

# ISSUES 2009

SATURDAY JULY 11

## ***The Consultation Platform for Baptismal Ecclesiology***

*The Broad Ecumenical Acceptance of the Prayer  
Book Baptismal Theology*

The liturgical movement, together with many other reforms, began in the middle of the nineteenth century with the courageous use of critical biblical scholarship and it relied heavily upon what that scholarship gradually discovered about the life of the early church.

The rediscovery of that baptismal theological foundation in the latter part of the nineteenth century conveyed sufficient clarity to cause action by the latter half of the twentieth century, such as was seen in the Second Vatican Council and in the landmark ecumenical and ecclesiastical document Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, produced under the auspices of the World Council of Church's Faith & Order council in 1982. It represented participation by theologians from traditions along a spectrum from Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, to Pentecostal. The accord exhibits the thorough-going baptismal ecclesiology of the North American Books of Common Prayer in which Christians find saving identity in Christ and the church is realized in the eucharistic celebration of word and sacrament, led by an ordained ministry exercising its service always in three inter-related aspects: the personal, the collegial, and the communal.

We remain confident that, while the church may take backward steps from time to time, the overall movement, ecumenically and within each of the adopting traditions, will be steadily forward behind this common charter and standard.

Joe Doss, APLM

## ***Does Sexual Orientation include Transgender?***

The tranz community are asking for the canons which include non-discrimination clauses to be specifically expanded to include gender identity and gender expression. There are those who have little experience of tranz people and think that transgender is a type of sexual orientation. It isn't. Sexual orientation has to do with whom you are drawn to love intimately and transgender has to do with whom you experience yourself to be.

Gender isn't a simple biological thing. Anthropologists have demonstrated again and again that gender – the attributes we assign to male and female - is largely culturally determined. There are not just two totally separate genders. In fact a surprising number of people are born with indeterminate sex and are surgically assigned to one or other in infancy. Others are raised as girls but experience themselves as men and vice versa. How tranz people choose to express their own experience of gender varies from person to person and so it is important that gender expression be no barrier to full inclusion, not just gender identity.

There are several wonderful tranz people, lay and clergy, attending General Convention. If you want to talk more about these issues please visit the Integrity booth where the friendly volunteers will put you in touch with a member of the tranz community.

Caro Hall, Integrity

## ***Lunchtime Speakers***

(1:00pm) in the Consultation Exhibit Area (next to the food service area) continue to have massive audiences. Each day deputies, bishops, exhibitors and visitors are invited to hear riveting talks from cutting edge Episcopalians speaking Christ' message of Justice and Peace. We will also have some afternoon speakers at 2:00pm.

**July 11th** – The Hon. Byron Rushing: Floor Whip in House of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. His living of the baptismal covenant as an elected official has made him a much sought-after speaker in the Church on baptism and justice. Mr. Rushing's topic at lunchtime: "There you will see Jesus": baptism and justice".

**July 12th** - Mr. Robert Dellello Representing KatrinasDream.org promoting the Indigenous Peoples, African Children's Education, and the

abolition of torture inside American jails and prisons, ERA, Anglican Women Theologians (CAWTE)

**July 13th** - Ms. Marge Christie

**July 14th** - The Rev. Dr. Katherine Ragsdale

**Episcopal Divinity School** banquet, this evening, is to honor long-time Consultation member and general agitator, Ed Rodman. Bishop Barbara Harris will chair and speak at this evening. There will be a Cash Bar at 6:00 and Dinner at 7:00. Tickets, \$45.00, may still be available at the EDS and Consultation booths and from EDS friends. This is not to be missed!!

### ***Where Trust Can Live***

On Wednesday night, Convention heard the Archbishop of Canterbury talk about the economic crisis in the world. Among the points he made was one concerning transparency, truthfulness and trust. He pointed out the obvious but too often ignored connection between these three things. Trust cannot live amid darkness and lies.

I appreciated his remarks. I have experienced firsthand how trust struggles to survive in a place where decision-making was reserved for a hand-picked few, where information was hoarded like gold, and where opacity had long replaced transparency.

It was that experience that gave birth to a resolution D045 – transparency in committee memberships. I crafted this resolution because I was alarmed by the decision to keep secret the names of members of a committee studying the theology of same-sex unions. (Aside from the outrageousness of once again studying this subject that has been been studied for more than 30 years I also was struck by the sheer weirdness of a decision to have a closeted committee studying this subject.)

Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 76th General Convention direct that the membership of all committees, subcommittees, task forces and panels elected or appointed by any body or leader of The Episcopal Church (including, but not limited to, the House of Deputies, the House of Bishops, the Executive Council, Standing Commissions, Committees, Agencies and Boards of The Episcopal Church and their respective Presiding Officers and

Chairs) be made public no later than 30 days after election or appointment.

The explanation says, “The Episcopal Church should model in its governance and life the transparency and openness all Christians are called to demonstrate. Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to seek Christ in all people and to respect the dignity of every human being. Transparency in our dealings with one another is one way human dignity is respected. Conversely, secrecy is destructive of human dignity and of our common life. Making public the names of persons elected or appointed to any body charged to work in Christ’s name for the good of the Church serves the Church’s health and promotes trust in one another.”

The resolution is in the Committee on Structure. Please vote for this resolution – assuming it makes it out of committee. Trust cannot grow in the dark.

Katie Sherrod

### ***Def Poetry Slam***

Sunday, July 12, 2:00 PM Speaker's Corner of the Consultation Booth: Come and join other "professional amateurs" and read/perform your poetry and share it with others. It may be one of the most courageous things you do at General Convention.

### ***Voices of Witness Africa***

*Copies of the DVD are available at the Integrity booth in the Exhibit Hall.*

### ***Weddings and Wakes***

“Ma’am!”

I turned around. I had just endured a two-hour hearing on all things related to marriage equality – an issue that took on new importance for me when my partner and I announced our engagement last month. During the hearing, I explained that my Irish Catholic family had always been uncertain about my sexual orientation ... until I started planning a wedding. Suddenly, all my cousins and aunts were overflowing with advice about caterers, bridesmaids, and where to find the perfect cathedral veil. My relationship, formerly so foreign to them, had become something they could understand.

Now, in the Hilton lobby, a bishop was calling my name. “Ma’am, I just wanted to thank you for your

testimony today.”

“Well, thank you. I’m counting on you.” (Note to bishops and deputies: We just set a wedding date for 2011, and we want to be married in the Church we love – so my sweet bride and I are counting on all of you. And so is my army of Irish aunts.)

He nodded. “It’s so easy to forget that in the end, all this is about real people, real weddings, real tears, you know?”

“It’s true.” I smiled. “How are you feeling about it all?”

He took a deep breath. “Naked. Because they’re going to take those votes by roll call, and I know that if I say “Aye,” my phone will be ringing off the hook with people who feel like I’ve betrayed them, betrayed the church. And on the other hand ... there’s you.”

On the other hand ... there’s me, and millions more like me. As I told the committee, in my family we party the hardest at weddings and wakes. It’s my dream that the Episcopal Church will choose marriage equality in time for my wedding.

Catherine Healy

*a member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship’s Young Adult Presence at General Convention from the Diocese of Oregon. Check out the EPF YAP blog at [epfyoungadults.wordpress.com](http://epfyoungadults.wordpress.com) for these young adults’ daily reflections on Convention.*

*There may still be time to get a ticket-- Episcopal Women’s Caucus (EWC) Breakfast, Marriot, 7:30 AM Sunday. Celebration of 35th Anniversary of the founding of EWC and ordination of the Philadelphia 11 and 20th Anniversary of Bishop Barbara Harris’s consecration. Speaker: Dr. Pamela Darling, historian and author of New Wine: Transforming Leadership and Power in TEC. Tickets available at the EWC booth.*

## **Understanding the White Elephant**

Thanks to Ed Rodman for naming the elephant in the room last Wednesday: the serious recent decline in church membership “correlates to the declining white birth rate.” If you hadn’t noticed, this is still a white church, and in spite of the best intentions, our “ethnic ministries” are still too weak to make up for losses in white membership. The church we love will be even more marginal in 11 years from now, as the minorities become more than 50% of the population.

Rodman points to the lack of respect for our siblings to the south and continents. Yet my experience of the white Church is full of stories of respect and sterling intentions. Rather, I suggest that at its core the white church suffers from its own cultural inability to deal with people who are culturally different. This is understandable. Unlike immigrants to the US, white Americans do not have the experience of learning another language and culture in order to survive. This puts them at a serious disadvantage in the mission field.

And so, from well-intentioned Anglos who sincerely think they can minister to Latinos after two weeks in Guatemala, to Bishops expecting Latino clergy to be Anglos, to a chronic lack of Latinos in the episcopate and other positions of national leadership, the white church shows a remarkable inability to relate to people who are different from them. Why? Many answers come to mind: The country is bound by two oceans. Only 10% of U.S. citizens have passports. Bilingual ability is still very rare among English-speakers in the US. The classic distrust of the Spanish by the English (the “Black Legend”) is still alive and well today, etc.

Perhaps, though, these are only symptoms.

This is not, of course, a moral failure. Anglo Episcopalians are among the most sincere, loving, and even respectful (pace Rodman) people I have ever met, only they seem to be seriously naive about the difference culture makes in relationships. They honestly, sincerely and lovingly think that, at bottom, everyone’s the same.

I fully agree with Ed that we need contrition, reconciliation, and authentic bonds with people of other languages, races and cultures. But we cannot even begin to move in that direction if we continue to piously deny difference out of a vague hope that since we are equals, we might save ourselves the hard work of learning other ways of being.

Juan Oliver

Your morning ISSUES is available in front of the main Convention Center entrance, on tables inside that entrance, and under the Consultation banner in the Exhibit Hall.

ISSUES 2009 can also be found on the web at [www.theconsultation.org/ISSUES-2009](http://www.theconsultation.org/ISSUES-2009)

There is an ISSUES blog available at [ISSUES-TheConsultation.blogspot.com](http://ISSUES-TheConsultation.blogspot.com) and an RSS feed is available at that site. You are encouraged to add your comments to the blog on that same site. They will be moderated.

### ***Grass Roots Organizaing– A Journey to the Center***

The glamor and glitter of General Convention is all around me, things for sale I cannot afford, the ambiance of life of luxury in hotels and restaraunts, my phone rings, someone from my home community is calling and it brings me back to center of some of the people this church is for and about.

Two and a half years ago my friend Rene was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Rene's experience opened the doors for a great and quiet grass roots movements of workers at Emerald Downs race track near Seattle. There is not space here to reveal the whole story, but it came to light that an "informant" had been calling ICE in. Scared workers gathered at St. Matthew/San Mateo, Auburn to stratigize – the sense of community support, and the protection of community gave them allowed them to approach the horse trainers with a threat of an opening day strike – loss of many thousands of dollars of course. Eventually the trainers, owners and finally representatives from the WA State Horseracing Commission met with them .....

Fast forward July 4th, 2009 I felt for the first time in many years that perhaps our democaratic process can work. I celebrated with the "Emerald Downs" family, including workers, security, and others.

I do not personally know the workers we will be supporting next Tuesday at Disneyland, but, like it is for me when I meet another Franciscan from another community, I "know them" is a special way, I feel like I know the Disney hotel workers as well ....community protection, community work, community compassion.

Dianne Aid, ENEJ

### ***UBUNTU "I in you; you in me***

This reflection is being set in the context of The Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) role at General Conventions both past and present.

The Union of Black Episcopalians was formed

some 41 years ago, in part, out if the need of Black Episcopalians to have something that we could identify with and feel that we are part of in this community of faith known as the Episcopal Church. During the early days of the Union of Black Episcopalians a good deal of the time during General Convention was spent debating the strategies to get our voices heard and to provide nurture and support for each other.

Over the years as some of our members mastered the art of General Convention politics, this information has been passed on to others who now hold leadership roles in the church and General Convention.

This Convention is ushering in a new day for the Episcopal Church and the role of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

With the UBUNTU theme in mind "I in you, you in me", the role of UBE now, is to become the thread that weaves the people of African descent in the Episcopal Church together to help the church live into it's mission priorities. This includes continued collaboration with member organizations of the Consultation and other strategic alliances.

The mission priorities for the current triennium as approved in Resolution D031 are: justice and peace; youth, young adults and children; reconciliation and evangelism; congregational transformation and partnerships.

The issue of racism and it's affects on people who are marginalized by society remains the clarion call for the mission of UBE as it seeks to help the church live into the full meaning of UBUTU.

John Harriss, UBE

### ***un-Convention-al Quotes***

On the EPF Young Adult Presence: "When you're an official group, you're marginalized!" -- Gary Commins, Chair of EPF

From opening remarks: We are interested in "building community within a theological construct." -- Bonnie Anderson, President of the House of Deputies

Also: "Our technology enables us to see and know... and to have a historic and effective impact." -- Bonnie Anderson

On the church's mission: We strive towards achieving "an abundant life for donor and recipient." -- Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefforts Schori

Gathered by  
EPF YAF