

## CANON 4: GOVERNANCE

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- 1) Summary: The objective of consensus government is to hear the voice of the Lord for the church (whether the local church, or the international church). The church is governed at all levels by leaders who choose men to serve on their councils. The councils shall operate according to the rules of consensus government.
- 2) Founding Principles:
  - a) The church is not led by men but by the Holy Spirit.
  - b) Christ chooses a man; that man chooses men to be around him to implement the vision; these men help him hear the word of the Lord.
  - c) Consensus is helping the Father to hear the word of God.
- 3) What Consensus is:
  - a) An order of government that is based upon covenant relationships, a yielding of each leader's will to the Spirit of God, an open and honest submission to the one set apart by God as the leader among leaders, and a faithfulness to each leader that is noted by a fervent desire to "lay down one's life." It is unity of wills submitted to the will of God.
  - b) The biblical model of hearing from God for his church.
  - c) Hearing the voice of God for the government of the church and to help each man hear the voice of God for his life and ministry
- 4) The Principles of Councils of the church:
  - a) Each leader of the church, and council member, must hold himself personally accountable to a formalized group of men.
  - b) Each bishop and rector of the Charismatic Episcopal Church must have a council to which he is personally accountable to whom he can confide and receive ministry. In most cases this is the church or cathedral Rector's Council. When this is not the case, the bishop must establish such a council.
  - c) Councils will act with mutual accountability, transparency, and open, honest discussion.
  - d) Councils are not representative councils, that is council members do not represent a region, diocese, area of expertise or ministry; Instead they are to hear from God for the church.
  - e) Councils do not vote on issues when hearing from God.
  - f) Councils have no authority that is not given in the canons, or delegated by the council leader.
  - g) Church Councils are chosen by the rector, with the approval of his Bishop. Appointments last until a change of rectors or the rector removes a council member with the Bishops approval.
- 5) Consensus Government Prerequisites:
  - a) A man involved in church government must be in good relationship with and among other members of the council before he can successfully participate in consensus government.

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- b) A covenantal relationship of a council requires members who participate in genuine fellowship, tithe, are honest, transparent, and remain submitted, supportive, and respectful if overruled.
  - c) Relationships as stated above must be tested and tried over a long period of time.
  - d) A member of the council must have a firm understanding of spiritual authority.
- 6) Consensus Government Procedures:
- a) Prayer is the foundation of government by consensus, beginning with hearing the Holy Spirit.
    - i) Government must come from hearing God's voice.
      - (1) If we do what we want it is not Christ's church.
      - (2) Christ must be the literal head, not a figurehead.
    - ii) All must lay down their wills and personal agendas.
  - b) Start by saying "Lead us Holy Spirit." The reality of true church government is found in the supreme confidence that the Holy Spirit is truly directing the church.
  - c) Members never talk about sensitive areas of church business unless the whole group is present.
    - i) Members cannot lobby people into a position.
    - ii) All discussions are conducted with all members present; no discussions should be held outside the council setting.
    - iii) Issues that are labeled "Confidential" are not discussed with others outside the council including family members.
  - d) Members must learn to hear the voice of God through each other.
    - i) Different people hear God in different ways.
    - ii) Spiritual gifts/backgrounds/experience all play a part in how God speaks.
  - e) Consensus government does not mean all have to agree.
  - f) Consensus requires that all parameters within church government must be met, which are:
    - i) Laying down of one's own will to God and each other.
    - ii) Laying down of agendas, opinions, and ambitions.
    - iii) Committing to speak what God says.
- 7) Polling Procedures:
- i) Respond one at a time.
  - ii) Respond youngest to the oldest (This is done to keep younger members from being influenced by those senior to themselves)
  - iii) Recognize council seniority by consecration, ordination date or newest to council.
  - iv) Issues of consensus and disagreement are noted
- a) Procedures for lack of unanimity.
- i) If one or two are uneasy, the presider can still rule that God has spoken
    - (1) who it is
    - (2) what the concerns are
    - (3) what the attitudes of those who disagree are
    - (4) whether or not they have talked to someone else
  - ii) Issues with no consensus should be tabled
  - iii) Whatever is decided, the group leaves committed to the decision and unity