



President's Report

by Elizabeth Morris Downie

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find Katie Sherrod's commentary on the recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Nottingham, England. It's an excellent—and alarming—summary of what actually happened. Do note the *absence* of the language of warfare, victory, and defeat, in marked contrast to the press releases and other statements coming from the American Anglican Council.

While I have heard that any change in the makeup of the ACC must be ratified by the appropriate body of each Province of the Communion, I suspect (though do not know) that there will be an attempt to prevent any action of our General Convention from being considered valid. OK, maybe I'm a bit paranoid—but such would be totally consistent with previous behaviors of those who have so vigorously opposed our confirmation of Gene Robinson's election and our simple recognition that in fact the blessing of same-sex couples does take place in Episcopal churches.

By the time you read this, legislation making same-sex marriage the law in all provinces of Canada will probably be in effect, making Canada the fourth nation to legalize it, along with Belgium, the Netherlands, and (perhaps most strikingly) Spain, a predominantly Roman Catholic country. I'm reading Tom Friedman's current bestseller, *The World is Flat*, and I suspect that the flattening of the earth he describes is very much involved in this particular phenomenon.

Friedman sees the global playing field leveled by the convergence of sophisticated technologies for global communication, the emergence of large numbers of managers, consultants, designers, and CEOs who are comfortable working in the horizontal collaborative style these technologies enable, and the entry into the world marketplace of three billion people from China, India, Russia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Central Asia. There's a lot of fascinating informa-

tion about globalization in the first part of the book (my bookmark is at page 204, with 265 to go), but the point that I can relate to the current struggle in the churches over homosexuality is that top-down, authoritarian exercise of power doesn't work anymore. When knowledge is very public, very accessible to anyone who can type "Google" into a computer, people won't just sit there—they will act. Innovation happens all over the place, not just behind closed doors in the company lab. People aren't waiting for permission; they act on the knowledge they have, and their desire to shape their own lives.

Many of us have been saying for a long time that the furor over the General Convention actions is not about sexuality, but about power and authority. Friedman's book helped me make the connection between the cry of perceived "erosion of marriage and family values" and what is happening all over the globe.

Of course "traditional family values" are threatened! Those "values" enshrine a totally authoritarian, totally masculine ownership hierarchy. When the whole world—including most of the so-called Third World—is moving rapidly into collaborative ways of working that have a lot of room for individual initiative, why would we be surprised that those at the top of the pyramid react defensively and angrily? Power is hardly ever relinquished easily and gently.

There are interesting days ahead, sisters and brothers. It is more important than ever that we ground our lives and our work in prayer, so that we may continue to listen for God's guidance and receive God's strength. This "flat world" is moving so fast that it's sometimes hard to glimpse God at work—but rest assured that She is working, doing new things.

Peace,
Elizabeth Morris Downie

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From the Editor's Desk.....

A small bit of recent and largely overlooked news this summer was the forced resignation of Tom Reese as editor of the Jesuit magazine *America*—apparently because, as any good journalist should, he presented both sides of certain issues. The fact that he carefully defined the Vatican's position on these same issues was apparently not satisfactory; the mere acknowledgment that opposing ideas might exist was, it would seem, enough to end his tenure.

There is something sad and a little bit wistful about the belief that—in our 21st century world—news can be so controlled that the opposite opinion could never be allowed to surface. After all, we live in a technological society where instant messages flash to the other side of the globe, personal websites are commonplace and blogs multiply by the day and sometimes, it seems, by the hour.

The very innocence of such a belief defuses it for us and blinds us to how dangerous it truly is.

As long as some believe that freedom of speech and the press can be controlled (and as long as human nature is as it is) they will try to control it, and to use whatever means they can find—legislation, excommunication, derision, vilification—to impose their views to the exclusion of all others.

They will not, I think, succeed—the American mind is much too feistily independent—but such tactics, no matter which side they come from, can poison debate at a time when we most need creative, just and well-thought solutions.

Already we see it happening, both in the church and in the wider world.

In such a milieu, it becomes essential that *Ruach*, as the printed and on-line voice of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, pause now and again to state exactly where we stand.

The EWC has always asserted its steadfast commitment to justice and equality. We also believe, however, that a reasoned and civil debate cannot take place unless the issues on both sides are clearly defined. To that end, we try to present typical—and unedited—statements from those who do not agree with our positions.

We are also committed to that most primary of journalistic ethics: keeping as clear a line as possible between objective, factual reporting and editorial or personal commentary.

“What is truth,” said Pilate as he washed his hands. In one of the great paradoxes of Christianity, truth is what makes us free, and truth is found only in freedom.



I am Caribou People

by

Sarah James
as told to Brian Keane

I am Caribou People. Just like Buffalo People or Salmon People, we Gwich'in are Caribou People. We've lived with the caribou since time immemorial. We do caribou dance, we sing caribou songs, we tell caribou stories. It's everything to us.

Caribou is our clothing, our tools and our shelter. (We used to live in caribou-skin huts when we were nomadic.) Caribou is our food. Even today, seventy-five percent of our diet is wild meat, most of it caribou. We also eat moose, wild sheep, fish, berries, nuts and small animals. That's our traditional diet.

When the change came upon us from Western culture, we went through sickness and starvation and all that other stuff. Every time caribou came through our villages, or wherever we lived, it revived us. That's why we're still here. There's a spiritual connection we have with the caribou.

The Porcupine caribou herd numbers about 120,000. They travel thousands and thousands of miles every year between Canada and Alaska, going from their grazing area to their birthing ground. We used to be nomadic and follow them, but now we're colonized into village life. The villages are located according to where the caribou tend to migrate. One of them is Arctic Village, another is Old Crow in Yukon Territory. Some of us live along the Yukon River. We hunt caribou up in Arctic Village and Fort Yukon. The villages along the river fish for salmon and we trade and barter with them because we don't get

salmon up in Arctic Village, only clear-water fish.

The caribou is never a target. It's given to us by the Creator for our food and our health. We don't talk about what a good shooter we are or things like that. The animals give us their lives, so we have respect for them. We respect where they are conceived; when they die we respect their remains; and we respect what we eat.

My parents raised me off the land. I went trapping with my Dad. I went out hunting with my Mom. My brothers and sisters and I all did our share. We had to share, we had to work, because if we didn't we weren't going to survive.

What I remember learning is to respect the land, to help each other, to share. I learned to use little, based on need not on greed. That's my basic learning. Those are the values that I learned about life.

When I was growing up, seventy below zero in winter was normal. Now it doesn't get that cold any more because of global warming and climate change. Climate change is real in the arctic and it's affecting wildlife in many ways. One time, there was too much snow in late spring, and the cows couldn't make it to the coastal plain in time. They didn't give birth in the right place. We lost a lot of calves that year.

Gwich'in Nation covers fifteen villages. Our area covers the MacKenzie River region of the Northwest Territories and the whole north half of Yukon Territory, the Alaska Range between Fairbanks and the

continued on next page

*A woman of
the Gwich'in
makes a plea
for the
preservation
of a way of life
in harmony
with nature*

I am Caribou People

flats to Wind River in the west and the Brooks Range to the north. The Brooks Range is the area where the Eskimos and the Indians meet, the Inupiat Inuit and the Gwich'in.

There's seven thousand of us Gwich'in between the United States and Canada. We believe that we never came from anywhere and we believe that we're not going anywhere. The Creator put us in the part of the world that we're supposed to take care of. That's our responsibility and we think we've done a fine job. We've kept our ways. We've sustained our life and our way of life, and it still works. The ecosystem still works.

There's a place, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and we call that place *'Izhit Gwatsan Gwandaii Goodlit.'* In English that means 'Where life begins.' That's the only safe place and healthy place for the Porcupine caribou herd to go to have their calves. For thousands of years they've been giving birth there. All winter long the coastal plain is breezy and windy, so there's no snow there. Even though it's about seventy-five miles north of Arctic Village, that's the place where vegetation starts growing first every spring. That's what the mothers need to nurse their calves. It's predator-free; even the bears don't hunt caribou there. No mosquitoes go there during the time that the calves need nourishment. Once the mosquitoes come in, the caribou go up into the foothills where the predators are. But by that time the calf can protect itself. It can run away from grizzly and wolf and all of them and keep up with the mother.

This is the place where life begins, not only for the caribou and the Gwich'in, but for many other life forms. That's where the fish spawn and there's polar bear denning, grizzly denning, wolf denning; there's eagle, white owl, white fox...any birthplace is sacred to us. We don't even talk about where all these places are because they are birthplaces and they shouldn't be disturbed. Our life is based on that. Our calendar is made up of the conceiving times for all of our animals. We call November *Divii Zhrii*; that means 'mountain sheep mating time.' October is *Vadzaih Zhrii*—'caribou

mating time'—and September is moose mating time so we call it *Dinjik Zhrii*.

Now the Congress wants to allow oil drilling on this sacred place. They even put it in the budget. The Senate is going to vote on it, [see sidebar on page 5] but they vote based on who is going to get elected next time, or how much their constituents are going to get from the deal, and things like that. They're using the deficit for an excuse to keep it in the budget, but it's not going to make any difference on the deficit or the war or the oil. It's only a six-month supply of oil for our country, and it's going to take ten years. By that time maybe they'll have better technology or alternative energy that will be better for our air and our land.

Since 1988 they've tried to start drilling there eight times. Each battle has been a hard battle, but we've won eight times since 1988. That's the year we first took a position as the Gwich'in Nation against oil and gas development. That year we formed the Gwich'in Steering Committee under direction of the elders.

We were having a meeting because we didn't know what to do to stop the development, and the elders took over. They threw away the written agenda. They said we were going to do this in our own way and they took out a talking stick. That's how we organized. They chose four people from Canada and four from the U.S. and I was one of them. That's how the Gwich'in Steering Committee was formed, on prayers and on a spiritual foundation and under the direction of the elders. Once you get on the board, you are on it for life, and that's what keeps it alive.

There's four different caribou herds in Alaska, and ours is the most wild, natural and healthy one. They always talk about this caribou that flourishes in the development areas like Prudhoe Bay and along the pipeline. That's the Central Arctic herd, they number about 40 thousand and they migrate in a small area within a big coastal plain. They did increase in number a little because they don't have any predators anymore. The predators like polar bears, grizzly, wolf and others that depend on caribou, they got shot because they got used

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to the camps and became a nuisance to that development area. Also the semi-trucks, the trucks that run along the pipeline, ran over predators.

Those caribou are the ones that you see in the pictures with the pipeline in the background. But now, more and more, scientists are seeing that they're aborting their unborn calves. They think it's got something to do with a disturbance of their feeding grounds.

These four different herds, they don't mix up. They don't enter into relations. Sometimes the Central Arctic herd comes over to our area, but they're small and they're lean. They come over to find food, I guess. Our hunters don't want to hunt them because they're too small and too lean.

A lot of natives in Alaska say they're for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge development because they want to make profits. They went with the Land Settlement Act and had to form corporations. Now they're stockholders in the corporations and they have to make profits. One way to make profits is to go for big-time development with short-time benefits. But it's not the traditional people who live in the villages and hunt and fish and respect their ways. They've got no voice. The corporation boards of directors are the ones that make these decisions. They're already into development with Prudhoe Bay and the pipeline. They're getting large benefits, they're comfortable, and they want more.

We Gwich'in, we didn't go with the Land Settlement Act. We didn't go with the corporation. What we're working for is permanent protection of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. That's what we need. Right now we have to do it by the government's terms, so we're going for wilderness

protection or to have it declared a monument. Like I said, we've already won the battle eight times. The Americans have spoken but the oil companies don't care. They just want more oil. This is human rights versus oil.

A long time ago, many of the animals weren't living right. Some of them were feeding on humans, some weren't the right size, things like that. So this guy, he could be a Creator, he went around and corrected the animals. He went around and said, 'From now on, you're going to be this size, and this is going to be your food, and this is the way you're going to live.' He told them, 'This is how you're going to be from now on.'

When he came to the caribou, he didn't have to change anything about them. They had their own food, they were clean and well organized. In fact, when he was with the caribou, he even stayed with them and rested. What I believe is that if he didn't have to correct the caribou,

or change them in any way, then that's an animal that respects creation. That animal's got its place in the world.

We need to get back together, like before, when the Earth was healthy. It's time we should get back together to revive our Mother Earth, to help Mother Earth. Mother Earth needs our help.

"I am Caribou People" was published in the Summer 2005 issue of Parabola, Vol.30, No.2. Sarah James was interviewed by Brian Keane while she was visiting Washington to lobby against oil drilling in ANWR.

The Gwich'in Steering Committee may be contacted at 122 First Avenue, Box 2, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701; by telephone at 907-458-8264; or by e-mailing Land is Life at lil@igc.org.

***"We need to
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What's Happening Now...

Since the first publication of "I am Caribou People" the issue has come to a vote in the Senate and failed, by only two votes, to prevent drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

This issue is still far from closed; at least one U.S. Senator has vowed to "use every legislative tool at my disposal to reverse this vote."

The organization of a consumer boycott against any company or companies that initiate drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and advocates of preserving ANWR are being urged to contact the CEOs of various oil companies.

United Church of Christ Casts Majority Vote in Support of Same Gender Marriages

by Doug Gross

The United Church of Christ's rule-making body voted overwhelmingly on July 4th to approve a resolution endorsing same-sex marriage, making it the largest Christian denomination to do so.

After little more than an hour of debate, roughly 80 percent of the members of the church's General Synod voted to approve the resolution. The vote, however, is not binding on individual churches, some of which, it was feared, might choose to disassociate themselves from the denomination.

On July 3rd, a committee gave almost unanimous approval to the resolution. It was also supported by the UCC's president, John H. Thomas.

The denomination has 1.3 million members and is a long-time supporter of gays and lesbians.

The committee also voted against an alternative resolution defining marriage as between one man and one woman. A small group of conservative congregations proposed a resolution defining marriage as being between one man and one woman. Others warned

that approval of gay marriage might well lead to the fragmentation of the church..

The church was criticized last year for its television advertising campaign featuring a gay couple, among others, being excluded from a church. CBS and NBC rejected the 30-second ads.

In the early 1970s, the UCC became the first major Christian body to ordain an openly gay minister. Twenty years ago, it declared itself to be "open and affirming" of gays and lesbians.

The resolution was submitted by the Southern California and Nevada Conference. The resolution also specified that bisexual and transgender persons merit the same support and protections as gays and lesbians.

UCC churches are autonomous; General Synod does not create policy for its 5,700 congregations.

There is no definitive data on how many gays and lesbians are members of the UCC. The denomination has 1.3 million members and 10,323 ordained ministers. [AP]

commentary

Some Thoughts on "Traditional Marriage"

by William J. Fleener

For several decades, I've been telling couples preparing for marriage that they are breaking new ground, given the fact that for 99+ percent of human history, marriages have been arranged by parents without any consideration of the consent of the marriage partners. Sheer numbers of people and centuries qualify that arrangement for the term "traditional marriage."

Until I heard an interview of a new book by social historian Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage: a History, from obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*, I had only a vague idea of how true my statement was, and what steps had occurred over the past couple of centuries, that have produced the thing we now, very mistakenly, call "traditional marriage."

Coontz' details about the patriarchal marriage stage of development fit in well with another of my theories. There was a time when the relatively few people who ever thought about same-sex relationships made the assumption that one member of the pair took the "man's" role and the other took the "woman's" role.

Such a relationship was no challenge to a patriarchal male's reign over "his" wife.

When we began more recently to look a same-sex relationships from the point of view of two persons, as different as any two people are in particular gifts, talents and interests, but building their relationship as equals, the patriarchal husbands started getting very nervous and began to proclaim that same-sex marriage would destroy heterosexual marriage.

I hope they are right—same-sex marriage will mean the death of patriarchal marriage. Only then can those preparing for marriage have a decent chance of building a new set of expectations, including continuing to build their relationship as equals for the rest of their lives, leaving behind forever the idea of a "stable" marriage in favor of an "ever-deepening" marriage.

The interview cited is from the Fresh Air from WHYY series on NPR and can be heard at <http://www.npr.org>. Click on "Archives" then scroll the calendar to June 2 and the Fresh Air listing "Marriage in Crisis—and the Role of Love."



June 21 at Nottingham

by Bob Williams for ENS

**The day everyone was waiting for.
The day the United States and Canadian churches would speak,
would explain, would justify themselves.
Speakers spoke. Most listened. Everyone got a booklet.
No minds were changed, and nobody was surprised.**

**"We have not
come to
argue....It is my
hope that, in the
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classical
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we will be
united in
Christ's love."**

**Frank Griswold,
Presiding Bishop**

Gathered under the theme "Living Communion," Anglican Consultative Council members assembled at England's University of Nottingham for their work as the Anglican Communion's principal consultative body and one of its four "instruments of unity."

The meeting, which was the ACC's 13th such triennial assembly, included a measure to adopt the designation "instruments of unity" over the formerly cited "instruments of communion." The other instruments are the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, and the Primates' Meeting.

ACC members—who number more than 70—are elected or appointed by the 38 interdependent yet autonomous provinces that span 164 nations and form the Anglican Communion.

Members from both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada attended the ACC meeting as observers after both provinces voluntarily withdrew their participation in keeping with a request from last February's meeting of the Anglican Primates to allow space for consideration of sexuality issues.

At the invitation of the ACC, the U.S. and Canadian churches offered presentations describing how it is possible, amid diverse views, for the U.S. church to elect a bishop living in a committed same-gender union, and for the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster to provide liturgical blessings for these unions.

Emphasizing the scriptural basis for its consideration of same-sex affection and related dialogue during the past 40 years, the Episcopal Church offered a formal response to the Anglican Communion's 2004 Windsor Report in the form of a theological paper, published as a 130-page booklet given to each ACC member.

Titled *To Set Our Hope on Christ*, the paper offers a "positive case" that responds directly to the invitation set forth in the Windsor Report's paragraph 135: "We particularly request a contribution from the Episcopal Church (USA) which explains, from within the sources of authority that we as Anglicans have received in scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection, how a person living in a same gender union may be considered eligible to lead the flock of Christ."

Other provinces—some opposing and some favoring the U.S. and Canadian actions—offered their perspectives in subsequent business sessions. Strongest opposition was voiced by representatives of South East Asia, Kenya and South America's Southern Cone. Additional provinces, including Uganda, registered their disagreement in written position papers.

About two-thirds of the presentations stated that while church provinces are not of one mind on sexuality issues, dialogue on the subject continues with commitment. It was noted in informal conversation that Anglican patterns of concurrence

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and disagreement on sexuality are generally aligned with the views of two British missionary organizations — the United Society of the Propagation of the Gospel and the more conservative Church Mission Society—which, dating from the 18th century, conducted overseas evangelism, at times in wider contexts of colonization.

Various provinces cited the 1998 Lambeth Conference’s resolution 1.10 that declared homosexuality “incompatible with scripture.” While resolutions from the every-10-years Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops are highly regarded by the provinces, the initiatives are understood to be advisory and non-binding under inter-Anglican polity.

Other visitors to the ACC meeting included as many as 20 U.S. and British Anglicans—some who oppose and others who favor blessings for same-gender relationships and the ordination of clergy living openly in such unions.

“Although certain actions by the Episcopal Church have deeply distressed a number of you, we have not come to argue,” Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold said to open the Episcopal Church’s presentation, joined by six panelists, including a bishop who withheld his consent to the 2003 election of the bishop of New Hampshire.

“I want to be clear that the Episcopal Church has not reached a common mind,” Griswold said, emphasizing that “it is our desire to be faithful to scripture. It is my hope that in the tradition of classical Anglicanism we will be united in Christ’s love and called to serve the world in Christ’s name.”

Earlier in the meeting, the ACC voted to endorse the Primates’ request that “in order to recognise the integrity of all parties, the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council, for the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference” and “interprets reference to the Anglican Consultative Council to include its Standing Committee and the Inter-Anglican Finance and Administration Committee.”

The provision does not bar U.S. Episcopalians and Canadian Anglicans from continuing to serve on ACC networks. The full ACC membership is not expected to meet again until 2009, and the next Lambeth Conference is set for summer 2008.

An additional ACC resolution on “the process of mutual listening” includes “listening to the experience of homosexual persons” and calls upon the An-

glican Communion’s secretary general to “collate relevant research...to make such material available for study, discussion and reflection to each member Church of the Communion; and...to report progress on it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the next Lambeth Conference and the next meeting of this Council, and to copy such reports to the Provinces.”

In a resolution at the meeting’s close, the council recognized “with appreciation” the responses offered by the Episcopal Church and the Church of Canada.

In other business, the ACC received detailed reports on Anglican ecumenical and interfaith dialogues, the initiatives of its several networks, and programs conducted through the office of Anglican Observer at the United Nations, Samoan Archdeacon Taimalelagi Fagamalama Tuatagaloa-Matalavavea.

The council adopted an annual budget of some \$3 million (1.6 million British pounds sterling), and voted with a clear majority to in the future include the Anglican Primates as ex-officio members of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Presiding at business sessions was ACC Chairman John Paterson, bishop of Auckland, New Zealand. Anglican Communion Secretary General Kenneth Kearon assisted in the proceedings.

Local hospitality was extended by the Rev. Canon Andrew Deuchar, rector of the medieval churches of St. Peter’s and St. Mary’s in Nottingham, where delegates attended Eucharist in each of the medieval structures. ACC members were hosted for a Sunday reception by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, also attended by the current Sheriff of Nottingham, whose office figures prominently in the region’s popular legend of Robin Hood.

Present at all sessions was the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, preaching at last Sunday’s Eucharist, said that “those of us who care about our Anglican Communion worldwide—its unity, its life, and its peace—care for it not in order to keep an ecclesiastical institution more or less upright... We care about it because we are part of the Body of Christ, and the world needs the Body of Christ.” □□□

Canon Robert Williams is director of ENS, and the Episcopal Church’s director of communication.

[Detailed ENS reports are posted online at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/>.]

(Full text of these resolutions posted online at www.anglicancommunion.org).



Reflections on Nottingham

by Katie Sherrod

Can the Anglican Communion maintain its commitment to unity?
Or will “an impossibly high sense of accountability” require
the U.S. and Canadian Churches to walk apart?

Well, we were not voted out of the Communion.

But a decision made in Nottingham may make it inevitable that the US and Canadian churches will voluntarily leave.

Here is what happened at the Anglican Consultative Council Nottingham meeting:

1. *A resolution passed that accepted the voluntary withdrawal of the US and Canadian delegates from official representation until Lambeth 2008.*

Since both those delegations had already withdrawn and the ACC doesn't meet as a whole again until after Lambeth 2008, we haven't been “suspended” from anything.

2. *This resolution passed by a razor-thin margin – 30-28 with four abstentions.*

This effectively refutes the conservatives' oft-repeated statement that the U.S. and Canadian churches stand alone against all the rest of the Communion. Apparently half the Communion still wants us at the table and the other half committed to listen to us by:

3. *Passing unanimously a second resolution that included the call for the Anglican Communion to listen to the experiences of homosexual persons.*

This resolution puts back into play the commitment made in the infamous 1998 Lambeth resolution 1.10 to do such listening, a commitment that has been scandalously ignored by conservatives both in the US and elsewhere.

So, this is good news, right?

Not necessarily.

The most troubling decision made in Nottingham is the decision to amend the ACC constitution to include the 37 Primates as ex officio members, thereby increasing the membership to 115 from 78.

This action, coupled with the voluntarily withdrawal of the US and Canadian delegates, drastically changed the composition and dynamics of the meeting. The ACC is made up of bishops, clergy and lay people from the 38 provinces of the Communion. It is

**“Apparently half
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to listen to us.”**

the *only* international forum in which Anglican laypeople can participate in decision-making. While the amendment included a provision that attempts to ensure balance for clergy and lay members, once the 37 primates—all male—are included, laity representation will no longer be the majority of the Anglican Consultative Council and the voices of women will be further diminished.

The Americans and the Canadians regularly include female priests and laywomen in their delegations, and usually female bishops as well. With them gone, the participants included only two women priests, no women bishops, and 11 laywomen.

The absence of our delegation and that of Canada allowed ultra-conservative voices such as that of Nigeria's Primate, Archbishop Peter Akinola, to dominate the meeting and change the ACC's decision-making process into a highly charged, highly polarized process.

Worse, the addition of the Primates has tipped the balance of the ACC toward male archbishops, many of whom have total authoritarian power over their provinces and apparently little understanding of and no respect for the politics of either the US or Canadian churches.

What does this mean for the future?

The constitutional amendment is subject to the
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primates assenting to the change at their next meeting; approval by two-thirds of the Provinces of the Anglican Communion by resolution of the appropriate constitutional body; and final amendment [if any] and approval by the Standing Committee [of the ACC].

Read that paragraph again, because if the conservatives have their way, every substantial change *any* Province in the Communion wants to make will be subject to the same approval process or one very like it. And then try to imagine the ordination of women getting approval by two-thirds of the Provinces in the Communion.

So much depends on what General Convention 2006 decides *vis a vis* the constitutional amendment and the Windsor Report recommendations. Both should be voted down, because both are steps toward formalizing the Anglican Communion into something it has never been—a worldwide church with a centralized decision-making body.

The Windsor Report recommendations create what the Rev. Dr. Jane Shaw, theology dean, New College, Oxford, has called a “Holy Spirit-free zone,” by calling for “an impossibly high sense of accountability” requiring “so much agreement that change can’t occur.”

The Report calls for a hierarchical teaching authority which would allow some provinces to veto actions in other parts of the Communion. The constitutional amendment adding the primates to the ACC is a significant move toward making that body such an authority.

This is exactly what US conservatives have been asking for since the ordination of women. Indeed, much of the rhetoric used in the wake of Minneapolis 2003 is almost identical to that used in the wake of Minneapolis 1976. The biggest change is that their targets are now lesbians and gays. This has been enor-

mously useful to them in enlisting the aid of conservatives in countries where being homosexual can lead to arrest, torture and death.

And in case you have any doubt who is next on their agenda if this unholy alliance succeeds in getting the American and Canadian churches to back down from their acts of radical inclusivity, look no further than England.

According to a letter published in the July 1 Church of England Newspaper, 17 “traditionalist” bishops have signed a letter giving warning that any moves to ordain women as bishops would be “deeply divisive” and that ordaining women as bishops could threaten the church’s “fragile unity.”

Nice strategy, huh? Orchestrate an uproar by screaming threats of schism over gay unions and ordinations, and then claim the unity of the church is too fragile to bear any *other* change involving anyone other than male clergy.

It doesn’t require a crystal ball to know that more undermining of female clergy will be in the works as the conservatives feel more emboldened. And laypeople? All you have to do is look at the amazing clericalism of the American Anglican Council to see their disdain for laypeople.

The US and Canadian churches aren’t the only ones with dogs in this fight. All Anglicans who cherish the Via Media genius of the Anglican Communion should be alarmed.

If remaining in the Anglican Communion means being part of a conservative, hierarchical clerical-and-male-dominated Anglican Communion with a Curia to keep us all in line, I say, let us walk apart, holding our differences in love.

In so doing, we will be faithful to Jesus’ call, and very Anglican to boot. □□□

Nominations Wanted!

At each General Convention, the EWC presents two awards. These are:

The **JOSEPH AWARD**, given, in the spirit of Mary’s spouse, to a man who has been a faithful companion to women on our journey in faith. The recipient of this award is a man who defies conventional wisdom and cultural standards in order to confront prejudice and obey the spirit of the God of incarnate love, liberation, justice, reconciliation and peace. The

MAGDALENE AWARD, given to lift up and celebrate a ministry that would not ordinarily be well known. The recipient of this award is a woman whose unflagging dedication and leadership transcends cultural standards, strengthens and builds up the disciples of Christ, provides for them out of her own resources, and witnesses to the power of the resurrection.

Do you know any person or persons who fulfill these ideals? Send your nominations for either the Magdalene Award or the Joseph Award—or both—to any member of the EWC Board. Contact information may be found on the inside front cover of Ruach.

The Emerging Torah

by Rabbi Arthur Waskow

**In our concern for the Anglican Communion,
we sometimes forget that other faith traditions are
struggling with the same issues.
Here, a well-known Rabbi provides a fresh perspective.**

Kedoshim, the portion of the Torah that we read recently, contains one of the two places in Torah that condemns a “male lying with a male as with a woman,” adding in this passage that they are subject to the death penalty (Lev.19:13).

How might we think about this, which has become one of the most controversial aspects of Torah in our society?

The Supreme Courts of the United States and Massachusetts have drawn on secular concepts of liberty, privacy, and human rights to strike down laws against same-sex sexual relationships, at the US level; and same-sex marriages, at the Massachusetts level.

But these decisions have been attacked as anti-religious, Godless, by certain religious groups in the United States.

So—how do we examine these questions from the standpoint of Torah?

Some have argued that Torah prohibits male homosexuality for sure, and perhaps lesbian sexuality as well. The Rabbis suggested that it also calls for privacy: that what Balaam found *Mah tovu*— “So good!” in the tents of the House of Jacob was precisely that they were pitched at angles to each other so that each household preserved its privacy—probably especially its sexual privacy.

Others have argued that “You shall not lie with a man as with a woman” is ambiguous, leaving open to question what the text really means. (Is this physically possible? Was it only about casual or ritual homosexuality, not committed relationships?) But I think we need to go beyond these historical or midrashic quibbles, to

look more deeply into Torah.

Does Torah look forward to its own transformation? If so, under what circumstances?

There is wise and powerful teaching in the passage of Talmud that cautions against raising goats and sheep in the Land of Israel. Since our forebears Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rivkah, did precisely that, how could the Talmud have the chutzpah to oppose it?

The Rabbis knew the world had changed. They knew that the numbers of goats and sheep, and of the human population, would denude and ruin the Land if these animals were bred there.

The world had changed, and so did Jewish holy practice.

Biblical Judaism, out of which sprang the Leviticus prohibition on homosexuality, professed three basic rules for proper sexual ethics:

1. Have as many children as possible: Gen.I:28: “Be fruitful, multiply, fill up the earth, and subdue it.”

2. Men were to be in charge: Genesis 3:16, where God says to Eve, “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

3. Sex was delightful and sacred: Song of Songs: throughout. Celibacy was almost unheard of, and almost always strongly discouraged.

How did these affect attitudes toward homosexuality?

“Be fruitful and multiply, fill up the earth and subdue it” worked against homosexuality, since having children was presumably impossible. But what shall

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***Does Torah look forward to its own transformation?
If so, under what circumstances?***

we do today, in a generation when the injunction has been accomplished?

Having put on t'fillin in the morning, must we do so in the afternoon?

Today the sheer number of humans is putting impossible burdens on our global ecosystem and plunging into extinction thousands of the species that God commands in the story of the Flood we must not allow to die.

Today we need to encourage, not forbid, forms of sexuality that avoid biological multiplication. We might now read the command as teaching us to be fruitful and expansive emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually rather than biologically.

What were the effects of "He shall rule over you"? If a man had to be in charge in a sexual relationship, there was no way to deal with a relationship of two men. Neither one could be subordinated—"as with a woman." Such a relationship would blow out all the circuits. Conversely, a relationship between two "subordinate" women would not even turn the power on—and so it was ignored in biblical tradition.

Is this statement in Eden intended by Torah to persist forever? No more than the twin statement (Gen. 3:17-19) that human beings (or at least men) shall "toil in the sweat of their brow," wringing a livelihood from a hostile earth. Do we think Torah commands us to eschew the machines that make our labor easier?

Like this statement about toil, and like "Be fruitful and multiply," the overlordship of men applied to a history that should be transcended. It was not an edict to be obeyed.

Modernity has transformed the world we live in. The Modernity that eases our work and makes women and men equal and brings the human race to fill up and subdue the earth may even be what God intended.

So then we must ask ourselves—as the Rabbis of the Talmud understood that in their new world they must oppose raising sheep and goats as their forebears did—what must we change in our new world?

In a world filled and subdued by the human race, multiplying our numbers may actually contravene God's intention. In a world where men are not required to be dominant nor women to be subordinate, a relationship of two men or two women need not be either destructive or irrelevant.

So we are evolving past these two rules that underlay the opposition to gay and lesbian relationships and marriages.

The third basic rule—that sex is delightful and sacred—still stands. The biblical Song of Songs embodies it, and the Song—far from being outdated—may point beyond the Eden of the past, of a childish human race, past our history of toil and hierarchy, toward an Eden of the Future. "Eden for grown-ups," for a grown-up human race and for newly mature individual human beings.

In the Song, bodies are no longer shameful as they were after the mistake of Eden; the earth is playful, not our enemy; and women and men are equal in desire and in power. And God is never named—no longer Papa/Mama as in Eden, giving orders, but inherent in the very process of life.

Though the drama of the Song is on its face heterosexual, it describes the kind of sensual pleasure beyond the rules that has characterized some aspects of gay and lesbian desire, especially since marriage was forbidden.

So we now have the opportunity to open heterosexual relationships and marriages to the kind of joy the Song embodies, while opening gay and lesbian life to the more planful structure that marriage makes possible.

Love and marriage are present in the Song, suffused with joy and pleasure rather than with rigidity and rules. For millennia, Jews have prided ourselves on the worth of marriage as a carrier of holiness and community.

Now we can expand the circles in which marriage—a new kind of marriage—is possible.

From a spiritual as well as a legal standpoint, the Supreme Courts of the United States and Massachusetts have opened the way to enhancing, not destroying, marriage. They have opened the gates; but only spiritual communities can enter. Let the tents of Jacob and the shrines of Israel rejoice, *Mah tov!*—"How wonderful!" □□□

Rabbi Arthur Waskow is director of The Shalom Center www.shalomctr.org and author of Down-to-Earth Judaism: Food, Money, Sex, & the Rest of Life, and co-author of A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven: The Jewish Life-Spiral as a Spiritual Path.

***"The Song of Songs may point...toward
an Eden of the Future, an Eden for grown-ups"***



Two Hundred Years of Liberation: a timeline

As we prepare to celebrate once again the ordination of women, this year Ruach has expanded the traditional timeline to include events in the wider world. By so doing, we acknowledge the context of our history and remind ourselves that liberation is not only a women's story but a human story in which we all share.

In Jesus' day, the Jewish priesthood had become a powerful force centered on the Temple in Jerusalem, where the high priest was coming to be seen as the ultimate mediator between God and humanity.

The smaller local synagogues were governed by councils of elders (Greek: *presbyteros*), of whom one was elected as what today would be called a chairman or group leader. Both concepts were important in shaping the structure of the early church.

In the First Century, Paul visited Jerusalem to plead for the full inclusion of Gentiles in the church. He succeeded, opening the door for the expansion of Christianity throughout Europe.

Despite intermittent persecution, the church continued to grow, each congregation centered around an "overseer" (Greek: *episkopos*) and a group of elders whom he empowered to present the sacraments in his absence. By the Third Century, this presbyterate, or priesthood, was firmly established as a separate order.

As the church continued to define itself, it tended more and more to accept the ways of the secular culture, and much of Jesus' revolutionary message of inclusion began to be lost. Though there were still grave markings inscribed with female names and the word "presbytera" or "episcopa," they were becoming increasingly rare and usually located in remote areas.

As the church became the official religion of Rome, in this period it also began increasingly to define the priesthood as being for males only—a proscription some scholars believe was meant to exclude not only women but eunuchs.

Some 1400 years later, our timeline begins:

1804

Thomas Jefferson begins his second term as president. Absalom Jones is ordained, the first black priest in the Episcopal Church. In 1808 the United States Congress bans any further importation of slaves.

1833

Slavery is abolished in the British Empire. One year later (1834), Charles Babbage invents an "analytical engine," now recognized as the first precursor of the computer. Two years later, the Mexican army wipes out the defenders of the Alamo.

1846

The Congregational Church (now UCC) becomes the first church to form an integrated antislavery society. (In 1853 they will become the first church to ordain a

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200 Years of Liberation: a timeline

woman). Frederick Douglass launches his abolitionist newspaper.

1848

A gathering in support of women's rights is held in Seneca Falls NY; A "Declaration of Sentiment" is signed by 68 women and 32 men. In 1850 one thousand persons of both sexes attend the first formal Women's Rights Convention in Worcester MA

1852

Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; later President Lincoln will refer to her as "the little woman who started this big war."

1855

Conflict breaks out in Kansas between pro-and anti-slavery factions. Florence Nightingale goes to the Crimea where she revolutionizes the practice of nursing.

1859

John Stewart Mills publishes *On Liberty*.

1860

Abraham Lincoln is elected president; South Carolina secedes from the Union, followed in 1861 by Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana. These and other states form the Confederate States of America.

1862

In England, the Bishop of London establishes what was believed to be the ancient order of deaconesses in the early church. Despite being ordered by the laying on of hands, deaconesses were not considered to have received Holy Orders.

1865

The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery.

1867

First ordination of a Native American priest

1869

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton form the National Women's Suffrage Association. Territory of Wyoming passes the first law in U.S. territory giving women the right to vote.

1879

A Federal court rules that Chief Standing Bear is "a

person" in the eyes of the law and therefore entitled to all rights and protections of the Constitution. Thomas Edison invents the electric light bulb.

1885

Deaconesses are "set apart" in the Episcopal Church by the Bishops of Alabama and New York, but this action is not authorized by canon until the General Convention in 1889. In Germany, K. Benz and G. Daimler, working independently, develop the internal combustion engine.

1890

The Roman Catholic nun Therese of Liseaux enters the Carmelite Order in France; she dies there in 1897, convinced that she had been called to the priesthood, along with St. Catherine and other female saints. "I think there will be surprises in heaven," she tells her sisters.

1893

Colorado becomes the first state in the Union to grant women the right to vote.

1998-1903

Marie and Pierre Curie discover radium. Five years later (1903) the Wright Brothers fly at Kitty Hawk.

1913

Supporters of women's voting rights picket the White House.

1916

Montana elects first woman to serve in the House of Representatives. One year later (1917) the U.S. enters World War I.

1919

The Archbishop of Canterbury appoints a commission to study the ministries of women and specifically the office of deaconess.

1920

The 19th Amendment to the Constitution is ratified on August 26th, giving women the right to vote. The Lambeth Conference affirms that Holy Orders are indeed conferred on women by the laying on of hands.

1925

Wyoming elects Nellie Taylor Ross as its governor, the first woman to hold a governorship in the U.S. Ten-

nessee passes a law against the teaching of evolution in schools, triggering the Scopes “Monkey trial.”

1930

The Lambeth Conference rescinds its previous statement that Holy Orders are conferred upon women deaconesses.

1935

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York appoint another commission to study women’s ministries; the commission finds there are “no compelling reasons” for or against the ordination of women but reaffirms the male-only priesthood. In Europe the German Reichstag passes laws stripping Jews of citizenship and civil rights. Two years later, in 1937, the Buchenwald concentration camp is opened.

1938

Congress passes the Fair Labor Standards Act, establishing the first minimum wage law—25 cents per hour.

1941

The United States enters World War II.

1944

Li Tim Oi is ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Hong Kong, the first woman priest in the Anglican Communion. The next year (1945) WWII ends.

1948

The Lambeth Conference declares that the time for women’s ordination “has not yet come” and refuses a petition from the Diocese of Hong Kong that it be allowed to ordain more women priests.

1953-1955

The Korean War ends with a cease fire agreement. In *Brown v. Board of Education* the Supreme Court rules segregation in schools to be unconstitutional. In the following year (1955) Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on the bus.

1960-1961

U.S. involvement in Vietnam begins. President John F. Kennedy establishes the President’s Commission on the Status of Women and names Eleanor Roosevelt as its chairman.

1962-1963

Pope John XXIII opens the Second Vatican Council.

Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his “I have a dream...” speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC. In November, President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas

1964-1965

Bishop James Pike, already a figure of controversy in the Episcopal Church, states that the ordering of deaconesses constitutes the conferring of Holy Orders and admits Phyllis Edwards as a full member of the diaconate. President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, giving the government the right to enforce desegregation.

1966

A special commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to study women’s ordination publishes its report. The U.S. House of Bishops recommends that the issue be raised at Lambeth 1968, based on its own study, “The Proper Place of Women in the Ministry of the Church.”

1967

Thurgood Marshall becomes the first black justice of the Supreme Court.

1968

The Lambeth Conference endorses the principle that deaconesses are full members of the historic diaconate, but takes no action on the ordination of women to the priesthood. It does, however, refer the question to the individual provinces of the Anglican Communion. In the U.S., Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis.

1969

At a special General Convention, delegates vote to amend ECUSA canons to allow women to be licensed as lay readers and to administer the chalice.

1970

Women are seated as deputies at General Convention, which also recognizes deaconesses as being within the diaconate and amends the canons accordingly.

1971

The Anglican Consultative Council declares the ordination of women to be acceptable “if done with the consent of the diocese or synod in which the ordination takes place.” ECUSA’s House of Bishops appoints

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a commission to study the issue. The Bishop of Hong Kong and Macau ordains two women to the priesthood. In the United States, the Episcopal Women's Caucus is formed to work for full inclusion of women in the life of the church.

1972

The House of Bishops passes, by a slim margin, a resolution favoring the ordination of women as both priests and bishops. The resolution is defeated, however, in the House of Deputies. In the same year, the Equal Rights Amendment expires; though passed by Congress, it fails to achieve ratification by the necessary 38 states.

1973

General Convention again refuses to accept the ordination of women. The U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Roe v. Wade* that a woman's right of privacy includes her right to obtain an abortion. U.S. troops withdraw from Vietnam, ending the longest war in U.S. history.

1974

The "Philadelphia Eleven" are ordained "irregularly" by retired bishops. Richard Nixon becomes the first president to resign from the presidency.

1975

The "Washington Four" are ordained, also irregularly, in Washington DC. The first Annual Gathering of the Episcopal Women's Caucus is held at Virginia Theological Seminary.

1976

Both Houses of General Convention pass a resolution authorizing a change in the wording of the Canons, thus permitting the ordination of women. The women ordained in Philadelphia and Washington are accepted as "regularly ordained," effective January 1, 1977.

1981

Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first female justice of the Supreme Court.

1984

A special celebration of 10 years of women in ordained ministry is held at the National Cathedral in Wash-

ington DC. The Nobel Peace prize is awarded to Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

1988

Congress passes the Civil Rights Restoration Act, overriding a presidential veto. Barbara Harris is consecrated as bishop suffragan in the Diocese of Massachusetts, the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion.

1993

The Church of England votes to ordain women to the priesthood: the following year, 32 women deacons are ordained as priests in Bristol, UK. Jane Holmes Dixon is consecrated bishop suffragan of the Diocese of Washington DC.

1996

Madeleine Albright becomes the first woman to serve as Secretary of State of the US.

1998

For the first time, women bishops—eleven of them—attend the Lambeth Conference, representing dioceses in the United States, Canada and New Zealand. In the following year (1999) Lt.Col. Eileen Collins becomes the first woman to command the space shuttle.

2001

The U.S. is attacked by militant jihadists on September 11, leading to war in Afghanistan.

2003

The U.S, with Britain and other allies, invades Iraq. Gene Robinson is elected bishop of New Hampshire, the first openly gay bishop in ECUSA. His ordination, and the blessing of same-sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada, cause waves of protest in parts of the Anglican Communion.

2004

Gay marriages are performed in San Francisco and in Massachusetts. The Windsor Report invites the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada to justify their actions in ordaining an openly gay bishop and in blessing same-sex unions and to "voluntarily abstain" from participation in the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council

Visit Our Website

<http://www.episcopalwomenscaucus.org> or <http://www.ewc-ecusa.org>



Where We Are— and Where We Ought to Be

by
Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows

*Even as we celebrate thirty years of women's ordination,
we're reminded that the story isn't over,
and much of the struggle is still to be won.*

The statistics still astound me. According to Louie Crew's Anglican pages, the Episcopal Church counts some 7,500 parishes in its number as of this writing. Fewer than 30 of them can claim a black female priest as their clerical leader as vicar, rector or priest in charge. The number of women of any color leading congregations looks a bit more encouraging—some 560 female-led parishes—that is, until one looks deeply behind the numbers.

Up until my recent return to parish ministry, I had spent the last two years traveling around the country visiting churches as the Director of Alumni/ae and Church Relations for the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley. It has been an enlightening two years. As we celebrate thirty years of women being ordained to the priesthood, it is clear that the stories behind the statistics tell us that we haven't come as far as even these figures would like us to believe.

I am a GenXer who was in elementary school during the height of the women's liberation and women's ordination movements. By the time I arrived at college in the mid-1980s, the image held high was that of the superwoman who could enjoy a high-powered career, children, marriage—if she so chose—and a dynamic social life that included time to devote to personal and community interests.

As we've all heard before, there was no reason why women could not have it all. Well, twenty years later, women and men have realized that it is not possible to have it all—at the same time anyway—and that

women continue to bear a larger burden and pay a higher price to hold to the superwoman ideal than anyone would have thought. It should come as no surprise that the church has been slower to recognize this.

In many ways the church exists in a time warp. It's as if we are in the 1970s at the height of the women's liberation movement where female priests face inequalities of pay and position and childcare concerns but the unspoken expectation is that they will be the superwomen of the 1980s—balancing vocation, family and personal wellness without the support (that of a wife) enjoyed by their male counterparts.

I believe there is still a struggle for women's ordination to be won. It is true that, with the exception of a handful of dioceses, women are ordained to the priesthood or accepted as priests throughout the church. But some of the justice issues related to women in the priesthood—deployment, parental leave and childcare and compensation—are concerns that the church is, belatedly, just beginning to address.

In my travels I have been to some dioceses that can claim female leadership for 30 percent of their parishes, but the stories behind the numbers show that the women are overwhelmingly serving at the smallest churches. Clergy women still find that balancing vocation and family is more of a challenge in the church than in the secular world. Many still fight for diocesan parental leave policies—despite the parental leave resolution passed at the 2000 General Convention recom-

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*"Justice is a big house, but there is no room for complacency.
Thirty years of women's ordination to the priesthood
has not earned us a victory party."*

mending such a policy. The Church Pension Group's latest research on clergy compensation shows that in every category—age, experience, seniority, geographic location, etc.—women continue to earn less than men. These gross inequities exist in spite of the fact that there is no gender differential in workload or expectation for clergy *and* the reality that many clergywomen—especially those who are GenX or who are closer to retirement—are the primary or only wage-earner in the family. There are stories yearning to be told of female priests who work to support their families, earning comparatively lower incomes than their male peers, while their spouse or partner looks for work, pursues educational goals, or is retired.

And there are the stories yet to be fully told of GenX women who struggle to balance their vocations with child-raising. The Episcopal Church has finally seen the wisdom in raising up younger vocations, but has forgotten that in this new day, when women are being raised up too, someone has to take care of the children.

With most dioceses preferring their clergy to be active in the greater life of the church but without providing some of the assistance that might make participation more feasible for clergy with young families—such as childcare provisions at clergy conferences of diocesan conventions—a conflicting message is being sent: if you are a young priest who is male with a family and spouse/partner who works—great. If you are a young priest who is a woman with a family and a spouse/partner who works, the message is: “Great—see you when the kids are school age.” There are diocesan conventions where the college of clergy looks overwhelmingly older—not because it is an entirely middle-aged clericus but because many of the young women clergy are home taking care of the children.

These concerns alone would be enough to keep us busy, but I've discovered something I fear more—complacency. Complacency has been described as the feeling of contentment to a fault. I often sense that women who are leading congregations and have adequate support systems, role models and satisfying ministries, feel that the struggle around women's ordination to the priesthood has been won and we can move on with real justice issues.

I have often felt that myself. When I first began attending the Episcopal Church 20 years ago, I

would have never guessed that women could not be priests—there had been a female priest in nearly every congregation I've been affiliated with—but that's New York and New England for you: Problem? What problem? Complacency will thrive in such environments.

Meanwhile, for the women serving in smaller, less urban or less receptive dioceses, the problem is all too evident and sympathizers can be few and far between. Much of the time the church seems to behave as if it is content with the way things are for women clergy. If we were *all* content and happy with the way things are for women, that would be wonderful. But I suspect that we settle for an uneasy contentment because (1) we already have too much to do and what about the real justice issues? (2) For some women it is all they can do to make it through another day, so who has any energy to engage in an uphill struggle that seems too large to tackle; (3) this is just the way the church is, so let's get on with the gospel and missionary work; and (4) we don't really know about the issues—we just want those women to stop whining.

Justice is a big house, but it has no room for complacency. Thirty years of women's ordination to the priesthood has not earned us a victory party. With so much more work to be done to make vocation a fair, viable and satisfying possibility for women (and please understand that I don't expect the priesthood to be without struggle, pains or conflict for anyone, but it must be viable and satisfying) the church cannot afford to let the inequities continue. The church loses when its leadership doesn't reflect the diversity of the entire body. We are all poorer when the particular gifts that women have to share are turned away or hidden.

I'll end with the dynamic with which this essay begins—black female priests, of which there are few. There are but a handful (a handful and a half at most) of black female priests under the age of 40. The issues complicating female priesthood seem all the more acute when race is added to the mix. At a conference last year, six of us young black priests found ourselves talking about our ministries. All of the men were serving as rectors and all of the women were in non-parochial ministry. All I could do was sigh and wonder about the odds. □□□

The Rev., Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows is rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Syracuse NY and Episcopal chaplain at Syracuse University.

“The church loses when its leadership doesn't reflect the diversity of the entire body.”

Church of England Synod Moves One Step Closer to Ordaining Women Bishops



*Though warning the road ahead may be rocky,
bishops, clergy and lay delegates at General Synod
favored women as bishops by almost 3 to 1*

The Church of England moved a step closer to ordaining women as bishops as its General Synod, the Church's main governing body, met July 8-12 in York, England.

Bishop Tom Butler of Southwark, who opened the Synod debate, said, "I believe that there are good ecclesiological and theological reasons why women should now be able to be ordained bishop."

He added, "There are many hurdles ahead, and we will gradually discover whether there is sufficient consensus in our church."

A motion, which passed 367 in favor and 127 against, asked Synod to consider the process for removing the legal obstacles to ordaining women bishops and invited the House of Bishops, in consultation with the Archbishops' Council, to report back to Synod in January after assessing the various options.

General Synod is made up of three houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity and regularly meets twice a year. An additional meeting can be scheduled if necessary. In the vote on the motion the bishops were 41 in favor, 6 against, clergy 167 in favor, 46 against, and laity 159 in favor, 75 against.

Coming after Anglican divisions over an openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, in the Episcopal Church in the United States, the decision seems certain to widen the theological fissures among the world's 77 million Anglicans.

Particularly, the debate pits Anglicans in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world against many of those in Europe and the United States. But it also sets some bishops in England against others.

"There continues to be serious disagreement within the Church of England, said Bishop John Hind of Chichester, an opponent of making women bishops.

"It reveals deeper disagreements about how we do theology and agree doctrine."

Taking into account the opposition from some Church of England members, the motion also asked that specific attention be given "to the issues of canonical obedience and the universal validity of orders throughout the Church of England as these would affect clergy and laity who cannot accept the ordination of women to the episcopate on theological grounds."

The Rt.Rev. Geoffrey Rowel, Bishop of Gibraltar and an advocate of delay in the process, noted that, "We are in danger of dividing the Church of England. We can't afford the easy luxury of division. We have to work for unity in the church."

The findings will be debated at the Church of England's next scheduled General Synod meeting in February 2006. The process, however, is expected to take several years to complete.

Synod members voiced various viewpoints on the issues. Bishop John Hind of Chichester told the synod that the motion was "premature and a dangerous precedent," claiming that more theological debate in the church was required before such a decision could be made.

"Whatever today's outcome, our own fellowship will be further strained and ecumenical relations compromised. We are in a lose-lose situation," he said.

Opponents of making women bishops argue that there is no biblical precedent for them because the apostles of Jesus were men. The Rev. David Houlding, the leader of a group of conservative priests at the synod, said the ordinations of women as bishops would mean "there is no room for us in the Church of England."

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*"We will gradually discover whether
there is sufficient consensus in the church"*

Province V and VI Ordained Women Meet *by Elizabeth Morris Downie*

For fourteen years ordained women from Provinces V and VI have gathered on the Sunday after Mother's Day for three days of learning, leisure, and laughter. The gathering is hosted in rotation by various dioceses, and supported in part by the generosity of several of the bishops. The Chicago area was the site this year, and Iowa was the host diocese, with on-site help from Chicago women.

Each year the host diocese provides a gift or premium for those attending, and these have been varied: sweatshirts, hats, travel mugs, mouse pads, etc. This year tie-dyed tee shirts in brilliant blues, yellows and greens were given, in keeping with the theme for the gathering: Wild Wise Women. They are wild—and were very popular! Members of the staff and the other guests at the retreat center kept asking if they were for sale.

Margaret Rose from the Office of Women's Ministries brought us up to date on the important work going on in her office and at the UN. Paula Jackson, rector of the Church of our Savior in Cincinnati, brilliantly illuminated Hebrew scripture texts with feminist light ("Brave sister Miriam!"), Professor Barbara Newman of Northwestern University spoke about wise medieval women, and Barbara Schlachter performed

her own one-woman play on the life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, complete with costume and props.

Each year the presider at Eucharist is the most recently ordained priest, this year Kate Guistolise from the Diocese of Chicago. We used a Sophia liturgy written by Allison Cheek, with her permission, and sang Sophia hymns by Miriam Therese Winter. Refreshed and renewed by this time apart in the company of women, we returned home, with next year's gathering firmly on our calendars.

Diocese of Eau Claire Installs its First Woman Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Leigh Waggoner has become the first woman to be named priest-in-charge of a congregation in Eau Claire.

Waggoner had worked with St. John's in Sparta for about a year before her formal installation. She had helped to enable such programs as a growing Hispanic ministry and expanded Christian education capability.

She is one of three women ordained to the priesthood in Eau Claire since 1999; prior to that time, the diocese did not ordain women.

C of E Votes for Women Bishops

At the synod, several priests who are women urged approval of making women bishops. The Very Rev. June Osborne, the dean of Salisbury, said there were no scriptural prohibitions on the ordination of women.

"Let us not set up artificial and inept lines that no one can defend," she said.

Christina Rees, chair of Women and the Church (WATCH), which campaigns for women's equality in the church, welcomed the synod decision, Ecumenical News International reported.

"To delay any longer would have further sapped [the church's] energies and wasted some of our most precious resources—dedicated, gifted, experienced and faithful women," she said. "It is a brilliant result. The vote showed we are ready to move forward and that in principle our church accepts women as bishops, and that is what we are going to do. Now we are on our way."

The newly-elected Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, also welcomed the decision. "The decision of the Church in England is consistent with the decision our Church

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took at General Synod last year," he said. "And just as it will now take some years for the English Church to look at its legislation and where necessary amend it, we too in Australia are in that same process."

The Church of England opened the priesthood to women in November 1992. Currently, one in five Church of England priests is female.

Formal discussion and debate in the Anglican Communion began in 1920 when the Lambeth Conference first considered the issue.

Three provinces—the U.S. Episcopal Church, Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia—currently have women serving as bishops. Bishop Barbara Harris, now-retired suffragan of Massachusetts, became the Anglican Communion's first woman bishop after her election in 1988 and ordination in 1989.

Eleven additional provinces have approved the ordination of women bishops but have yet to appoint or elect one. One such province, the Scottish Episcopal Church, voted to accept women bishops June 2003.

[Several other sources contributed to this article]

When is Conversion Not Conversion?

by
Joan Chittister, OSB

A familiar and astute voice from the other side of the Tiber assesses how the actions of one church affect another—and adds some trenchant comments on the changing face of theology.

Just when you think that things are quieting down—at least on one front—someone sets off a landmine. This time it's a theological one.

On July 11, the Church of England voted, 11 years after the ordination of its first women priests, to begin the legislative process that will now admit women to the episcopacy. Don't for a minute think that the issue is finally resolved. Either for them or for us.

Theology is a tricky subject. You have to be careful when you're trying to understand exactly what is being said—or how. It has an eel-like quality to it. It slips and slides. It changes its mind a lot more than the tone of its teachings imply. It can get all entwined in history—called tradition—and interpretation—often called revelation.

If you're Roman Catholic, you're good at this: As in the shift from usury, which used to be a sin, to the Vatican Bank. Or the shift from the selling of plenary indulgences, which was once a promise of remission of sins, to their complete disappearance. As in the shift from "infallible" to "definitive." Or the shift in the nature of fetuses. Years ago a fetus could not be buried in blessed ground because they weren't fully developed human infants, my mother was told. Now even stem cells are protected as potentially privileged human beings.

Some of theology, at least, is, apparently, a movable feast. The problem is that its tenets often only get changed long after it has done eons of damage to society, people and church alike.

In the meantime, theology raises a lot of questions: How was it, for instance, that

white converts could receive the Eucharist immediately but American Indian converts like St. Kateri Tekawitha had to wait until they had proven that even Indians could control their impulses and so would not violate the host?

How was it that cultural understandings pretending to be moral absolutes, like segregation, could be so soundly theologized?

How was it that public prejudices that purport to be eternal truths, like the prohibitions against mixed marriages, could shift to the point where those marriages can now be shared by both ministers?

How is it that birth control can be determined to be so clearly sinful but nuclear weapons are a matter of theological doubt?

How is it that women, also made "in God's image and likeness"—according to God, at least—have their access to God controlled by men?

Answer: Who knows?

The new news is that Roman Catholics do not have a monopoly on examples of circuitous theology presented from age to age as part of revelation. Anglicans are now in a theological bind of their own.

In the first place, the Anglicans ordained openly homosexual priests but are now divided about whether or not gays can be bishops as well as priests.

Now, the Church of England has determined that it will allow females to become bishops—meaning that ordained women were not eligible for bishoprics before this time.

And that is where the theology gets fuzzy. More than that, thanks to them, it gets

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When is Conversion Not Conversion

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fuzzier for us. Their questions create new questions for us, too.

If women and homosexuals are “fit matter” for priestly ordination—still a question for some denominations—why wouldn’t that be the same “matter” that’s theologically necessary for episcopal consecration? So why is it a question at all? Especially when 87 percent of the bishops, 78 percent of the clergy and 66 percent of the lay representatives to the Synod voted for it?

But it is. To those who argue that a ban on the episcopal ordination of women undermines the credibility of the church, others respond that Christ’s apostles were all male and it is wrong for women to have authority over men in a religious capacity.

In fact, some Anglican priests are threatening to become Roman Catholics if the Church of England follows the theological principle of woman’s ordination to the ultimate acceptance of women bishops. And the Roman Catholic church, history attests, will surely accept them.

That’s precisely what must make the rest of us wonder about the consistency of our own theology: Is this really a theological question at all? Or is it simply

a matter of sexism or homophobia? Is such a motive really “fit matter” for genuine conversion if the only thing in question here is the role these already ordained women will begin to play in the structure of the church itself? Is that a matter of faith or a matter of discipline, a matter of theology or a matter of prejudice?

If the Roman Catholic church believes that a celibate priesthood is an essential dimension of Roman Catholic witness in the world, how is that we can accept married priests whose only disagreement with the theology of their church is resistance to the promotion of women whose priesthood they have already accepted? What is “conversion?” Is this a real conversion to the Roman Catholic faith—or is it just an attempt to run away from the leadership and authority of women?

From where I stand, it seems that our theology of conversion may be as much in question as their theology of ordination these days. But one thing we can count on: there will be a good theological reason for it.

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Women’s History Conference Set for September in Dallas

The Episcopal Women’s History Project and women who esteem it will celebrate two milestones at the 2005 EWHP Conference in Dallas Sept. 22-24. They will look at the struggle for women’s ordination and at the 25 year history of the Episcopal Women’s History Project. The dual focus will enable the conference to review women’s progress in the church and to highlight some of the stories that have given light and life to women’s history.

“Celebrating the Range of Women’s History” will bring to Dallas such notables as Dr. Joanna Gillespie, historian and author, the Rev. Lawrence Crumb, researcher and author, Katie Sherrod, nationally known TV and print journalist; Louie Crew, professor emeritus of English, Rutgers University and Margaret Larom, director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of Anglican and Global Relations as well as other authors, historians, scholars working in the field of women’s history.

“We are proud to be able to offer such a varied and in-depth look at women’s rising roles in the Episcopal Church. This is an important first that brings together aspects of women’s contributions to the Church, many of which have been largely overlooked.”

said the Rev. Bindy Snyder, EWHP president.

Among the topics to be explored are: “Women Priests in Academe, a roundtable discussion; ‘Daughters of Dallas’; “Lay Women Building Church and Community”; “Many Forms of Ministry—Anglican Nuns”; “The Voices of African American Episcopal Women”; and “Laywomen and Vocation in the 20th Century Episcopal Church.”

Men’s participation in the program will include “Tracing Women’s History”; “The Story of Annie Farthing”; “Twentieth Century Challenges—What Happened in Philadelphia” and “Resources for Researching Episcopal Women’s History.”

Special events include a trip to the Dallas Women’s Museum, one of two such facilities in the U.S., and to St. Matthew’s Cathedral, once the site of St. Mary’s College, an early and ground-breaking educational program for women. The Rt. Rev. James Stanton, Bishop of Dallas, will greet the participants at a dinner on Thursday night.

Contact: Dr. Katherine L. Ward, EWHP Treasurer, 10370 Greenview Dr., Oakland CA 94605-5017. revdrklw@aol.com



Anglican Church in Kenya Rejects US Funds

The Anglican Church of Kenya has refused financial support from the Episcopal Church in the United States because of the consecration of an openly gay bishop in the US, but it says this action will not jeopardize ongoing church activities in the East African country.

“We have said no to the funds from the American church because we believe a church is formed to preach the gospel,” Kenyan Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi told journalists.

“If they are going against the gospel, it means we have to say no to any package they are bringing,” Nzimbi said at the end of a three-day synod meeting that endorsed the decision to reject aid from the US Episcopal Church.

The archbishop said his church had cut its links with the US church because of the consecration in 2003 of V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire.

“When they decided to consecrate Venerable Gene Robinson, who is a homosexual and who is living in a same sex-union, we said then, we not cannot continue having fellowship and links with them,” said Nzimbi.

The Kenyan church also intends to petition the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, to bar Anglican churches that have accepted homosexuality from the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

Kenyan bishops could not specify the exact amount the church had been receiving from its US counterpart. But the provincial secretary, Bishop William Waqo, claimed that assistance was received sporadically and used exclusively for church development projects.

“Its absence will not affect the operations of the church,” said Waqo. “The church generates funds for its administration work.”

Diocese of Atlanta Forms Committee to Consider Same-Sex Unions

Atlanta’s Bishop Neil Alexander has appointed a study committee to consider same-sex unions and the formation of a liturgy to bless such unions. The committee plans to present an Interim Report to the Diocesan Convention in November.

Alexander stated that his understanding of the Canons of the Church does not permit him to authorize such a liturgy for regular use until the General Convention has authorized such liturgies. Both the bishop and the committee recognized and affirmed that pastoral acts of blessing are taking place in various parts of the church—including the Diocese of Atlanta—and that General Convention 2003 had recognized such pastoral blessings as being within the “normal and legitimate” life of the church.

To date, the committee has reviewed the legal meanings of marriage in the state of Georgia and the diverse theo-

logical meanings of marriage as understood in the church.

The committee welcomes suggestions, but notes that it is a study committee and cannot enter into debate or dialog with individual correspondents. It affirms that the confidentiality of persons and parishes will be preserved.

Diocese of California Opens Search for 8th Bishop

On August 1, the Episcopal Diocese of California began accepting nominations of candidates for the 8th Bishop of the Diocese. The diocese encompasses San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa and parts of San Mateo County in California’s San Francisco Bay Area. Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to visit www.bishopsearch.org where they may review additional information:

Scientific Body Honors Episcopal Priest for Leadership in Science and Religion

The Episcopal Network for Science, Technology and Faith honored the Rev. Dr. John Keggi when its steering committee met recently in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The citation for the first Genesis Award for Science and Religion recognized Keggi, a priest of the Diocese of Maine now retired in Massachusetts, as a “prophet and pioneering leader” in the field.

Keggi, whose scientific background includes a PhD in organic chemistry, had served as convener of

the Episcopal Fellowship of Ordained Scientists and of the of the Episcopal delegation to the Ecumenical Roundtable on Science, Technology and the Church. Dr. Keggi continues as co-convener of the North American Chapter of the Society of Ordained Scientists, an Anglican fellowship that meets annually in Britain to discuss new developments in the field. He also assists with the newsletter and other communication ministries of the Network.

Nine Network Bishops Threaten to Intervene in Connecticut Controversy

Nine bishops affiliated with the conservative Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes have threatened to intervene in an ongoing controversy between Connecticut bishop Andrew Smith and six priests who have refused to accept his authority as diocesan bishop.

A July 27 letter detailing the Network’s plans, which included threats of presentation against Smith as well as possible legal action, was released to the Internet before a copy arrived at the Diocese of Connecticut offices in Hartford, according to diocesan officials.

The nine bishops stated that they were “determined to intervene” in the case of St. John’s, Bristol, and in the cases of the other five parishes should that become necessary, including the “shaping of a present-

ment against you for conduct unbecoming a bishop,” raising legal and financial support for the six parishes in any future civil suits, providing “episcopal care” to the parishes and “immediate licensing of the Rev. Dr. Mark Hansen [the former rector of St. John’s] for functions within any of our dioceses” despite his inhibition by Smith.

According to diocesan officials, the six priests had refused an offer of delegated episcopal pastoral oversight unless the assigned bishop was permitted to oversee future succession of clergy and future candidates for ordination within the parishes. They had also asked for release from the obligation to pay diocesan assessments.

Same-Sex Partnerships, Soon to be Legal in Britain, Will be Available to ‘Chaste’ Clergy

Church of England clergy will be able to enter into same-sex civil partnerships in Britain under national legislation set to come into force on December 5, but they will be told they must remain chaste.

At a media conference in July, the Bishop of Norwich, Graham James, who headed an Anglican working group on the issue, spoke on a pastoral statement by the Anglican House of Bishops on the country’s Civil Partnerships law. This allows same sex couples to register a legal commitment to each other and enjoy equal rights and responsibilities on matters such as inheritance, pension and employment benefits.

The House of Bishops is one of the three chambers in the General Synod, the parliament of the Church of England. The other two are the House of Clergy and the House of Laity. The statement noted that the

bishops did not regard entering into a civil partnership as intrinsically incompatible with holy orders, provided the person concerned was willing to give assurances to his or her bishop that the relationship met the standards for the clergy set out in the document “Issues in Human Sexuality,” which states that homosexual clergy should abstain from sex.

Bishop James said the denomination did not want to exclude gay or lesbian lay people who were unable to accept a life of sexual abstinence. If they had registered a same-sex partnership, they should not be asked to give assurances about the nature of their relationship before being admitted to baptism, confirmation and communion. However clergy would not provide services of blessing for those same-sex couples who registered a civil partnership.



Afro-Anglicans Gather in Toronto, Discover the Strength of Unity in Diversity

by Daphne Mack for ENS

Diverse in their languages, yet united by their faith, more than 250 black Anglicans from Africa and the Diaspora met in Toronto, Ontario in July for the third International Conference on Afro-Anglicanism.

"History drew me to this conference, and its relevance for black Anglicans the world over," said the Rev. Vernon LaFleur, a Guyanan in the diocese of Toronto. "I came to learn and participate in a way that would have some impact on the final communique of the conference."

The Afro-Anglicanism conference began in 1985, when more than 200 black Anglicans—bishops, clergy and laypersons from 17 countries and five continents—met in Barbados. Recognizing that there were experiences that they shared, they decided to hold gatherings of Afro-Anglicans every ten years. The initial gathering also brought forth the Codrington Consensus, a statement adopted by the Barbados meeting.

Conference participants came together under the theme "Celebrating the Gifts of Afro-Anglicanism" with the following objectives:

- To revisit the Codrington Consensus and identify what has been achieved;
- To embrace the Afro-Anglican ministry of reconciliation based on the spirit of the Lambeth Conferences;
- To affirm the black Anglican community living in Canada;
- To support and promote the spiritual wellness of Afro-Anglican clergy and laity;
- To engage each other in learning and mutual understanding;
- To go forth with a renewed sense of mission in Christ to our respective parts of the world.

Bishop Orris Walker of Long Island, chairman of the conference committee, welcomed attendees. He introduced dignitaries, including Mayor Hazel McCallion of Mississauga, Ontario, who told participants, "The

Christian Churches are under challenge and prayers without action are worth nothing."

"If we want peace in the world, then the Western World must eliminate poverty and illness," McCallion said, "We must support the NGOs."

The opening Eucharist at St. James' Cathedral took on a spirit of celebration, with steel and African drummers and praise dancers.

In his sermon, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of Cape Town, Primate of South Africa, said, "I have been pondering what it means to be an Afro-Anglican because identity is a fundamental marker of our selves. People who have been taken from their homes have a unique journey to find an authentic past to call one's own. My message to the conference is to hold on to each other."

"We have a new potential to build a bridge within the Anglican Communion," he said. "What we have in common is far greater than what divides us."

Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, retired Bishop Suffragan Barbara Harris, Ndungane, and the Rev. John Peterson, former Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, now at the National Cathedral in Washington, were panelists exploring "The Anglican Communion: Our Global Village."

"Communion is God's own life embodied in a community of faith," said Griswold. "We have gone beyond Anglican civility to a new place of really wrestling with differences in a much more substantial way. This is the only way in which we can actually discover what God is up to in one another's realities."

"God's fullness, God's imagination, is always unfolding, and the invitation that God holds out to us in the mystery of communion is to discover more fully the person of Christ in one another."

"I think we have a number of issues with which we continue to wrestle," Harris remarked. "I hope we
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Afro-Anglican Gathering

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will, in good faith, wrestle with those issues in their broader context and not become so focused on one or another aspect, such as human sexuality, that we ignore the broader concern that needs to be addressed. We are in this fragile marriage of autonomous churches, and I think what is lacking among us is mutual respect.”

Ndungane, saying he felt “honored and privileged” to be a part of the province of Southern Africa, reiterated his earlier message. “Hold on to each other, and hold on to the Lord of our Church as he shows us a new way of moving forward.”

Stressing the urgency of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Peterson said: “For us not to tackle the problem of hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS and malaria is scandalous. To not attempt to deal with the reasons is actually a nail in our coffin.

“If we don’t do this,” he added, “I believe as a communion we are failing our churches, our people, the ecumenical community and this great communion and no wonder there is terrorism today.”

In another panel entitled “The State of the Anglican Communion, in a post Windsor Report World,” the Rev. Dr. Michael Battle, part of the writing team for ECUSA’s response to the Windsor Report and a representative to ACC-13, said that *To Set Our Hope on Christ* was not “trying to be academic, or representing all the various sides in a cultural war.” It was rather, he said, an effort to explain the theological and biblical reasoning behind such transitions.

“God’s Spirit,” he said, “often moves in profound ways.”

Also part of the panel was Dr. Esther Mombo, academic dean of St. Paul’s United Theological College and one of the authors of the Windsor Report. “Dr. Mombo is really a voice crying in the wilderness,” Battle said. “She gives insights into how Anglicans, especially in the Global South, do not need to participate in cultural wars that only demean the African community. She points to issues in Africa that really need to be addressed, instead of the issues dangled before them for monetary gain.”

Young people made their voices heard during daily informal sessions a panel discussion entitled “Claiming Elijah’s Mantle.” led by the Rev. Dr. Michael Clarke, rector of St. Mary the Virgin in the British Virgin Islands.

“We are the prophets of our church,” Clarke said. “We are the ones to call young people on their journey.”

“We are growing up in an age of questioning everything and accepting nothing,” said Sadie Goddard

of Barbados, a member of the youth panel. “We need adults to help us understand what it is to be Anglican.”

“We’re asking that you teach us how to get closer to God,” added Randy Callender, another panelist.

The panel “Perspectives on Human Sexuality” generated a lengthy but respectful dialogue. Panelists included Bishop John Holder of Barbados; the Rev. Robyn Franklin Vaughn, chaplain at Howard University; Atu Yalley, seminarian at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the Rev. Olive Baker of the Diocese of Toronto.

“We have been taught that human sexuality is divine,” Holder said.

“Sex needs to be preached in the pulpit and needs to be taught in the seminaries,” said Baker. “We must create a safe place for young people to go to speak about sex.”

“We need to revisit the original sin,” said Yalley. “Why has the church been silent while our children are exposed to overt sex?” He also spoke of sex being used as a weapon in warfare, citing the abuse of women and children in Darfur.

Bible study sessions were held daily. Some of the lessons looked at sexism and classism in the Bible. Workshops dealt with indigenous spirituality, human rights, new democracies, and the black family.

“The feelings of unity, not uniformity, make me hopeful because I was afraid that our differences would be greater than our unity,” said the Rev. Jayne Oasin, social justice officer at the Episcopal Church Center. “I left feeling that we have the ability to face some of the tough issues such as poverty and famine—that they could be addressed even as we continued to debate some of our differences.”

“The conference has changed the work I do for the Episcopal Church because I was able to connect a name to a face and to be aware of how global our community truly is,” said Sonia Omulepu, interfaith education coordinator for the Episcopal Church’s Office of Anglican and Global Relations. “What struck me most profoundly, however, was the fact that we were able to engage in conversation on sensitive issues even though there were disparate points of view. We listened to each other in sisterly and brotherly love in spite of our differences.

“This confirms for me that we carry the Anglican Communion in our hearts and minds, and that we have the ability to unite rather than divide,” she said. “In essence, the Afro-Anglicanism Conference is another instrument of unity.”

Daphne Mack is staff writer for Episcopal News Service.



Politics: the Stewardship of Power

by Carol Cole Flanagan

The Episcopal Women's Caucus has sometimes been accused of being political. We are. And it is a quality I want to embrace without apology!

Aristotle, writing in the fourth century BCE, identified politics as the search for the good life. He understood it to have a moral and philosophical component. According to a more recent definition, politics is who gets what, when, where, why, and how.

In theological terms, this is a matter of stewardship. As Christians we believe that all we have is a gift from God. In Genesis 1:26f. we're told that God gave to humankind dominion over all creation. In so doing, we—each and every one of us—was made a steward of all that God has given us. We can be good stewards. We can be poor stewards. But we cannot say, "Gee, I think I'd rather not." It was a solemn appointment, not a social invitation.

Among those many gifts is the gift of power. The power God bestows upon us enables us to do all that we do, and be all that we are. It enables us to form relationships that nourish and sustain us. It enables us to develop the many skills and talents we possess. It allows us to undertake meaningful work, to serve others, and to advance God's plan for the salvation of the world.

The question, of course, is who gets what, when, where, why, and how. Politics is the means by

which we exercise stewardship of the power God has given us—the means by which we seek to apportion God's resources for God's purposes.

In the parable of the talents, a master going on a journey entrusted his property to three servants (Matthew 25:14-30). You know the tale. Two of them invested the master's resources. The third buried the talent entrusted to him because he was afraid. Upon the master's return, the first two were commended, but the third was condemned.

The power bestowed upon us is a gift. It is intended to be used to the glory of God, the honor of Jesus Christ, the building up of the church, and the welfare of the human community. It was not given to us to be buried.

So when people accuse us of being political, I am encouraged. It tells me we are doing something right. We may mistakes, but let them be mistakes of commission rather than omission. Let us not bury our talents.

As some wag once said, "A mistake is sure and certain evidence that someone tried to do something."

So let us be political. Without apology. Let us be the best stewards we can be of the power God has given us.





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