

OPEN LETTER TO THE FAITHFUL ANGLICANS/EPISCOPALIANS IN
LOWER SOUTH CAROLINA
December 12, 2014

I write as a Bishop of The Episcopal Church...Consecrated in March of 1996...serving in the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina until 2007. In 2008 I was elected to serve as Bishop Assistant in the Dominican Episcopal Church and served until I resigned in 2012. I graduated from The Citadel in 1962 and following completion of my theological studies at The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, I was Ordained Deacon in Florence, SC. Ordination to the Sacred Priesthood was celebrated at La Iglesia Todos los Santos, La Romana, Dominican Republic, where I served until 1972 when I returned to serve in South Carolina. I have served 15 years in the Dominican Republic and 44 years in South Carolina ministering in Rural congregations, suburban ministry and College Chaplaincy. Two thousand sixteen will mark my 50th year in the Priesthood.

When events led to the separation of the Diocese of South Carolina from The Episcopal Church, I was deeply saddened by something which I felt could have been dealt with in a different manner... a more creative manner. The deep chasm that developed between friends, neighbors and even families led me to the question of how to best minister to those on all sides who were hurting and how I could help in the midst of this situation.

My ministry has been one of "bridge building" and connecting and I felt that this is what I should be about....

I met with with the Bishops separately and in explaining that which I felt I needed to do, The Provisional Bishop of the Episcopal Church in South Carolina explained that he thought my proposed work would cause "confusion" and that he felt called to bring clarity to the situation....my response was that there was little I could do to confuse matters more than they already were....and that, as a Missionary Bishop (as I am known) my ministry had always been one of reaching across these unfortunate lines...The Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina explained that he knew this work would be difficult and painful and that he understood...aspirina me OF historian prayers.

In speaking to the Presiding Bishop in March of 2013, she spoke of the confusing nature of what she felt I was undertaking and requested that I not "function Sacramentally"on either side.... when speaking to all the Bishops gathered in March of 2013, I explained that I realized the risk that I was taking but that I felt strongly in the need to reach across the great divide and minister to all and committed myself to NOT performing (Episcopal Rites) Confirmation or Ordinations on either side but that I would Preach and Celebrate the EUCHARIST on both sides.

I have adhered to my stated mission and the usual comments made by lay members in South Carolina have been...I am so glad that someone is doing it.....

The attached letter is from the Provisional Bishop of the Episcopal Church inSouth Carolina and my response to his letter

I am releasing these letters as I believe that there is a need for the Church in South Carolina and community at large to know why I am unable to continue in this difficult ministry of reconciliation to a part of the body of the Church that is deeply wounded.



The Episcopal Church in South Carolina



December 2, 2014

The Rt. Rev. William J. Skilton
4969 Parkside Drive
Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Bill,

I hope you and Lynn are well as we move into the time of Advent with anticipation and hope.

You probably will recall my concern about clarifying matters of disagreement between former Episcopalians and those who remain in The Episcopal Church. Some time ago, I indicated to you that your sense of call "across the divide" conflicts with my desire to promote clarity and with the Presiding Bishop's request that you avoid functioning sacramentally on either side, for a while.

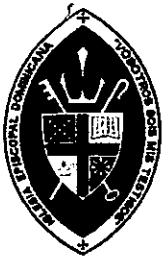
The court case in Dorchester County, including three weeks in court at St. George, has emphasized the need to seek greater clarity. Indeed, the court - along with the church and society in general - appears to be quite confused about what has happened to The Episcopal Church in these parts. In my judgment, it is not in the best interests of anyone on either or both sides of the controversy for ordained people to encourage or promote confusion - except, of course, where it is in the best interests of those who benefit from such confusion.

With this background, I need to express a couple of things to you at this point. First, I have indicated to priests who remain in The Episcopal Church that it is not appropriate to ask you to function sacramentally in a church which remains part of The Episcopal Church. Indeed, you do not have my permission to do so. This is consistent with what I and the Presiding Bishop have requested of you. Further, this direction is consistent with what I have told priests who request to participate liturgically in former Episcopal churches. Secondly, I want to be clear that you do not have my permission or that of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina to represent The Episcopal Church or this diocese in any official way. Again this direction seeks clarity on behalf of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina, The Episcopal Church at large, and the ecumenical community in South Carolina, in a time of great confusion.

I am confident that you regret recent events in the life of The Episcopal Church here, as do I. However, your responses to those events differ from those which I believe to be helpful. Therefore, as Provisional Bishop, I feel the need - and have the responsibility - to share these directives with you.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Charles G. vonRosenberg



Rt. REV. WILLIAM J. SKILTON

**Bishop Suffragan of South Carolina, Retired
Assistant Bishop of The Dominican Episcopal Church, Retired**



The Rt. Rev. Charles G. VonRosenberg.
Provisional Bishop
The Episcopal Church in South Carolina
P.O. Box 20485
Charleston, SC. 29413

December 11, 2014

Dear +Charlie,

What a sad surprise to receive your letter of December 2, 2014. After reading it several times, I find it difficult to understand the source and real reason for such communication.

Since we spoke, first alone in your office at Grace, then together with Bishop Clay Mathews and the Presiding Bishop and the following day speaking to the House of Bishops in Executive Session, I have neither Confirmed nor Ordained in any church in South Carolina Nor have I represented The Episcopal Church in any official capacity. I also, since you, as Provisional Bishop of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina, have refused me permission to "function sacramentally in a church which remains with The Episcopal Church in South Carolina", will abide by your direction. However, I am a Bishop Assistant of the Dominican Episcopal Church, resigned, Bishop Suffragan of South Carolina, resigned; this speaks of person and identity...something I claim with great pride and thanksgiving.

"Reconciliation" seems to be presented as someone expressing regrets for going in a certain direction, repenting (turning) and then publicly making a statement of contrition and being re-integrated into the "other"

The process towards reconciliation is messy...and it speaks of truly listening and learning from each other so that, as Dr. Jacqueline Cameron of Chicago writes..."we can catch a shared vision of our rich bonds in Christ and become more effective healers in our wounded and suffering world"

The ability of living into the agony of this communication towards reconciliation without the pressure or demand of adherence to one perspective is the only thing that will enable us to move forward.

When I made my presentation to the House of Bishops, I stated that "my calling was to proclaim the Gospel and celebrate Eucharist across the great divide...realizing that there were risks involved, I would continue being what I gave always been; a missionary.

It is interesting to note that the only comment made following my presentation was one of understanding and approval....

Please be assured of my prayers for you and for the whole of our fractured Episcopal presence
In this part of the Lord's vineyard.

Wishing you the Lord's blessings in this season of anticipation and hope...

Abrazos in Christ

The Rt. Rev. William J Skilton

Cc. Rdm. Julio Cesar Holguin

Cc. Most Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori