

ISSUES 2009

SUNDAY JULY 12

The Consultation Platform for Baptismal Ecclesiology

Correcting Abuses

Many Episcopalians still think of baptism in terms of old and tired assumptions based on medieval scholasticism and on issues of the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation of the 16th century – issues that have played themselves out. This is not an exercise in academic debate. The old assumptions are producing gross abuses of authority and sacramental reality. For example, too many still seem to assume, or at least accept the idea, that bishops carry some sort of magic in their personal fingers and that this personally held power provides a bishop with an unstoppable ability to confirm and ordain according to personal whim. That is, when a bishop performs a sacramental action, even in direct, intentional, and gross violation of canon law and church polity, that action is supposed to produce valid effects without regard to the will of local communities as expressed in their governing authority – even communities located far away from the bishop's jurisdiction, sometimes thousands of miles away. In this view, the only thing that counts is validity ("Did it take?") and this notion of validity seems to operate completely separate from, and independent of, the authority of the baptized People of God; that indeed it can be imposed upon the People of God.

If the whole church accepted the baptismal theology as recovered from the early church and established in the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church there would be so such violation of the Church's order and sacraments. The Baptismal Consultation will develop teaching tools and materials to educate the members of the church about such abuses and help to spread the orthodox Prayer Book theology far and wide.

Joe Doss, APLM

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's message of Justice and Peace. We will also have some afternoon speakers at 2:00pm.

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)

2:00 pm Def Poetry Slam: Come and join other "professional amateurs" and read/perform your poetry and share it with others.

July 13th - Ms. Marge Christie: Women's activist in the Episcopal Church and founder of the Anglican Women's Empowerment

2:00 pm The Rev. Juan Oliver, Ph.D.

July 14th - The Rev. Dr. Katherine Ragsdale

July 15th – Rev. Wilma Jacobsen:

EPF-YAP (Young Adult Presence) offers a series of Haiku from Michelle Harvey. They will be space throughout today's edition, with Michelle identified with MH

Young adults in church
Don't enjoy "product placement."
Tokenism: NO!

Less than three percent:
We can do better than that.
Where are the young folks?

MH

What is Marriage?

Were Adam and Eve married? God may have made Woman to be a partner to Man and to procreate at a time when the world needed populating, but were they married? In whose eyes? There was no state to marry them. And Abraham and Sarah – were they married? Surely they were married in the eyes of God, even though Abraham tried to pass Sarah off as his sister, which of course, she was. But what is it that makes two people married in the eyes of God? If two people get married at City Hall are they married in the eyes of God? Apparently they are married in the eyes of the Church because we list them as married in all our church records.

In a world of rapid change, marriage has changed

and is changing. It is no longer the social institution embedded within stable community in which children are raised and nurtured. Many couples don't have children, many couples don't get legally married, many couples live far from family and don't know their neighbors. Couple relationships are often based on mutual satisfaction and so can be abandoned when satisfaction drops below acceptable levels. Divorce rates are high and second and third marriages are common.

The gospel has much to say to couples and individuals (40% of Americans live alone) about their intimate and family relationships. But we are making it up as we go. It is time for the Episcopal Church to talk about marriage – what it means to us today, how that relates to the Biblical witness, and how we teach the values which we articulated in 2000. That year, in Resolution D039 General Convention stated 'that we expect such relationships will be characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God.'

The need for a church wide study of marriage has come up in the Education Committee as well as in Prayer book, Music and Liturgy. The questions about marriage of same gender couples is moving us to reconsider what we mean by marriage anyway. It's not the first time the church has done this – until the 11th century we weren't in the marrying business, and by the 13th century we understood marriage as a sacrament. It's time to reinterpret the Gospel to the needs of today's world.

Caro Hall, Integrity

Traces of the Trade, Two viewings

In 2006 at the Columbus General Convention we were privileged to see rough cuts of this important video about one Rhode Island family's discovery and exploration of the fact that an ancestor was one of the major figures in the Slave Trade. This evening and Tuesday evening at 7:00 the final version will be shown in the Anaheim Marriott Grand Ballroom, Salon F. In light of Convention's continuing work on slavery and reparations this is an important opportunity to deepen one's understanding

Authenticity.

Episcopal liturgy.

That's the stuff we want.

MH

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.

And for those whose work is of a musical bent, there will be a handheld synthesizer (a 'Kaossilator,' to be exact) to throw down some beats, a mic for rapping, and an electric guitar on hand!

Asian Christians: Whence and Whither

Over half of the human race today, as two thousand years ago, are Asians. More people speak Chinese than any other language. Chinese has been spoken for longer than any other with the same scripts. In other parts of the world, antiquity is largely buried in the sand, often of the battle ground.

The border between the West and Asia has been moving for two millennia from today's Turkey to the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. From the European point of view, as the world view expanded, the Eastern end of the world moved farther east. The Khyber Pass that separates Central Asia and South Asia is a narrow path through which the adventurers and the invaders moved into the Indus River Basin in today's Pakistan: the Aryans, Alexander the Great, the Muslims and the British. Today, Taliban and Al Qaeda militants are crossing the Pass, back and forth.

Asians from these ancient lands started crossing the Pacific in the mid 19th century, when the Italians and the Irish crossed the Atlantic. While the Europeans came as immigrants, intending to settle down as Americans in the "New World," Asians came as indentured and migrant workers with no right of naturalization as US citizens until the passage of the McCarren-Walter Act of 1952. The quota of less than 3,000 per year was not removed until 1964, when Asian started coming to the shores of North America as laborers, students and refugees.

Before the Europeans embraced Christianity, there were Christians in Africa, Syria, Armenia and India. In January this year, I visited a Syrian Orthodox church in Kerala, India, founded in 54 AD by Apostle Thomas. Nestorians sought refuge in China, after being branded "heretics" in the West. The largest church anywhere today is in

Seoul, Korea, with 600,000 members.

Such is the time and place from which Asian Christians come.

TJames Kodera,
for the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates

Voices of Witness Africa, Copies of the DVD are available at the Integrity booth in the Exhibit Hall.

*Present at worship,
Give us a real job to do -
Not your agenda.*

MH

Health Care for All

The Episcopal Church previously called for universal access to health care to be achieved by the end of 2006. However, that deadline has passed, and the situation is worse than ever. More than 47 million people in the U. S. are currently without health insurance, more than 75 million went without it for some length of time within the last two years, and millions more have inadequate coverage. People of color, immigrants and women are denied care at disproportionate rates, while the elderly and many others must choose between necessities and life sustaining drugs and care. The Institute of Medicine has found that each year more than 18,000 in the U.S. die because they had no health insurance.

We currently spend more than twice as much of our gross domestic product as other developed nations on health care (\$7,129 per capita), but almost one-third (31 percent) of that goes to administrative costs.

Of all the health care reform options being considered, a "Single-Payer" Universal Health Care Program is the most efficient, affordable and universal. The potential savings on paperwork, more than \$350 billion per year, are enough to provide comprehensive coverage to everyone without paying any more than we already do.

Under a single-payer system, all Americans would be covered for all medically necessary services, including: doctor, hospital, long-term care, mental health, dental, vision, prescription drug and medical supply costs. Patients would regain free choice of doctor and hospital, and doctors would regain autonomy over patient care.

It would be financed by eliminating private insurers and recapturing their administrative waste. Modest new taxes would replace premiums and out-of-pocket payments currently

paid by individuals and business. Costs would be controlled through negotiated fees, global budgeting and bulk purchasing.

Resolution D048 declares our support for a "Single-Payer" Universal Health Care Program, but also provides that we will work with others in adopting some kind of universal health care. It supports the best option, but provides a measure of flexibility.

Please vote to adopt Resolution D048.

Tim Yeager, EPF

The Theology of Appeasement

For decades, those opposed to the ordination of women in the Diocese of Fort Worth, San Joaquin and Quincy said, "We can't ordain women because the Church has not yet done the theology of the ordination of women."

They kept saying this as the piles of such theology reports grew in number and size. It was a wonderful delaying tactic that has now been adopted by those opposed to same sex unions. The Church has not yet done the theology of same-sex unions they cry, even as theological studies and reports pile up in number and size.

There is something to be learned here.

So here is what I want.

I want us to set aside B033 until the Church has finished a study of the theology of appeasement. Altagracia Perez famously has said that "When I climb on the cross, it's sacrifice. When you put me there, it's murder."

I call for us to set aside B033 until the Church has done the theology of asking LGBT priests to sacrifice their vocations and relationships for the comfort of other people. Until then, let us get on with the work of helping absolutely everybody to be open to God's call.

Katie Sherrod

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Walking for Justice

In New Delhi, there is a fitting memorial to Gandhi – the man who walked all over India for justice. It marks the path of his last steps, before he was assassinated.

Just for a giggle, I brought Ms. Conroy's pedometer to Anaheim. It's not a 'professional' one. It's just something she picked up a while back when she was trying to get into shape.

I know that General Convention requires a great deal of walking – I've been attending these things for a while and my tired body remembered instantly – but I was curious to know just how much walking I do.

So, I put on the pedometer and here's what I found. Keep in mind that, for a person my size, 2,000 steps equals approximately one mile.

Monday: 9,644 steps.

Tuesday: 21,157 steps

Wednesday: 31,104 steps

Thursday: 32,064 steps

Friday – stopped wearing it. I don't want to know anymore.

I suspect Gandhi never counted his steps. He just kept walking. He walked all over India – an area much larger than all the General Conventions I've ever attended.

Still, he kept walking for justice.

Jesus walked all over Israel – back and forth, going to where the people were. Being with the people who needed to hear the Good News. Teaching. Telling stories. Bringing healing and hope. Confronting the powers and principalities in the name of justice and peace, and never counting the cost – much less the steps.

It's humbling to remember that as I schlep back and forth and forth and back from hotel to convention center and from the HOD to the HOB to various hearings.

It's also not a bad thing to remember that for every 2,000 steps I take, I burn 100 calories. Who would have guessed that walking for justice can also be good for your body?

Elizabeth Kaeton

Not that power point -
(We don't really enjoy that.)
Where is the hymnal?

"How can we get them?"
Ask. Listen. And celebrate -
We have many gifts!

Future of the church -

What happened to the present?

Why not the church NOW?

MH

A Different Perspective

"All the Sacraments, All the Time" is one way in which Integrity and their friends, speak about the move to repeal, reject, or move beyond the infamous B-033 resolution of General Convention 2006. As a straight priest of a certain age, I agree and support their efforts and have done what I can to further the cause. However, I have come to see that there is another way in which B-033 has hurt the Episcopal Church in the last three years and will continue to limit our possibilities in the future unless it is remanded.

In a number of cases, diocesan committees working to nominate candidates for election as bishop have been explicitly instructed to work within the limits of B-033, and I am sure that in many other cases this limit was accepted and acted upon. Although such limits may have kept some parts of the Anglican Communion a little more content (although it sounded last summer as though those parts were substantially limited), I believe that a number of dioceses were prevented from electing the most suitable person because of a suspicion that that person's manner of life would give offense. No one has a right to become a bishop, but dioceses should have the possibility of electing the person whose skills and personality most closely match the expressed needs of a given diocese. Unless it is fixed, B-033 will continue to limit such possibilities.

Ron Miller, ISSUES Staff

Friends don't let friends miss ISSUES

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