

WEEK 3: How the Via Media plays out today

1. Review - The Compass Rose

Directions:

- Horizontal bar east/west = “Me” vs “We” - **Evangelical** (personal faith, me and Jesus) and **catholic** (belonging, raised this way, corporate)
- Vertical bar north/south = “Here” vs “There” - **Charismatic** (God is a friend/brother/lover - God is close, speaks to them in their hearts - the Spirit is moving here and now) and **Orthodox** (God is different/holy, transcendent - we receive the faith from our ancestors and have a duty to guard it as “once delivered”)
- NE/SW bar = “Be” vs “Do” - **Contemplative** (resting in what God has done, who God is, accepted by God) and **Activist** (Doing the right thing, standing up for justice, ethics, concerned for systemic injustice and institutional sin).
- NW/SE bar = “Stop” vs “Go” - **Conservative** (those who are cautious about change - not in a hurry to innovate - “how did we handle this in the past?”) and **Liberal/Progressive** (Go forward, forging a new path, relevance, responsiveness to culture, “What’s best, even if we’ve never done it before?”)

2. Some Clarifications:

- a. Centered Set doesn’t mean we try to find the center point
 - i. NOT A tightrope
 - ii. Rather - each continuum can be seen as an X/Y axis (Conservative/Liberal...Contemplative/Activist) etc.
 - 1. Jesus embodies the meeting place of these things - and it’s a wide open playing field.
 - 2. Non-dualistic way of thinking.
- b. This isn’t how ALL Anglicans think of things, but it’s how we are endeavoring to.
- c. Holding tension means endeavoring to be faithful to the Word of God EVEN when it challenges our biases, beliefs, convictions, and paradigms.
- d. IT ISN’T IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS OR EASY TO LIVE LIKE THIS

3. Hot Button Issues in our Day - i.e. Culture War Issues

- a. *What can you think of?*
 - i. Human sexuality
 - 1. Gender dysphoria
 - 2. Abortion
 - 3. Gay marriage
 - 4. Women in Leadership
 - ii. Politics (neither left nor right but the Church)
 - 1. War/Violence
 - 2. Power/Leadership
 - 3. Christian relationship to Govt
 - 4. Immigration

Exercise - Let's take ONE of these issues and use the compass rose to think through an issue in a Jesus centered way - Gay Marriage.

Thinking through this issue from each of the following perspectives, what are the core questions or key issues for each point on the compass rose?

Evangelical - *What does Scripture say?*

Catholic - *What does the Church say?*

Charismatic - *What does the Spirit say? What is God doing now?*

Orthodox - *What do the creeds/Church history say about this?*

Contemplative - *What is God saying today about this?*

Activist - *What issues of justice or righteousness are at stake in this?*

Conservative - *What do we lose or is threatened in this?*

Liberal - *What do we gain or who benefits in this?*

The continuum right now that is most at work in this conversation? **Conservative/Liberal**

Each side frames it differently:

Conservative = ??

Liberal = ??

ACNA = Conservative - (African bishop's response to Canterbury/TEC in USA)

TEC = Liberal (Open and affirming as a justice/liberation issue)

Both are fighting a culture war

How does Jesus as our orienting center - who holds this together - how does He transform the conversation?

A few thoughts:

- The role of accommodation in Scripture:
 - Divorce, Israel King, Taking of Promised Land, Hagar/Ishmael, Violence, Polygamy, Eating meat, etc
- Scriptural Precedent is that God doesn't always go to Scripture to shift people's perspective
 - Saul/Paul - vision - from killing Christians to b/c one
 - Peter - sheet from heaven - from excluding Gentiles to inclusion
- Patriarchy - a way of organizing society where heterosexual men hold the power and women (and other gender identities) are excluded from it.
 - No doubt scripture is written in patriarchal society, but:
 - Was God accommodating to the ancient culture and revealing himself in their societal norms?

- Was God commanding and endorsing patriarchy as “God ordained” way to order society/church?
- *How has Patriarchy impacted the way we see gender?*
 - IMO: Only in a culture reacting *against* Patriarchy would consider abortion as primarily about ‘choice’.
- *Do I even know what it means to be heterosexual in our pornified, misogynistic, male-centered culture?*
- Being “gay” is only a small part of what makes up a person - God sees all of them, not just part of them
- Ideology makes it almost impossible for us to think about this clearly
 - *Why draw this line in the sand and not:*
 - *Gluttony?*
 - *Malice* (ill will toward another)
 - *Greed* (consumerist culture)
 - *Building more barns for our grain* (storage units, savings accounts, houses too big for our shit)
 - *Divorce*
 - *Slander*
 - *Rivalries and Factions*
 - *Any of the things Jesus mentions in the Sermon on the Mount (i.e. looking lustfully or anger in your heart)*
- Human sexuality isn’t primarily an “issue”, but rather it’s about REAL people.