

Wednesday,
July 1, 2015

ISSUES 2015

The daily General Convention newsletter of the Consultation

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Calendar

July 1

3:00 pm - Exhibition Hall Closes

Today is your last day to visit and make purchases in the Exhibit Hall. Consider supporting one of these Fair Trade booths that support village artists from around the world: *Friends of Sabeel* (227), *African Team Ministries* (307), *Betty Wood Enterprises* (300), and *Colores del Pueblo* (400).

We also invite you to visit the Consultation booths and support our member organizations by making a purchase.

EXCERPTS FROM NEWLAND SMITH'S COMMENTS IN ACCEPTING THE EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP JOHN NEVIN SAYRE AWARD

... it is racism which I feel compelled to name as the issue for our justice work. I am convinced that much of the madness - the violence in our common lives as Americans stems from the horrific legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery, of slavery, segregation, and its current manifestations today to which the #BlackLivesMatter voices are a cry for justice.

Three years ago the War Resisters' League published a 600 page book "We Have Not Been Moved: Resisting Racism and Militarism in 21st Century America" in which the question is asked, "Why have peace groups in the United States been predominantly white? Why has it been so difficult for white members of the peace movement to make the connections between racism and war?" I realize that as a white American, a Connecticut Yankee to boot, in addition to addressing my white privilege and taking concrete material actions as a way to apologize for my part in maintaining these structures of racism, I need to look to communities of color for next steps for racial justice. Earlier this year ten black journalists, artists, and organizers representing Ferguson, #BlackLivesMatter, and the Black Youth Project 100, joined Dream Defenders in a ten day trip to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel. Marc Lamont Hill, one of the journalists, said, "We came here to Palestine to stand in love and revolutionary struggle with our brothers and sisters. We come to a land that has been stolen by greed

and destroyed by hate. We come here and we learn laws that have been co-signed in ink but written in blood of the innocent and we stand next to people who continue to courageously struggle and resist the occupation. People continue to dream and fight for freedom. From Ferguson to Palestine the struggle for freedom continues." A week ago Sunday, I participated in a Gaza pinwheel exhibit outside a church in Chicago. 521 pinwheels, each with the name of a child who had lost his/her life in Occupation Protective Edge last summer comprised the exhibit. Our job was to pass out leaflets about this tragic loss of life and to engage people going to and fro on the sidewalks and at the CTA Red Line stop and Clark and Division. The young American Friends Service Committee office summer intern, with whom I was working, commented to me that it was black, not white persons who were more open to accepting our leaflets and talking with us. As she said to me, "Black people get it."

.... I must end. Thank you again for this recognition. May it be a challenge to me to risk more - to risk letting go of my white privilege in order to be able to be in authentic solidarity with Black and Palestinian persons.

Newland Smith is a long-time leader in peace and justice activism and a deputy from the Diocese of Chicago.

Deportación y derechos humanos en la República Dominicana

El pasado jueves 17 del presente mes de junio, el día en que escribía este artículo, fue un día muy agitado para la República Dominicana, las instituciones de la sociedad civil, pero además el mundo; y, precisamente porque perimió el plazo en el que se concibió el Plan Nacional de Regulación de Extranjeros PNRE que el Gobierno dominicano y las autoridades concedieron para que los ciudadanos extranjeros, la mayoría haitianos, en situación irregular se registraran y pudieran de ese modo contar con un estatus regular en el territorio de la República Dominicana. Sin embargo, debido a los propios escollos burocráticos que con sabiduría impuso la República Dominicana, muchos ciudadanos vieron imposible reunir los requisitos para el proceso.

Es difícil escribir con facilidad sobre el proceso en general, primero por lo voluminoso y espinoso del tema, y segundo por la impotencia de describir la profundidad de los abusos vividos por los inmigrantes en cada una de las etapas que daban al traste con dicho proceso.

La situación por la que atraviesan muchos ciudadanos haitianos en la República, pero además, dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana, es decir, personas que independientemente de la situación de regularidad de sus padres (sus antepasados), han nacido en territorio dominicano y que por lo tanto detentan todo tipo de derechos legales y constitucionales. Gente, muchas de las cuales, que ni siquiera han visitado al vecino país de Haití ni mucho menos en algunos casos hablan el idioma creole de sus descendientes, que no tienen en sentido general ningún tipo de vínculo excepto la consanguínea en términos lejanos, por decirlo de alguna manera.

Desde el año 2007, la Junta Central Electoral, que es el organismo que tiene que ver con el Registro Civil dominicano (entre muchas otras tareas), emitió algunas resoluciones administrativas como la 12-07 y la Circular 017-07, respectivamente, con las cuales se les impedía a ciudadanos dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana acceder a una copia de sus actas o registro de nacimiento, atribuyéndoles la condición y característica de "hijos de ilegales", por lo que veían a partir de entonces tronchadas sus posibilidades de estudiar, sacar una cédula de Identidad

y Electoral, tener un pasaporte para viajar, tener un empleo y muchas otras aspiraciones, incluyendo el ejercicio pleno de sus derechos civiles y políticos. Quedaron, muchos de ellos en un estado de lo que se conoce como, "muertos civiles", personas inexistentes, o simplemente ápatridas.

Desde aquellos años hasta ahora la situación se ha venido agravando considerablemente, cuando el Tribunal Constitucional dominicano, a través de la Sentencia 168-13, del 23 de septiembre del 2013, consideró la invalidez de las actas de nacimiento de ellos, incluyendo su calidad como dominicanos. Dejándolos en una situación de apatridia y susceptibles, inclusive, de repatriaciones por su condición de hijos de descendientes de haitianos, muchos a través de más de 3 y 4 generaciones; pues, la Resolución del Tribunal Constitucional da un giro retrospectivo al 1929, disponiendo efectuar una auditoría "minuciosa" a los registros de nacimiento desde 21 de junio de 1929, en una franca violación al principio de la irretroactividad de las leyes.

De todos modos, según Interior y Policía, unos 288,466 se inscribieron en el Plan Nacional de Regulación de Extranjeros.

Desde esa fecha a entonces los medios de comunicación en Santo Domingo, así como en el mundo entero no han dejado de difundir informaciones sobre la situación. Muchas analistas independientes no han descansado sus plumas para expresar de una manera o de la otra su firme repudio a lo que consideran un atropello contra la dignidad y los derechos fundamentales de las personas.

Haití, por ejemplo, ha denunciado una violación en lo referente a un Protocolo de Repatriación suscrito entre ambos Gobiernos y que data del año 1996. Y, ante la situación por la que atraviesa ese país, especialmente después del sismo del 2010, del que no ha podido restablecerse aún, ahora entiendo que permitir una repatriación en forma masiva (violatoria al Protocolo), agravaría mucho más la situación interna por la que está sumida; y es por ello que en la persona de su Primer Ministro Evans Paul anunció encontrarse en una crisis humanitaria, --criterio con el que coincide el Caricom-- luego de que más

de 14,000 personas de manera voluntaria han cruzado la frontera.

Por su parte en un reciente informe, los Estados Unidos definieron como una discriminación la que lleva a cabo la República Dominicana contra ciudadanos los inmigrantes haitianos y sus descendientes, sin dejar de citar la Sentencia del Tribunal Constitucional, que evacuó "La sentencia que estipula que los descendientes de individuos considerados ilegales en el país, muchos de los cuales son de origen haitiano, no tienen derecho a la nacionalidad dominicana".

Pienso que, tal y como lo establecen otros analistas, el problema no es que República Dominicana, como país soberano, decida quién se queda en su territorio o no, sino que el problema radica en que en el proceso de deportación no quedan excluidos aquellos dominicanos cuyos casos aun se debaten en tribunales dominicanos, y cuyos derechos fueron vilmente atropellados por el prejuicio de un Tribunal Constitucional conformado por personas cuyos ancestros fueron tan inmigrantes como los progenitores de muchos haitianos y dominicanos de origen haitiano.

La 78 Convención General de la Iglesia Episcopal aquí en Utah, así como los Diputados y demás actores importantes, deben servir para estrechar un lazo de solidaridad ante el hecho deshumano que en el día de hoy se vive de manera cruda en la República Dominicana, situación que hizo repetitiva en su sermón eucarístico el pasado jueves 25 del corriente la actual Obispo Presidente de la Iglesia Episcopal, Katharine Jefferts Schori, y quien definió como "limpieza étnica" lo que de manera atroz y aberrante sucede en Santo Domingo.

Necesitamos construir una sociedad justa, donde se respeten los derechos fundamentales de las personas; apostar al futuro de un mundo mejor donde las personas puedan ejercer de manera plena sus derechos de convivencia con igual proporcionalidad, y donde se respete la dignidad, sin importar, raza, origen, ideología, entre otros.

- Rev. Pedro Cuevas,
Vicario Auxiliar Misión Cristo Rey,
Tijuana

Yesterday, the United Church of Christ joined the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in committing to enact a divestment policy that might pressure Israel to end its 48-year occupation. In the following article, Vicky Gray shares her deep frustration and pain that The Episcopal Church looks like it may not follow suit.

An ordained trans woman, I should be overjoyed at our continued progress on LGBT inclusion. I am. But, again, I leave in tears at the obstruction in our church for the long-suffering Palestinians who, for a decade, have been petitioning us to enact a divestment policy that could bring about change. Resolutions from California and Hawai'i having been pushed aside, the legislative committee is left with but one watered-down call (D016) to look into the matter and report back in 2017.

Why? Because we are afraid of conflict, afraid of being called anti-Semites, and, under threat, afraid that our dialogue of the deaf with the Jewish Establishment will be ended.

Yet, we at EPF have worked at GC with young Jews from Jewish Voice for Peace who agree that criticism of the recalcitrant Netanyahu Government is in no way anti-Semitic. And, with them, the dialogue with Jews who believe in the universal ideals of the prophets flourishes.

In my sadness, I re-read Presiding Bishop-elect Michael Curry's GC 2012 sermon "Crazy Christians." In it, he alluded to Mary Magdala. And that reminded me of a poem by the late Jane Kenyon - "Woman, Why Are You Weeping?" In a boat on the Ganges, as she watches the bodies of dead babies floating by, she's asked that question. She replies, "I have lost my Lord and I don't know how to find him." As I leave General Convention, I do so with a similar feeling. Oh, my Lord - Jesus - is closer than ever. But I have lost my Church and I don't know how to find it.

- Vicki Gray,
Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network

Not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord"

You know the riff: Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt 7:21).

There was lots of Jesus talk in the presentation and answers from, the nominees for Presiding Bishop last week. Everyone got into it. And it was good. We now have a new Presiding Bishop and all those parts of that presentation are now in our prayers for different reasons than before. They are all a rich blessing to our common life.

Still, I wonder: from the standpoint of participating in and being part of the Body of Christ, lots of "Lord" talk, or "Jesus" talk for that matter, is not very useful or even always necessary. This is because it is doing the will of God that is the issue, not constantly referencing the sacred or holy name.

This is not to say we Episcopalians ought not use Jesus talk. Actually it was refreshing to hear Jesus on the lips of the nominees. But it is to say that the radical call to discipleship is not about saying "Lord, Lord," or "Jesus, Jesus," as if the will of God was somehow the outcome of such utterance.

We need to say "do justice now," and "love mercy now," and act on those imperatives. And then those who hear us will know we are invoking words that Jesus loved and will know too that we have Jesus in our lives in so many ways.

I think more conversation among all of us about doing the will of God is in order, and less about saying "Lord, Lord," is in order. When the day is finished we will still need to work at the challenge to do the will of God, which God is apparently more interested in our doing than our saying.

- Mark Harris, Priest

From Too Proud to Bend: Journey of a Civil Rights Foot Soldier

Eighth in a series of ten excerpts from Nell Braxton Gibson's memoir

The author is nineteen years old and a sophomore at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA.

The boys are lined up and led off in one direction down a long hall. Ruby Doris, Mrs. Forman, and I are led down another hall where we're searched by a female trusty. It's the first time I've been searched, and I feel awkward letting someone run her hands over my body. She acts as if it's all in a day's work.

When the three of us have been searched, we follow the trusty through a series of bars that slide open as we approach and shut when we've passed through. After a long walk we reach our destination—a cell with Negro females—seasoned criminals, hard-timers. The bars to their large cell open and then slam shut behind the three of us. Standing in the middle of the room, I look into an adjoining one that is larger than this one. It is shut off by bars and filled with single beds. Next to it is another partially barred area where toilets and washbasins stand. The toilets are far enough inside the room so that guards cannot look into them from their station outside, but there are no doors to make that area completely private. The washbasins are in full view of the prison guards, all of whom are white males.

A television is playing inside the room where we stand, and a majority of the inmates are watching a soap opera. Smaller groups of three or four inmates are seated in straight-back chairs and rocking chairs, holding conversations. There are twenty to twenty-five of us in this cell. "This place is like a resort," Ruby Doris says. "I've been in a lot worse jails than this." Thank God I'm with a veteran, I think. Looking around, I have to admit this is not what I expected, either. The room is spacious and filled with light, but the windows are so high that I can only see sky and the tops of trees. Benches are on either side of metal tables where we can play cards or read newspapers, but this is still jail. There are bars everywhere—in front of the toilets, around the area where we'll sleep, and over the windows. Already I feel trapped.

Note: *The good folks at Amazon.com would be happy to help you read more from Nell's book.*

From the history of ISSUES

ISSUES, conceived in the living room of the late William Stringfellow, has been around as a voice for social justice at General Conventions since 1967. This year we are going to reprint some articles from our history.

September 12, 1979, Denver

Integrity is approaching the "Spears Report" with moderation. Though they object to words within it and disagree with some of its positions, they are not opposing it completely. Their idea is to delete all but the last "resolve" and have that passed. In other words, the Convention would vote to do nothing to restrict the normal functioning of the present process of admission to Holy Orders. Failing this, they would prefer tabling the whole matter. This decision represents remarkably cool thinking on the part of a repressed minority which is just beginning its struggle for equal rights and human respect. The Church can do no less than grant them their rightful place as Baptized Christians. It is Baptism that creates the Body of Christ and is the only sacramental prerequisite for being in Holy Orders. Baptism creates the Diaconate, the Priesthood and the Episcopate, and most importantly the Laity. Baptized homosexuals are already ORDAINED INTO ETERNAL LIFE. After this, the problem of Holy Orders is a minor one.



The Consultation is a collaboration of progressive organizations within the Episcopal Church that partner to work for social justice. Before every triennial General Convention, we come together to develop a platform that will guide our shared advocacy and goals.

The Consultation member organizations are:

Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission
Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates
Episcopal Church Publishing Company
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Episcopal Urban Caucus
Episcopal Women's Caucus
Integrity
TransEpiscopal
Union of Black Episcopalians

Leading by Following Jesus with my Whole Life

Participant in the Young Adult Festival at General Convention, Grace Aheron says, "The witness of my life is that God is faithful." She should know, losing her father to ALS when she was 13. Her Episcopal church in Roanoke VA stepped up, supplying an endless procession of Brunswick stews and rides everywhere, holding Grace in the bonds of community. In that furnace of pain and kindness was forged Grace's solidarity with those who suffer and conviction that God really does transform pain into grace.

Perhaps that is part of why she has had the courage to step out of the path of the academically successful and the individualistic, market-driven logic of our cultural norm and chooses instead to live in the intentional Charis community in an unused Episcopal church property in the country outside Charlottesville, Virginia, with a commitment to prayer, simplicity, and hospitality. "I prioritize the way of Jesus," she says. She works part-time, reads a lot, strives to be present to the place she's in, building community with her Charis colleagues and with the University of Virginia chaplaincy she serves. "I don't need to be a one-house-one-leaf-blower-per-person kind of person, or a four-ski-trips-per-year person," Grace points out. "I can choose freedom in relation to stuff, make choices in my priorities, think how I honor Christ each time I swipe my credit card."

Key to this consciousness in Grace was that growing up in a parish led by a social-justice-oriented woman priest, in diocese and youth ministry, even in the Official Youth Presence at General Convention, "people identified gifts in me that I wouldn't have seen – a voice to read; words to preach." "I learned to love God reading the bible among friends in 'Young Life' in high school," she reports, "Then I fell into a Catholic Worker house, where they love Jesus and love justice in an intentional community NS farm, with hospitality to migrant workers, rooted in the love of God, not 'justice for justice sake.'" "But I learned my deep love for the liturgy in my Episcopal church, so that I feel it in my being when I go a week without communion."

"Being both multiracial and a woman," as a leader, "I stand outside of the social system, I have a unique view and I question what I see," Grace observes. "I don't have to unlearn patriarchy as some do. My faith was fed by liberation theology and feminist liberation theology - God as 'she;' the power of the feminine God." Viewing things freshly "from the margins," Grace provides leadership for a renewed Episcopal Church as she strives to live what she believes.

- The Rev. Holly Lyman Antolini



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