

Tuesday,  
June 30, 2015

# ISSUES 2015

The daily General Convention newsletter of the Consultation

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**WANT A CHANCE TO DISCUSS  
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE  
AT GENERAL CONVENTION?  
WHAT SHOULD WE BE UP TO ADVANCE  
GOD'S MISSION? COME HELP US WITH THIS!  
PLEASE JOIN US FOR TODAY'S  
OPEN MEETING OF THE CONSULTATION  
AT 1:00 PM IN ROOM 355 E&F**

*THERE WAS A TYPO IN YESTERDAY'S CALENDAR  
SECTION SAYING IT IS AT 7:00 AM.  
OUR APOLOGIES, IT IS AT 1:00 PM.*

## DISCRETION OR VALOR

At its meeting on June 26, the Committee on Social Justice and International Policy discussed next steps in its discernment on the resolutions on Palestine and Israel. It was a sort of temperature-taking by the committee and its bishops on the mind of the House of Bishops at this time. Valor, a committee member commented, comes from the grassroots, discretion from those in power. As a struggling pacifist, as an Episcopal Peace Fellowship member, as once part of the team in Hebron with Christian Peacemaker Teams, I fall into the 'valor' category - as does the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. We push the envelope.

The House of Bishops in the past has chosen to take the counsel of the Bishop and now Archbishop in Jerusalem on matters concerning his diocese and specifically over the last years on boycott, divestment and sanctions against companies enabling Israel's occupation of Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The Archbishop does not support boycott, divestment and sanctions against

Israel or against companies whose products enable Israel's Occupation.

General Convention is meeting in the seat of the Bishop of the Missionary District of Utah (1916-1918), Paul Jones. In speaking to the Fellowship of Reconciliation in 1917, Jones said "War is Unchristian." The controversy his statement raised led the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops to appoint an investigative commission which ended up disagreeing with Jones's statement and recommending that he "ought to resign his office, thus rejecting [his] right to object to war on grounds of faith and conscience." [Thanks to *Holy Women, Holy Men.*]

General Convention will likely be considering resolutions around positive investment for Palestine and divestment from companies enabling the violence of war and occupation in Palestine.

Will the House of Bishops come down on the side of valor or of discretion on these issues?

Donna Hicks,  
*Episcopal Peace Fellowship* Palestine Israel Network

## Calendar

### June 30

**1:00 pm - Open Meeting of the Consultation**

Where: Convention Center Room 355 E&F

**2:00 pm - Speaker's Corner: Immigration**

Where: Under the Consultation banner in the Exhibitor Hall  
Who: Dianne Aide, Episcopal Immigration Activist

*The Speaker's Corner is a Consultation offering where experts speak on social justice topics. The space allows for an intimate question and answer format.*

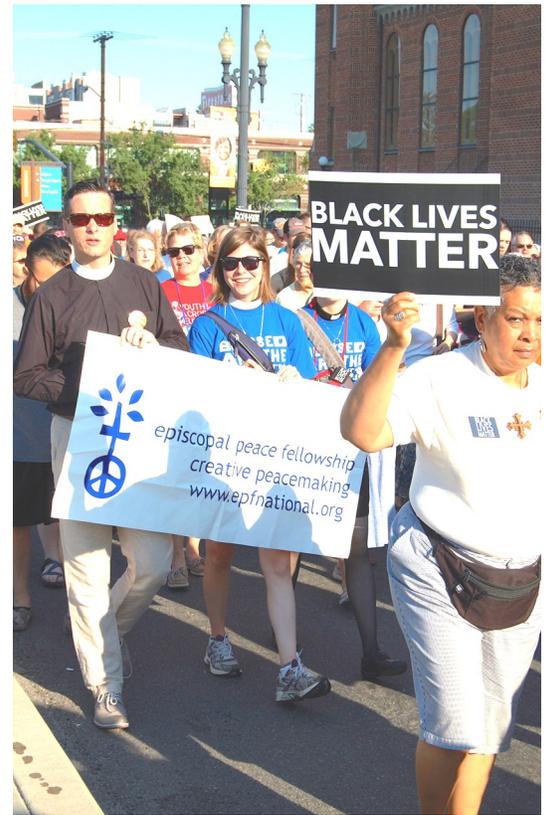
### July 1

**3:00 pm - Exhibition Hall Closes**

Don't miss your last chance for Consultation and other quality swag, tsochkes and TEC-approved doodads. Or you could buy a book...

## CLAIMING COMMON GROUND AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship and many other members of the organizations of the Consultation greatly appreciate the leadership of the *Bishops United Against Gun Violence* who led the "Claiming Common Ground Against Gun Violence" march on Sunday morning. And they also gathered folks in a meeting on Sunday night to organize for ongoing action. Check out <http://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/> to see how you can participate in this holy work to bring about Christ's way of peace.



## The Promises and Perils of Liturgical Experimentation

The 1979 BCP allows for a greater level of variety than any of our past prayer books, and this has fostered a lot of great liturgical experimentation. While some wonderful practices have developed in the past thirty years, there have also been plenty that are, to put it mildly, not so edifying. Either way, churches have maintained a certain level of secrecy – perhaps we fear that the bishop will find out and we'll get in trouble (I'll admit that I've been guilty of "adapting" the usual Sunday morning liturgy when the bishop visits my church so that we don't do anything outside of what the prayer book prescribes), or maybe we're scared that, if the other Episcopal church in town finds out what we're doing, they'll copy us and attract the people we're trying to woo, or maybe we're just too busy to bother telling anyone what we've been up to. Whatever the reason, a culture has developed where many feel they can do whatever they want in the liturgy, wither it be within the bounds of prayer book norms or not, and that they don't need to tell anyone.

Without an official means for sharing our liturgical experiments, some churches have developed idiosyncratic practices that stray too far from the "Anglican ethos" (an admittedly vague term) and are locally evaluated by how they make worshippers "feel." Another problem is that sometimes when a church does something that really works, other churches copy it then wonder why their attempt to do the same thing was a flop.

As one example, a church where I used to serve had a wonderful Celtic Eucharist every Sunday. This service attracted a wide variety of people from the surrounding area who would never have darkened the door of what had been known as the country club church. Over time, this service stimulated growth in outreach, fellowship, stewardship of creation, small group ministries, Bible studies, etc. Word spread, and others tried to reproduce what they saw by using the same words, turning down the lights, and putting up a bunch of candles. They didn't know, for example, that the liturgical leaders would gather for an hour of silent prayer before the service (which was an essential part of the service's preparation each week). Were there an official mechanism for sharing this liturgy, it could have been refined, more churches could have learned about it, and more people could have explored what "made it tick" so they could adapt it successfully for their local circumstances.

Liturgical experimentation is happening and will continue. Should they be approved, the proposed changes to Article X will acknowledge this reality and stimulate mechanisms, under the guidance of the bishops, so these experiments can be explored in common to the benefit of the wider church.

- Matthew Johnson,  
*Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission*

## Revolution on the Frontiers of Love: Transforming the World by Listening

After a triennium on TREC, The Reimagining the Episcopal Church Task Force, Julia Ayala Harris is ready to double down, running now for Executive Council. But then, Julia is a doubling-down kind of person. Once she's caught fire about something, there's no stopping her.

It's a good thing, too, because Julia was up against it from her start in life. Raised as the "little brown girl" by her resource-challenged Anglo grandparents, odd-person-out among a flock of children when her mom succumbed to mental illness and her Mexican-American dad didn't want to raise a girl, Julia's childhood might have sunk a less hardy person. It made Julia a feminist, if a feminist in 6-inch heels.

It also made her a seeker, never quite at home until the day at Wheaton College when she forsook her Roman Catholic upbringing and evangelical exploring, and tried an Episcopal church. Kneeling at the rail to receive communion, she realized the wafer was being proffered by the hand of a woman. She looked up and sure enough: a woman in a clergy collar. Suddenly she knew she'd been an Episcopalian all her life. Women at all levels of leadership! The reverent mystery of the liturgy! Room to question and struggle and formulate your own beliefs. Room for everyone of all colors, classes, backgrounds.

That was just the beginning. With a shared passion to serve, Julia and her husband, now confirmed Episcopalians, went to work with the Mennonite Central Committee in South Sudan before its nationhood. With a bachelors's in non-

profit development, Julia's role was to help the Sudanese change mindset from war to reconstruction. She brought together a coalition of stakeholders to make a strategic plan for social entrepreneurship, from large European donors to Sudanese community leaders who'd never seen a plane before. People of totally different spheres made enduring connections, so that an illiterate tribal woman could transform the convictions of a minister from The Hague.

Such "phoenixing" work is Julia's specialty, her calling in God, the fruit of her own sense of marginalization as a woman of color. Honest, real, collaborative, she takes on desperate case after desperate case, visioning, networking, listening. She quotes Proverbs 31:8: "*Speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, defend the rights of the poor and the destitute.*" "Now," she says, "I know I have to help people find their own voice and claim their own power. If they're not ready, I speak up. But infinitely more powerful when they are ready to speak for themselves."

"Our church institution may be dying," she says. "But we have these ministries on love's frontiers: vibrant leaders, doing amazing things, loving their neighbor, engaged in their communities in ways that aren't the norm, at the margins of church institutions. You can SEE GOD WORKING! We need to go further; it needs to get riskier. We need to see pruning and death not as ends but as necessary preludes to the resurrection."

- The Rev. Holly Lyman Antolini

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

Seventh 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.

Smitty, who had only planned to drive Andy Young's car downtown and drop us off, is seated on the opposite side of the paddy wagon from me. Instinctively he begins to pray aloud. We all bow our heads. As soon as he says, "Amen," we sing, "We Shall Overcome."

The paddy wagon comes to a halt at the Fulton County jailhouse, and cops open the doors. When all of us are assembled outside the vehicle, we're led inside to a booking room. Some of us sit, while others stand. I sit near the place where our names will be given and where fingerprints are to be taken.

"Name?" a burly cop shouts to the boy next to me. "Billy Mitchell," the young Johnny Mathis lookalike responds. "Home?" "Los Angeles, California." "School?" "Morehouse College." "Class?" "Freshman." Freshman? I say to myself. I thought this guy was a junior. "Over there," the cop says, directing Billy to another cop, who is taking fingerprints. "Name?" the same cop says to Billy's co-captain from the march the day before. "Russell Carmichael Campbell." "Campbell?" "Yeah, like the soup." Listening to his response, I begin to pray that he'll keep his cool, because he has just looked at the answers the cop is writing down and is now correcting the spelling of his middle name. "C-A-R-M-I-C-H-A-E-L."

My God, this guy is going to get us thrown under the jail, I think. Doesn't he know where he is? This is Atlanta, Georgia. "Home?" the cop asks. "Detroit, Michigan." "Class?" "Freshman." Not another freshman, I think. "Name?" the cop says to the next boy. "Larry Fox." Larry, I learn from his answers, is a freshman, too. Good Lord, I can't believe I've followed freshmen into jail, freshmen who don't have any more experience than I do. Thank goodness Smitty, a junior, has had experience with demonstrations. "Name?" the cop yells to me. "Nell Braxton." After getting the information he needs, he directs me to another cop who takes the little finger of my right hand and rolls it over an ink pad. Then he rolls it onto the clear bottom portion of a piece of paper that has writing on the top. He then rolls my ring finger over the ink and continues with all the other fingers on that hand, and my thumb. He does the same thing with my left hand before commanding, "Stand over there," pointing to a spot in front of a white wall lit up with bright lights. I walk over and stand in front of the camera on the spot marked X. "Face forward!" he commands. "Turn right! Turn left!" Click, click goes the camera.

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

The General Convention Exhibit Hall is a World Market Place. Between booths and tables informing and engaging us in a variety of ministries, outfitting liturgical ministers and filling home and church libraries with new books, there are many vendors bringing items crafted by village artists from around the world, and being sold at fair trade standards. The money from these sales goes back into communities, and artists are paid fairly and justly for their work.

Check out:

*The Latin American Committee Tee Shirt Booth (201)*

Arizona based and supporting border relief.

*Friends of Sabeel (227)*

Hand crafted Palestinian items.

*African Team Ministries (307)*

Working directly with The Anglican Church in East Africa to bring hand crafted items.

*Betty Wood Enterprises (300)*

Featuring items (stoles, jewelry) made by a Guatemalan women's co-op.

*Colores del Pueblo (400)*

Featuring Latin American Fair Trade Items.

*Thistle Farms (1100)*

Oils and lotions supporting women survivors of violence.

*The Consultation Organizations*

Look for us under the Consultation Banner.



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



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## *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.*

*October 3, 1973, Louisville*

### "WHAT IT IS ALL FOR"

Yes, General Conventions are more than a bit tiring and depressing. Yes, the procedures seem miserably slow to laity accustomed to the fast pace of secular work and to clergy aching to get back to myriad pastoral problems. And yes, there's a GREAT deal of fussy housekeeping, from the election of a Presiding Bishop to the nuts and bolts of committee revision.

But having bought into it, all this is desperately important if the Church is to do the job for the next few years. The wrong housekeeping decisions will hinder, maybe cripple her. And there is a kind of demonic tediousness about major church gatherings which makes good, sensible, positive decisions so difficult to achieve. The price of an effective Church structure is eternal vigilance at dull conventions.

## **Fossil Fuel Divestment**

On Sunday, June 28th, the House of Bishops approved resolution C045 on environmental responsible investing. The resolution calls on various institutions within the church to divest from fossil fuel and reinvest in renewable energy as fiscally responsible. It also invites all dioceses and parishes to engage in conversation about fossil fuel divestment within the coming year. Greenhouse gases trap heat and cause global warming, which results in significant changes in climate around the world. These changes affect all living things, but the people affected most severely by extreme weather, drought, rising sea levels, and melting permafrost up to now have been some of the poorest people in our world who have contributed least to the increase in greenhouse gases. As global temperatures continue to rise, climate change impacts our health, economic well-being, food security, and access to clean water. Everything else we pray and hope for the Episcopal Church and all God's people in the remainder of this century depends on a sustainable environment. The call to faith communities and other institutions to divest from the fossil fuel industry and reinvest in clean energy is a call for moral leadership. Our church is positioned to join in with the leadership of numerous other faith communities which have already begun fossil fuel divestment.

We call on the Episcopal Church to take seriously the duty to care for God's creation and future generations, particularly those already suffering from the effects of climate change. Our divesting from fossil fuels will not bring the fossil fuel industry to a halt, but it will take away the stamp of moral approval from the continued use of fossil fuels. It is a powerful way for us to say that continued reliance on fossil fuels is morally unacceptable. It is a prophetic action as we stand united with our sisters and brothers around the world in financially supporting renewable energies. By divesting from fossil fuel and reinvesting in clean, renewable energy, we express our love and care for God and God's creation for us and for all future generations.

- The Rev. Stephanie M. Johnson & Archdeacon Betsy Bennett