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Basic Biographical Facts for Bishop Steven Charleston

Introduction:

I first heard of Bishop Steven Charleston when my VTS classmate and friend, Hilary West, serving as a parish priest in a small highland Mexican town, posted his site on Facebook. For many years, longer than I can remember, every Saturday morning I turned to his Facebook page, where he posted a candle lit, and offered a prayer community for anyone who cared to leave their prayers, assuring us that all petitions and prayers would be offered by all community members. It was my faithful practice to spend a good five to ten minutes addressing in prayer all of my and the world's concerns and immensely comforting to have this online community of fellow Episcopal prayers. I was inordinately sad, when due to his health, Bishop Charleston was forced to give up his prayer community, although grateful that he is still posting reflections and meditations.

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Steven Charleston was born on 2/15/1949. He was born in Oklahoma, the site of his tribe's, the Choctaw's end point following the Great Trail of Tears which brought them from Georgia. His grandfather and great-grandfather were both Presbyterian ministers to the people of the Choctaw. From an early age, he was recognized by his family as someone destined to be a 'holy man'.

He attended college at Trinity College, followed by a Masters of Divinity from EDS, and became the Staff member for Indigenous Peoples at the National Church after his ordination. Successively he served as Chaplain to Trinity College, Dean of EDS, and 6th Bishop of Alaska, from , Assistant Bishop to the Diocese of California, and as of 2017, Adjunct Professor of Saint Paul College of Theology in the Twin Cities, Minn. He served and led in the House of Bishop's Committee for justice, peace and integrity. In 1999, he authored a treatise called the Cambridge Accord in answer to the Windsor Report and Lambeth Conference.

He is known as one of the best preachers in the Episcopal church, and restarted the Democratic Socialist of America in Minnesota.

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He is well known and loved as a prolific writer of books on Spirituality and Native American Spirituality, memoirs, and two novels.

His books include:

Coming: Sacred Migration: An Indigenous Elder's Vision for our Future 2027

Ladder to the Light, 2001

We survived the End of the World, 2015

Sacred Steps, An Indigenous Elder's Meditations 2027

Spirit Wheel, 2023

Hope as Old as Kiva

The Bishop of Mars, 2016

The Four Vision Quests of Jesus, 2015

Cloud Walker, 2018.

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Steven Charleston: Quotations from the Four Vision Quests of Jesus

In his seminal work, *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*, Charleston identifies four moments in the life of Christ, offering an understanding of each using the theology of the Native American peoples.

Charleston identifies Four Vision Quests, the first is Jesus in the Wilderness and the Temptations, where he compares this as foundational to Native American spirituality, addressing the need to enter the 'We' rather than the 'I'. In the second quest, The Transfiguration, Jesus faces a quest which in the Indigenous tradition, plunges him into transcendent spirituality and shapes his mission.

The third quest takes place in the Garden of Gethsemane, and embodies 'the Native American tradition of holy men and women who find freedom thru discipline, concern for justice compassion and human dignity in the form of sacrifice. The Native American idea of sacrifice is to make it so profound that it 'will turn even the grave into a garden'. Essentially the Gethsemane quest, during his third vision, Jesus understands

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that for him” it has become a good day to die”. This is rooted in the Native American culture, particularly in the Sun Dance tradition. “Native American people did not fear death. In fact they often prepared for it, with songs to sing while facing death, welcome it as a part of life.”

In the quest ending in Golgatha, the emphasis is on the need of Jesus to reach beyond creation. “To reach beyond the margins of creation means to being cut off from creation, however the courage of Jesus is not in facing death, but in facing what it means to be alone. To restore all of creation, he must step outside of creation. His friends will be asleep to him. God will be asleep to him. In the deepest of the Native Covenant, in order for all things to be, Jesus must venture where no things can be.”

Cambridge Accord

The **Cambridge Accord** was an attempt to reach agreement on at least the human rights of homosexual people, notwithstanding controversy within the Anglican Communion about Anglican views of homosexuality.

It was published in the wake of the controversial Resolution 1.10 passed at the Lambeth Conference of 1998, which stated that "homosexual practice" is "incompatible with Scripture".^[1] The Cambridge Accord was published in October 1999 from the Episcopal Divinity School at Cambridge, Massachusetts and circulated for adoption by bishops of the Anglican Communion.

The Cambridge Accord proposed that:

In the name of God, we, the bishops of the Anglican Communion who have affixed our names to this Accord, publish it as a statement of our shared opinion in regard to all persons who are homosexual. We affirm that while we may have contrasting views on the Biblical, theological, and moral issues surrounding homosexuality, on these three points we are in one Accord:

- That no homosexual person should ever be deprived of liberty, personal property, or civil rights because of his or her sexual orientation.
- That all acts of violence, oppression, and degradation against homosexual persons are wrong and cannot be sanctioned by an appeal to the Christian faith.
- That every human being is created equal in the eyes of God and therefore deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

We appeal to people of good conscience from every nation and religious creed to join us in embracing this simple Accord as our global claim to human rights not only for homosexual men and women, but for all God's people.

Its author was the Right Reverend Steven Charleston, President and Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts.^[2]

Signatories

Nineteen Anglican bishops in the UK signed up to the Cambridge Accord, including Rowan Williams, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Four bishops in the UK expressly declined to sign: George Carey, who was Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of Lambeth Resolution 1.10 in 1998 and at the time of the Cambridge Accord itself; David Hope, who was then Archbishop of York and was alleged to be gay in 1995 by an OutRage! outing campaign;^[3] the Anglo-Catholic Eric Kemp; and John Sentamu, who later became Archbishop of York.^[4]

References

1. "Lambeth Conference 1998: Resolution 1.10 Human Sexuality" (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/windsor2004/appendix/p3.6.cfm>). Retrieved 3 July 2008.
2. "The Cambridge Accord" (<http://archive.wfn.org/1999/10/msg00103.html>). *Worldwide Faith News archives*. 7 October 1999. Retrieved 8 March 2017.
3. "David Hope's triumph of faith" (<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/features/David-Hope39s-triumph-of-faith.886985.jp>). *The Yorkshire Post*. November 11, 2004. Retrieved July 12, 2014.
4. "Changing Attitude's list of UK signatories and bishops who declined" (https://web.archive.org/web/20011023003245/http://www.changingattitude.org/cambridge_accord.htm). *ChangingAttitude.org*. Archived from the original (http://www.changingattitude.org/cambridge_accord.htm) on October 23, 2001. Retrieved July 12, 2014.

External links



Christianity portal

- Full text of the Cambridge Accord (<http://archive.wfn.org/1999/10/msg00103.html>)
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