

ISSUES 2009

FRIDAY JULY 10

The Consultation Platform for Baptismal Ecclesiology

Recent History

It was at the General Convention of 1970 that the Episcopal Church in the United States explicitly accepted the challenge to re-examine its baptismal theology in the light of what has been learned in the twentieth century about the early church. Interestingly enough, it was this same General Convention of 1970 that seated women as deputies for the first time and took the first vote on the ordination of women. The connection was not planned, but with hindsight it is obvious that it was not coincidental.

The issue for debate at the moment was whether or not to give communion to children prior to confirmation. Driven by constant reference to the early church's practices, the debate resulted in the decision to include children in the full sacramental life of the church and consequently in the decision to establish the rediscovered baptismal theology in the proposed Book of Common Prayer. This baptismal theology had immediate effect even during trial use. Just six years later in 1976, when the General Convention voted to accept that Prayer Book as revised, it also voted to ordain women. The church had been led to this decision by the new baptismal ecclesiology that was being established within the Book of Common Prayer.

Joe Doss, APLM

Indabababuntu

Ubuntu – you in me and I in you – or as the Desert Fathers put it 'our life and our death is with our neighbors'; indaba – a process of community discernment. What do these have in common? They depend on trust. They depend on listening and sharing. They depend on transparency.

It's ironic, given these community values we are being asked to embrace, that the House of Bishops Theology Committee's new study of 'same-sex relationships in the life of the church' is shrouded in secrecy. We don't even know for sure what the parameters of the study are, or the identity of all the participants. It's great that we can submit information that we want the committee to consider, but what are they studying? What information would be useful? 'Same-sex relationships in the life of the church' covers a multitude of possibilities. I work with two other clergy who are both women – is this a 'same-sex relationship in the life of the church'? or does my gay male colleague make it a heterosexual relationship?

We can't create a church based on mutual trust when some as yet not fully identified people are studying the relationships of some other as yet unidentified people (though we can hazard a guess). I'm tired of being the object of someone's study, especially when they won't tell me who they are, exactly what they're planning to study or how much this is going to cost us (we heard \$70,000).

"Now we see through a glass darkly" but we yearn for transparent windows and an open climate of trust.

Caro Hall, Integrity

OPEN MEETING
of **The Consultation**
in **Pacific Ballroom A** in the
Hilton Hotel
from **12:45 to 1:45**
on **Friday, July 10**

Lunchtime Speakers

(1:00pm) in the Consultation Exhibit Area (next to the food service area) will rock the house! 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 10th – The Rev. Ched Myers: Activist theologian who has worked with social change

movements for more than three decades; a popular educator who animates scripture and issues of faith-based peace and justice. Rev. Myer's topic at lunchtime: "Sabbath Economics and Community Investing".

At 2:00 pm in the Speakers' Corner--July 10th - **Cameron Partridge & TransEpiscopal reps:** TransEpiscopal is a group of transgender Episcopalians, Anglicans and our allies whose purpose is to build up support for transgender people within the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion. Our members are from across the United States and around the globe, and are engaged various lay and ordained ministries, both within and beyond congregational life. Founded in December, 2004, TransEpiscopal became a member of the Consultation in 2007. Topic: "Behold, I Make All Things New": Transgender Episcopalians in the Life of the Church

July 11th – The Hon. Byron Rushing: Floor Whip in House of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

July 12th - Mr. Robert Dellello

July 13th - Ms. Marge Christie

Episcopal Divinity School banquet, Saturday 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, are available before Thursday Noon at EDS and Consultation booths and from EDS friends. This is not to be missed!!

Koko and General Convention

Fred Rogers wanted to meet Koko, the gorilla who had been taught American Sign Language and had watched "Mr Rogers' Neighborhood." When they met, the 280-pound gorilla gave the diminutive Rogers a big hug, then took off Mister Rogers' shoes.

It is only too easy to think of a neighborhood more as a place than as a relationship, more really than reality. In our better moments, we might even call it an outward and visible sign of an inner and spiritual reality. Then maybe we'd be on to something. For there is a kind of spirit that helps make a neighborhood a hood and sort of hold it together with a kind of pride, like the kind that keeps trash off the streets and the grass mowed. People in our town like the idea of "the Hood," and they say it with pride.

Right now and no matter how hard I try, I can't get General Convention off my mind. After all, to use a neighborly term, it's sort of our Hood. I keep thinking of ways we can set aside religion's entrenched and protective security long enough to dare faith's loblolly off-the-wall openness and risk. Somebody suggested we call General Convention our Big Fat Anglican Wedding and accept it as something like the neighborhood God's Great Commandment intends when God says love the folk who live there, among others, of course.

Gorillas have a way of being hard to avoid noticing. So perhaps Koko has a clue. Why not, just before each legislative session, we give one another a big hug, then take off our neighbor's shoes?

Lane Denson, The Covenant Journal

Two important opportunities

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.

and you can do both

The Brownings feted Episcopal Peace Fellowship will honor Bishop Edmond and Ms. Patti Browning, as the 2009 recipients of the John Nevin Sayre Award. Please go by the EPF booth in the Exhibit Hall to make a reservation for this \$35.00 event and join us on Saturday, July 11th at the EPF reception at the Red Lion Hotel, 6 to 7:30pm, with the Rev. Canon Brian Grieves, presenter and Bishop Greg Rickel, speaker (presentation at 6:30).

Latinos/Hispanics on the Go

The new Strategic Vision for Latino Ministry Development in the Episcopal Church is hot off the presses. A great achievement, it marks the first time since TEC officially began to explore this ministry that we have a concrete plan of action. The vision lays the foundation for the developing resources and implementing strategies. But it will be just

more hot air unless the funds are secured for its work. VOTE YES for resolution PF285 Strategic Vision for Reaching Latinos/Hispanics, coming up in PB & F.

Juan Oliver.



Susan Williams

Holy Women, Holy Men

There has been a certain amount of carping criticism about the proposal to enrich and expand the Church's calendar. In response to a resolution of the Denver General Convention in 2000 a committee of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music has undertaken a broad investigation of who is being included in the calendars of churches around the Communion and of our sister churches and of who might well be included in such calendars and has brought this draft to this convention for approval for trial use. It is a massive amount of work and has, to my mind, produced a marvelous result. Lesser Feasts and Fasts has grown over the decades since its introduction before the Prayer Book was revised without any overall plan or considered design. Holy Women, Holy Men brings some balance and overall design to the calendar. No one will be completely happy; for example, I am appalled that Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall was not included. On the other hand I was, as an old, white male who has served in a number of Baltimore congregations of color, surprised and delighted to see that George Freeman Bragg is included along with W. E. B. DuBois. The legislative committees will probably make some adjustments such as fixing the date of the death of St. John of the Cross, but it is my hope and prayer that those committees and the Convention as a whole will approve this good and rich work.

Ron Miller, ISSUES Staff

Voices of Witness Africa

Last year the Rev. Cynthia Black and I spent many weeks in Africa interviewing African Anglicans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

We did this in hopes of bringing their stories of faith and courage to the rest of the Anglican Communion. We edited the hours and hours of interviews into a 30 minute film, *Voices of Witness Africa*. It is a production of *Claiming the Blessing* and was funded with the help of the Chicago Consultation, many bishops and a cloud of generous angels from across the church. A preview of the film was shown at Lambeth 2008 and a copy of the film and the accompanying study guide has been mailed to every bishop in the Anglican Communion.

The faith and courage of these LGBT Anglicans who face persecution from their church and in many cases risk imprisonment, even torture and death at the hand of their civil authorities, inspired and awed us. Listening to their stories renewed our commitment to the full inclusion of all the baptized in all the sacraments, not only in the Episcopal Church but throughout the Anglican Communion.

Please come see and hear their stories at 7 p.m. Monday July 13 in the Carmel Room on the 4th floor of the Hilton Hotel.

Katie Sherrod,

In Praise of our Political Process

We all know the criticisms of our polity's form of governance: "Are we truly engaging in fruitful dialogue when our system is so litigious and even antagonistic?" "It's an irresponsible use of our limited financial resources to host such a huge convention." "Can we really discern the will of God by committee or via Robert's Rules of Order?" And on and on. These are good questions that we need to continue to grapple with as a church. That all being said, I believe there is something redemptive specifically in the adversarial and contentious nature of our General Convention.

Romand Coles, drawing on the work of Rowan Williams, suggests that perhaps we've got it wrong when we assume that the inner life of God and our eschatological end is a tension-free state of peace. Rather, he proposes that the processions from the Source that Christians call

the Trinity are in a persistent state of creative tension. A constant, vibrant reciprocity ever in motion. In other words, the peace that surpasses all understanding may not be as restful and tranquil as we might like.

If there's any truth to this, then what we are engaging in here at General Convention—in the chaos, in the conflict, in the crisis- is not a necessary evil. Not just a nasty bit of adversarial and ponderous work we need to do to achieve a better end in the future. Rather, the creative, tensive, and seemingly unending work we do here is a spiritual practice because it enables us to share now in the creative, tensive, and certainly unending life of God.

And we, the members of the organizations of the Consultation, humbly commit to continuing to agitate for the spiritual benefit of God's holy church.

Matt Stewart, ISSUES Staff

Help Us Articulate God's Mission of Peace and Justice

The Consultation asks for your help in our ongoing discernment of God's call to us here at General Convention 2009. As part of our belief in a fully realized baptismal ecclesiology, we know that it is often in the crucible of dialogue that we hear God's word and meet God's Word.

Therefore, we not only invite you but encourage you to respond to us in either of the following ways:

1. **Consultation Open Meetings** – Today, and on Monday, July 13 and Wednesday, July 15, the Consultation hosts open meetings in Pacific Ballroom A in the Hilton Hotel from 12:45 to 1:45 pm. We invite you both to hear our concerns and share with us your own.

2. **Blog Comments** – Every day, following the distribution of the print version of ISSUES, we post the articles on our blog at

ISSUES-TheConsultation.blogspot.com. We invite your comments on any of our articles.

The Consultation looks forward to hearing from you.

ISSUES Staff

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. There is an ISSUES blog available at ISSUES-TheConsultation.blogspot.com and an RSS feed is available at that site.

EPF Prayercard for today

"Anyone who comes to me I will never turn away."

John 6:37



Almighty God, Lover of souls, your dear Son showed us the way to discover the holy in one another. As leaders in Christ's name, open our ears to listen for the truth in each voice. Unclench our fists that we may pass your peace. Make room in our hearts to meet one another in the spirit of grace; that we all may be one at your table, growing together into the full stature of Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

"Todos los que el Padre da, vienen a mí; y a los que vienen a mí no los echaré fuera."

Juan 6:37



Dios poderoso, amante de nuestros almas, tu Hijo bandito, nos mostró la manera de descubrir la presencia sagrada en cada persona. Como líderes en el nombre de Jesucristo abre nuestros oídos para escuchar tu verdad en la voz de cada persona. Abre nuestras manos para que podamos ofrecer la paz del Señor a cada persona. Haz campo en nuestros corazones para encontrar el uno al otro en el espíritu de tu gracia, que podamos ser presente a tu mesa, y juntos podamos ser el verdadero cuerpo de Nuestro Redentor, Jesucristo. Amen.

Your morning ISSUES is available in front of the main Convention Center entrance, on