

[Casey's Comments on Surviving a 363 by Rev Anonymous. Observer Magazine Archives 2005.](#)

The author of this article, through the United Church Observer, after talking with the author, turned down my request to print the article on this web site so we did anyway.

Here is the link to it http://www.ucobserver.org/archives/may05_ministry.shtml

If you can't access it I will also post it on our page. Here is the link on our page.

***%^\$#* it they printed it anyway**

Before I comment I just point out the shame – fear factor is in operation. The person who wrote this article knows the negative reality of sharing thoughts in the Observer with a name attached so while wanting to see the article in print, getting an ego stroke, and trying to help colleagues in ministry he is still frightened to death.

Here is my problem with Rev Anonymous. How can a colleague in need even call for advise? One can't because the writer is too hurt by his /her own wounds to help you. Kind of a reverse Calvary.

So much so he/she will not even allow the anonymous article to be shared on a web page to support fellow clergy. Is this in case his/her betters in the church might see it a take a dim view of it. They might even think the articles author supports such a ministry as Clergy Support. Some will say the writer is gutless but I don't. I just say its all par for the course. 99.9 % of all clergy will only help each other if it doesn't cost them personally and anonymous is no different.

It's the 'lone ranger' syndrome gone mad. In not wanting an anonymous article printed on this page there are no way people can seek help and in addition this person is judging the whole minister of Clergy Support.

Because of that we So I will print the article anyway. (To anonymous I say talk to my lawyers and we will all waste money).

Here are my comments. There is lots of good in the piece it. He /she has been there. For that alone one should not only read it but digest it.

On balance this article is a good contribution to the field of conflict management and worth reading especially if you are in the United Church of Canada tradition. A 363 is the way the United Church handles congregation conflicts.

I need to comment on a couple of ideas our masked person makes.

1) First, the writer suggests we should avoid the temptation to sue. That may be true if we are going the wrongful or constructive dismissal route but asking for a judicial review of all Church decisions might be possible. The problem isn't primarily that you ' would become known as a trouble maker and no

congregation would hire you' but rather the process is long, costly and your chances of a significant win are very slim. There certainly is also a stigma factor that kicks in under the phony dictum 'good Christians don't fight' myth.

The greater problem is once the Church knows you are not going to sue you have just given away your biggest and most important bargaining chip. The Church hates potential hits to their image through court cases and the accompanying bad publicity. Take that option away and your fair game.

I suggest one might find a lawyer who will work on a contingency basis and consider going the civil route. As far as I know paid or volunteer staff are not protected by the National Church errors or omissions Insurance, or other liability Insurance.

It is my understanding that if a Church paid staff or volunteer serving a Church Court gets sued because of some action in the conflict process as an individual they are on their own and they pay their lawyer's bill themselves. Ditto at the congregational level.

Local lay persons who attack a local cleric do not have their lawyers bill paid for by the Church. If a local person bad mouths you, harasses you, bullies you etc that moron can be hauled into civil court. Ditto the clergy killer locals who volunteer for Congregational committees.

If a committee helps in any way to take away your job or harms you, then members of that committee can be sued and no one will pay their legal bills but themselves.

Even if the Church might come forward with help for your adversaries legal bills the legal event will put a chill through the Church Courts that will last a long long time and people will think twice about the decisions taken on Pastoral Relations, the local M&P, at 363 reviews etc as well as what negatives come out of their mouths at other meetings. '

So here is another bargaining chip in the you hurt me you will pay lexicon. From the safety of hind sight I can say that one of the ways you make the local sickos pay for the pain and suffering caused you and your family is to never give up the option of going to court. Let them worry about that for awhile.

Question. Why is it a clergy can go to a doctor or a dentist for a checkup and advise. One can go to an accountant or any number of professionals but when a clergy goes to a lawyer for simple legal advice as to their possible options, the Church goes nuts? Why is going to a lawyer such a threat. Everyone in the church immediately and at all levels takes a supreme shit fit! How dare you go to a lawyer? Crazy eh!

2) The second thing I take issue with is Rev Anonymous' urging to take the Matt:15 - 17 route. Piety is nice but protest is better. Matt15 never worked in the history of the Church why would it work now?

No self respecting Church bureaucrat would offer this platitude as a conflict management technique. It could get them sued or worse laughed at

If you go to the angry sicko who is trying to ruin your ministry and destroy your call you could get killed. O.K. just punched out! These clergy killers are dangerous mean spirited people. The walking spiritually dead infests our congregations and cannot be confronted by a poor pastor under attack. You can be sure Presbytery will never do it! The minister is their target.

If you 'take it to the Church' as this scripture says when taken out of context, do you think your colleagues will rise up to defend you? Come on! We live in the world as it is not as it ought to be. All you will do is succeed in getting kangarooed and become bitter and destroyed by the conflict process.

So go ahead read the anonymous article several times, make notes ,there is nothing in it that will hurt you but just remember this writer is being kind to all involved. A 363 is 1000 times worse than being described in the article!

So my reader who I will name Tonto. Its too bad you can't call to the author in your own time of need.

Its clear to me that the anonymous lone ranger who wrote the piece doesn't share not even with Tonto his brother .Especially when Tonto is in need. Shame.

Casey