

Protocol: an Introduction for Engaging Kings

By John Anderson

An exciting part of getting to know people and joining new groups is discovering their traditions – “How we do things around here...” When you join a new company, someone offers to “show you the ropes.” Navigating these informal, and largely unwritten or even unspoken, practices is often the source of grief and unintentional offense for eager newcomers. In my parents’ household, all were expected to have and to express their opinions directly and respectfully. In my wife’s household, only her mother was allowed to express an opinion. The one time that I violated that rule, my wife took me aside and told me to shut up “for the sake of peace in the household.” A sacred, but unwritten rule had been violated.

In government and in some professions, their traditions have been written down, debated, reviewed, updated and published from time to time. This Formal set of traditions – or rules – is called Protocol.

In electronic networks, the “HTTP” placed before web address, such as “<http://www.google.com>” specifies a set of Rules called the “Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol.” These rules instruct software operating at sending, relaying, and receiving ends in how to interpret the coded information that follows. Similarly, anyone who has setup eMail access on a smartphone or laptop has encountered a request to establish credentials to use SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) or Post Office Protocol (POP). Without knowing any of the Rules, you can still enjoy all of the benefits of email software that does know, and does implement the Protocol.

Where else is Protocol used? In Pharmacy, all new drugs are tested using a Protocol. In Medicine, all diagnostic and therapeutic procedures have formal written Protocols. In Accounting and Finance, governing boards maintain Protocols, such as Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) and publish new Protocol statements as the ruling of the Financial Accounting Standards Board. Certain engineering practices, law, and other professions have bodies of formal procedures that are referred to as Protocol.

All militaries have a formal system of enlisted and officer ranks, with titles, manners of address and acceptable answer. Anyone who has seen movies such as *Crimson Tide* will recall the communication system that requires subordinates (Diving Officer) to repeat a superior’s (Commanding Officer) commands: Diving Officer: “Make your diving plane a 20 degree down angle.” “Make my diving plane a 20 degree down angle, Aye Sir.” This is an example of military Protocol.

Governments, beginning in the 15th century BC with Egypt and Sumeria, have developed Diplomatic Protocols for relating to one another. Diplomatic Protocol deals with Macro issues, such as defining common titles for Roles (Head of State, Chief of Mission, Commercial Attaché, etc.) and Micro issues, such as seating

arrangements at meals, manners of address and greeting (who shakes hands, bows, nods, hugs and kisses, etc.). In coordinating a visit between state officials, their respective Protocol Managers will meet often, beginning as much as a year in advance of the visit date to determine agendas, schedules, participants, menus, entertainment, etc. to ensure that the right people (and / or spouses) are in the right place, dressed in the right clothing, and carrying the right message, to ensure that the Visit is a mutual success. All of these items, and more, are the subject of Protocol.

Within a nation, commoners may be required to address their Head of State with “Your Royal Highness” and to bow, kneel, or stand with eyes averted from the gaze of a ruler and only speak when spoken to. But another head of State may do none of those things, and simply address them as King Hussein or Mister President, with Protocol that involves no bowing, scraping, or feet kissing. Protocol determines who the peers are, and how they treat one another.

So what is diplomatic Protocol? What purpose does it serve? Can it be useful in disciplining nations?

Dr. D.M. Forni, replying on behalf of the International Association of Protocol Consultants and Officers, writes: “Protocol is commonly described as a set of international courtesy rules. These well-established and time-honored rules have made it easier for nations and people to live and work together. Part of protocol has always been the acknowledgment of the hierarchical standing of all present. Protocol rules are based on the principles of civility.”

Organization development theorist Herzberg identified two types of factors in dealing with people: Hygiene factors and Motivation factors. Motivation factors, like treats that reward obedient pets, work in proportion to the frequency of their usage. In workplace settings, timely and sincere praise for a job well-done produces continued excellent effort. Hygiene factors are neutral when they are present, but a demotivator if absent. For example, accurate and timely payroll checks do not produce improved performance, but late or erroneous paychecks are a great detriment to it.

When we, as Kings of the Heavenly Kingdom, engage the Kings of the mountains, wisdom demands that we “give honor to whom honor is due.” Protocol is a Hygiene factor for Kings, not a Motivation factor. Proper adherence to the rules of civility gives you access, and the opportunity to be heard. Breach of protocol diminishes your influence before even declaring your purpose in attending the meeting.

But before lessons in Protocol for dealing with the kings of the 7 mountains, let’s turn to our own mountain for a pre-flight check.

Institutional Christianity is a poor classroom for learning Protocol. Few of Christianity’s more than 36,000 global denominations acknowledge even the basic rules of civility within their own group. Still fewer practice civility and demonstrate

respect for one another's tradition. Titles are esteemed by some traditions because they separate the State of the person from the Status of the office, and require due respect for the Office. Other traditions despise titles as they can give people a mask behind which to hide lies, personal sins, and hypocrisy. Both parties have bible verses (e.g. "call no man father – you are all brothers" and "give honor to whom honor is due") that are used to justify their sentiment.

For example,

- As members, are you Ed and Bonnie? Or Brother Smith and Sister Jones?
- As a leader, are you called Brother, Deacon, Elder, Pastor, Reverend, Vicar, Teacher, Father, Evangelist, Prophet(ess), Apostle, Bishop, Cardinal, the Right Reverend? Does this "Title" prepend your Given Name ("Ed", "Mary") or your Family Name ("Smith," "Jones")?
- Is there Rank, and is it communicated in private settings as well as in public settings?
- Do earned "terminal" degrees result in being addressed as "Doctor?" or only if you are Medical (M.D., D.O, O.D., D.D.S., D.M.D., D.C.), and "Professor" if Academic (Ph.D., D.Sc.), "Counselor" if an Attorney (J.D.), and "Reverend Doctor" if Theological (Th.D., D.D., D.Min.)?
- Do you combine honorifics, as in Apostle Doctor Smith, or Reverend Doctor Jones? Or go with the higher esteem single honorific only?
- And what do we do with honorary degrees (HHD, LHD, LLD, or PhD honoris causa, etc.)?

This article and this writer will waste no time attempting to sort out 2000 years of bitter infighting over doctrine and authority. As a historical note, Jesus (John 17.21-23) installed only one standard for unity between his followers: recognition of God's Glory in one another. This standard lasted ("behold how they love one another") until 320 AD, when Emperor Constantine, a newly converted follower of Jesus, ignorant of scripture, was seduced by pagan priests into naming them Bishops of Christian churches and announcing that people must acknowledge their authority and adhere to their doctrine for membership. Since then, One Church and One Body has become 36,000 denominations largely driven by "which doctrine?" and "whose authority?" are correct. Only when we return to the foundation of unity that was carefully laid by the Lord Jesus will we make any progress toward the unity that honors and delights Heaven.

Since violation of protocol may demonstrate ignorance or pretentiousness, we as Kings and Queens should learn the rules of civility and the ways of protocol in preparation for engaging the kings of the earth.

About the Author: John Anderson is a skilled Kingdom Administrator, delivering results for over 40 years in large organizations, start-up companies, churches, schools, and non-profit foundations. His education includes degrees in Physics and Business Administration, with additional studies in biology, chemistry, nuclear

engineering, management, marketing, information technology, and strategy. His executive leadership spans education, marketing, sales, finance, information technology, manufacturing, quality management and operations. He has served successfully as CIO, CFO, CQO, COO, CEO and also as a Director of many organizations. His teams have won broad recognition for achievement of breakthrough results in spend reduction, sales growth, project completion, and quality leadership. His businesses span energy, retail, telecommunications, forest products, automotive logistics, electronic commerce, homeland defense, and biotechnology. John has also failed dramatically and has taken full responsibility for the impact of those failures. Presently, he serves as Executive Chairman of the GDP Group SPC, and as a director of Kingdom Congressional International Alliance, Indigenous Peoples Foundation, and the Global Communities Institute. He is a member of Who's Who in US Executives, Who's Who in Information Technology, and Lexington's Who's Who. John lives in Gig Harbor Washington with Mary Roe, his wife of 38 years. Together they have two sons and two granddaughters.