaders – but probably not much longer than it took to read! Thanks for hanging in there.

Again, I am so grateful for you all. I rejoice to be in the yoke with you, and with Jesus.

In Christ's love,

Bishop Steve, for the Team

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