



President's Report

by Elizabeth Morris Downie

You can't escape it—this is a big election year. A very big one, both nationally and in the Episcopal Church. The stakes are high enough that this introvert is going door-to-door with the MoveOn campaign for voter registration, something I could not have imagined myself doing ten years ago. And in the relative freedom of my very recent retirement, I plan to devote time and energy both to getting out the vote and to speaking out on the issues that threaten our nation.

Our own Episcopal Church elections are more significant than usual this year. It's important for us all as Caucus members to be aware, alert, and involved in the elections of General Convention deputies which are beginning to take place. June 2006 may seem a long way away, but my diocese will elect this October. Are you able to consider running? Can you work with other progressives in your diocese to support a progressive candidate? If you are a delegate to your diocesan convention, are you making an effort to get to know the candidates and their positions? If the Episcopal Women's Caucus is to be a strong and effective voice in the next General Convention, we all need to be working now.

On May 8, Nedi Rivera was elected Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Olympia. This would be cause for great rejoicing in any event, but it is especially welcome news after a series of episcopal elections (five or six? I've lost track.) without any women candidates. Your Board, and most especially Jane Dixon, retired Bishop Suffragan of Washington, did what we could to support Nedi through the walkabout and election. The Board is in the process of developing a support process—and a list of possible candidates—for future episcopal elections.

By the time you read this, our neighbors to the north, the Anglican Church of Canada, will have elected their new Primate at General Synod in May. As I write, Victoria Matthews, the Bishop of Edmonton and the

first woman diocesan in the Canadian Church is said to be one of the two leading candidates for the post. If she is elected, another Old Boys Club will be cracked open!

[*Note:* as Ruach goes to press we have learned that Victoria Matthews has withdrawn her candidacy for health reasons. We rejoice that she was so seriously considered and pray for her complete and speedy recovery.]

As usual, there's good news and bad news. Nedi Rivera is the good news; the bad news is symbolized for me in a Reuters article on April 28, in which Deborah Zabarenka reported on recent deletions and alterations of significant information on a range of women's issues from government web sites. The deleted information covered such fundamental things as health, pay equity, child care, women business owners, and much more.

The political message is clear: we dare not take anything for granted. That's true in the church also, sisters and brothers.

Now for our very own Episcopal Women's Caucus elections: this year we will need to elect at least two new Board members. Our by-laws provide for the election of four of the seven Board members in rotation, and the appointment of the remaining three by members of the Board. Any member of the Caucus is eligible for office. Consider seriously the possibility of serving, and don't be shy about nominating yourself.

Please send names and something about yourself or the person you are nominating to our Business Manager, Bill Fleener by July 31. Our bylaws call for an election by mail, and the ballot will be sent to all members in August. Please feel free to contact any present Board member to find out more about the work, and don't forget to keep recruiting new members, male and female. This Caucus has work to do!

Ruach

a publication of
the Episcopal Women's Caucus
Summer 2004 • Vol.25: No.1

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Friends—

It is with deep regret that we report the resignation of Katie Sherrod as editor of Ruach, a position she has filled with intelligence, dedication and integrity. Her growing professional and family responsibilities, to say nothing of her continuing steadfast advocacy for women in a difficult venue, however, have made it impossible for her to continue.

The good news is that Katie will continue to write her warm essays and her thoughtful, hard-hitting editorials. Two of these appear in this issue—and there will be more to come in the future.

We'll miss you, Katie. May God bless you for all you have done and are doing for justice and equality, in the church and in the wider community.

Visit Our Website

at

<http://www.episcopalwomenscaucus>

or

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



Episcopalians Make Good Showing in Washington March for Womens' Lives

by Matthew Davies and Maureen Shea for ENS

Episcopalians joined more than one million people, representing 100 religious and religiously-affiliated organizations and congregations, to march on Washington, D.C., April 25 in support of women's reproductive rights at home and abroad. The march recorded the largest ever crowd count for women's rights in the nation's capital.

The "March for Women's Lives" was co-sponsored by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), an alliance of national organizations from major faith groups, local affiliates, the national Clergy for Choice Network, Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom, and the Black Church Initiative. According to its mission statement, RCRC supports the constitutional right to abortion and advocates solutions to such problems as the spread of HIV/AIDS, inadequate health care and health insurance, and the "severe reduction" in reproductive health care services. The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Women's Caucus are both members of RCRC.

RCRC's president, the Rev. Katherine Ragsdale, welcomed the gathering with assurances that

the religious community is behind them. "You can't sustain a movement on outrage," she said. "We are here to support the providers, politicians, women and activists, and let them know that we respect them for their work and their commitment." Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest, added that a punk rock concert was held in Washington April 24 to enlist young people in the movement.

Also marching behind the Episcopal Church banner were the Rev. Margaret Rose, director of the Episcopal Church Office of Women's Ministries; Executive Council members Louie Crew and John Vanderstar; long-time women's rights activist and General Convention deputy Marge Christie; and Maureen Shea, director of the Government Relations Office.

Before the march, the RCRC also held a "Prayerfully Pro-Choice Interfaith Worship Service."

In 1994, the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirmed that all human life is sacred from its inception until death and that all abortion is regarded as having a tragic dimension.

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March for Women's Lives

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"While we acknowledge that in this country it is the legal right of every woman to have a medically safe abortion," the resolution stated, "as Christians we believe strongly that if this right is exercised, it should be used only in extreme situations. We emphatically oppose abortion as a means of birth control, family planning, sex selection, or any reason of mere convenience."

"General Convention resolutions have expressed unequivocal opposition to any legislation abridging a woman's right to make an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy, as well as offering the support that may be needed for those making difficult life decisions," Rose said, adding that participating in the march shows that advocacy for women's rights is "essential to our call for justice."

"By publicizing this march and other events through our network, we are able to enlist and inform Episcopalians about important events," explained Mary Getz, director of the Episcopal Public Policy Network.

"This is one of the ways we are continuing to build our grassroots network."

The march came in for criticism from the Institute on Religion and Democracy, which issued a press release calling it a "scandal" and suggesting that "a majority of church members...would be disgusted if they knew that their denominations have joined...in backing this kind of cause." IRD president Diane Knippers, an Episcopalian, said that "the church's proper role in this issue is to offer godly counsel and ministry to persons involved in crisis pregnancies. But in this case some...are adopting the strident arguments of the secular culture."

Other Episcopalians participating in the march included delegations of women and men from California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Virginia.

Matthew Davies is staff writer of Episcopal News Service. Maureen Shea is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations.

The Politics of Numbers

by Barbara Santee

Politicizing of the estimates on the number of people who attended the Women's March in Washington were not unexpected, but I was there and I can tell you what happened. March volunteers met people as they left the buses or entered the mall. They put small stickers on each person that said, "Count Me In" and asked us to give contact info. They were able to get a handle on the actual numbers of people who were there.

Some 7500 volunteers collected this info. They did this because at the last pro-choice march, the park police gave an estimate only half of what the crowd size actually was. As a matter of fact, the Million Man March organizers sued the park police because they drastically underestimated the numbers for that march. After that, the park police stopped doing estimates, so the organizers of the April march decided to do their own count and validate it with signup sheets. Their estimate is 1.15 million.

Always before, the park department would take aerial photos from a helicopter and count bodies per square inch to come up with their estimates. The outer edges of the mall are covered by trees, however, and there were thousands of people under those trees. In addition, many people come late and leave early, or come for a couple of hours and then leave. So making an estimate based on one photo taken at one period of time leaves a lot to be desired.

All I know is that the march last month started at 12 noon at one end of the mall (Washington Monu-

ment), went by the White House, and down a long, wide avenue to the other end of the mall (the Capitol) where the march ended.

Four hours later, marchers, 30 to 40 people abreast, were still marching off the avenue onto the mall. That's a lot of people!!

I remember seeing a film about a "right-to-life" rally at the same location some 10 years ago. The male organizers were on the stage discussing the size of the crowd. They didn't know that one microphone was picking up their voices as they were being filmed. They were talking about what numbers they should announce to the crowd. One of them said that he thought there were 200,000. But Wilkey, the head of the National RTL organization said, "No, I'll announce 400,000." And 400,000 was the number that hit the papers. The counts at these demonstrations has become very political, and the opposition is not above lying about their turnout. The pro-choice organizers of this march didn't want that charge made against them, so they did an actual head count. There was an article in the *Washington Post* the day after the march giving a history of crowd estimates at other Washington demonstrations.

This was the biggest crowd ever to gather in the United States, including the Million Man March, the Million Mother March, the anti-war demos in the '70s, and Martin Luther King's speech.

Barbara Santee is the Moderator of Pro-Choice Oklahoma

Episcopalians Proudly Join in March for Women's Lives

by John Vanderstar

The looks on some of the faces were delightful.

My day began at 8:45 on the morning of April 25 when I walked to the Metro (subway) stop near my home in Arlington, VA, just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. I had not even gotten on the escalator to enter the station when I was stopped by some women who were wearing t-shirts showing that they had come from Vermont for the March for Women's Lives. They asked if they could take my picture! We all cherish the belief that we are attractive, but I suspect that what prompted the request was my raspberry pink t-shirt that said, in large white letters, "This Is What A Feminist Looks Like."

In fact, I was stopped about 20 times during the course of the day by others who wished to photograph this 70-year-old gray-bearded man who was wearing that t-shirt. The faces always expressed delight. I always said "yes."

The reason my day began so early is that I planned to attend the "Prayerfully Pro-Choice Interfaith Worship Service" at 10 on a section of the Mall right near the Capitol. The service was sponsored by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, which was a co-sponsor of the March.

The RCRC seeks to bring the moral power of religious communities to the defense of reproductive choice. The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Women's Caucus are members of the Coalition. I serve as the Caucus representative on the Coalition's Board of Governors; the Reverend Katherine Ragsdale, the Episcopal Church representative, is President of the Coalition. Other members include The Presbyterian Church; the Unitarian Universalist Association; Catholics For a Free Choice; various components of the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, and a number of Jewish organizations from both the Conservative and Reform traditions; the American Humanist Association, the American Ethical Union, and the YWCA.

After the prayer service, we unfurled our flags and banners and stepped off as part of the Coalition segment of the March. In addition to the various church and church-related members, Harvard Divinity School and Union Theological Seminary in New York displayed

their flags. There were also numerous purple signs that contained the Coalition slogan—*Pro-Faith, Pro-Family, Pro-Choice*. We held these high, for the benefit of the many church-goers who are burdened by the popular view that "religion" translates to "anti-choice." There were many delighted faces.

The large Episcopal Church banner produced another set of delightful facial expressions. People would walk near us, see the banner, look somewhat surprised and pleased, and proudly say, "I'm an Episcopalian."

Among those carrying or marching near the banner besides me were the Reverend Margaret Rose, Director of the Office of Women's Ministries at the Church Center in New York; Marge Christie, a long-time activist for women in the Church; Maureen Shea, Director of the Church's Office of Government Relations in Washington; Louie Crew, who is also a Member of Executive Council; and many Episcopalians from (at least) California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts and Nebraska.

As is well known, the size of the event was staggering. Accurate estimates of these things are hard to come by, but I do believe there were at least 750,000 participants and perhaps many more. The original name, the March for Freedom of Choice, was changed to reflect the broad agenda of those who support women's reproductive health, access to family planning, and accurate sex education. The principal organizers were Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Organization for Women (NOW), and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

The agenda of the March for Women's Lives fits well within the mission statement of the Episcopal Women's Caucus, which includes "empowering women and men to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, nation, and church" and also "giving visibility and respect to women's perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation." Those of us who marched on April 25th were proud to give their time and energy to advance these noble goals.

John Vanderstar is a member of the Executive Council and a former EWC board member.

"People would walk near us, see the banner...and proudly say, 'I'm an Episcopalian.'"

‘Most Diverse’ Religious Contingent Meets, Prays and Marches

The largest and most diverse religious contingent ever assembled for a pro-choice march gathered under the banner of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) Sunday, April 25, at the March for Women’s Lives. The first event of the day was an interfaith worship service sponsored by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, at the Capitol Reflecting Pool area.

“Christians, Jews, Unitarian Universalists, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and many other faiths are speaking up in the face of the Religious Right assault on reproductive choice,” said the Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, head of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. “We’re marching in unprecedented numbers for justice and equality—and to debunk the notion that the Radical Right speaks for religion.”

The RCRC Prayerfully Pro-Choice Interfaith Worship Service featured inspirational songs and prayers from more than a dozen traditions.

Participants included Rabbi Sally Priesand, the first woman rabbi; Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, RCRC President, African American Baptist minister; Rev. William G. Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; Ms. Genie Bank, President of the 1-million member Women’s Division of the United Methodist Church; Rev. Loey Powell of the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries; Rev. Debra Haffner of the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing, and Muslim, Buddhist, and Sikh leaders.

More than 70 religious and religiously affiliated groups and churches and synagogues marched. The co-sponsors of the march included the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church USA, General Synod of the United Church of Christ, two agencies of the United Methodist Church, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and official bodies of the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Jewish movements.

Now with Bill Moyers Features Religious Aspect of March for Women’s Lives

Deeply held pro-choice religious beliefs motivated countless numbers of people to take part in the historic March for Women’s Lives, as journalist Bill Moyers reported on *NOW*, his award-winning PBS-TV program.

As Moyers reported, the massive March—more than 1.15 million strong—was much more than a matter of numbers; for many, it was a pilgrimage, an act of faith, and a witness to profound beliefs about faith and conscience. The report features the crowd roaring its approval as Coalition President Rev. Carlton Veazey says, “Most religious people are pro-choice because of their religious beliefs!”

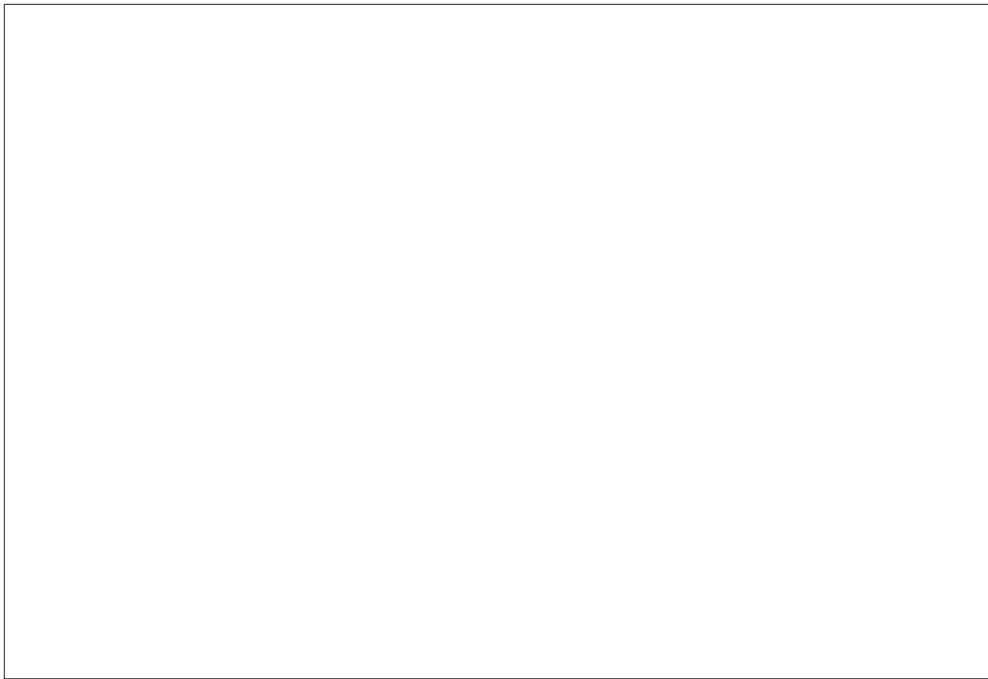
The report shows the colorfully clad marchers—young and old, women and men, carrying banners and placards—and contrasts them with a few men in all-black clerical garb standing on the sidelines. Moyers comments that, even though the Radical Right

seems to vastly outnumber other believers when it comes to views about abortion and reproductive choice, in fact many millions of people of all faiths also read the Bible and come to a vastly different conclusion.

The report shows the Religious Coalition “Prayerfully Pro-Choice” worship service and many of the Coalition member groups that marched, including Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian Universalist, Episcopalian, and United Church of Christ. Moyers comments that what these denominations—which together have more than 20 million members—have in common is a belief that “the state should not force a woman to bring a child into the world against her will.” [RCRC]

For information about purchasing this video, go to http://www.pbs.org/now/thisweek/index_043004 and click on Shop PBS at the top of the site.

“Even though the Radical Right seems to vastly outnumber other believers when it comes to views ...about reproductive choice, in fact many millions of people of all faiths also read the Bible and come to a vastly different conclusion.”



Dream of a World, Speak of a Vision

Remarks Made at the March in Washington

by Katherine H. Ragsdale

Good morning, pro-choice America! I come to remind you that this [pointing to collar] too is the face of pro-choice America. The vast majority of religious Americans are behind you—as we have been for decades—since before Roe. We are pro-choice not in spite of our faith but because of it.

We're pro-choice because we know that the scriptures—and any faith worthy of the name—do not give simple and easy answers to complex and difficult questions. They don't promise to spare us from making tough decisions. They just promise that we won't have to face those choices alone.

We're pro-choice because we know that our faith cannot answer the question of when a fetus becomes a person. We also know that the whole question of fetal personhood is a disingenuous, and often malicious, attempt to distract us from the real issue—which is that the woman is a person. She is a person endowed by God, the U.S. Constitution, and common sense and decency with rights and responsibilities which she must exercise to the best of her ability, using her own best judgment.

And while our various religious traditions may teach various things about when, if, and how we should sacrifice ourselves for others, no one—not partner, nor priest, nor politician—no one gets to decide what is, or

is not, an appropriate sacrifice for someone else to make.

We're pro-choice because we have a vision. We have plenty to march against—plenty to be outraged by:

Violence at our clinics,
Onerous burdens placed on the poorest, youngest, and sickest among us,

The atrocity of outlawing medical procedures and so threatening the lives of women who are already contending with shattered dreams.

No one with a heart and a conscience can fail to be outraged. But outrage burns fast. It is a powerful force but a finite one.

To sustain us we need a vision—a vision that reminds us of the values and dreams that make us who we are and that brought us here in the first place.

I dream of a world where every person has full access to all the health care they require—provided conveniently and compassionately.

I dream of a world where people don't grasp at the ridiculous and faithless notion that there is, or can be, a rule for every occasion and that knowing and enforcing enough rules will save us from the difficult work of making complex ethical decisions.

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Ragsdale Remarks

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I dream of a world that values cooperation over competition, compassion over punishment, respect over control, and the dazzling diversity of creation over conformity.

I dream of a world that not only protects a woman's right to choose—but celebrates it.

And so we march.

But we march also to support you.

You know who you are:

Providers who have to wear Kevlar in order to go to work,

Politicians who put your careers on the line to do the right thing,

Activists who refuse to give up and go back,

And women—oh, the women—you who wrestle with these decisions and make the choices that

you need to make to honor your own futures or to protect your families....

And you do it all while under assault from the abuse heaped upon you by those who think they have the right to decide the course of other people's lives.

And in your heads you know they're wrong, but sometimes, I suspect, your hearts get bruised anyway.

So we're here to tell you—every one of you—how much we respect and honor you for the work you do and the decisions you make.

And so we march with you—a massive, living prayer for that just and safe world that lives already in the heart of God... that shimmers on the horizon of our hope... and from which we will never turn back!

God bless you all—today and always.

ECUSA Executive Council Voices Concerns about Marriage, General Convention 2006

Concerns about the effects of Ohio's new Defense of Marriage Act on plans to hold the next General Convention in Columbus, and a new churchwide conversation on marriage were brought by the National Concerns committee to the Episcopal Church's Executive Council at its meeting in Burlington, Vermont in June.

In response to Ohio's recently enacted Defense of Marriage Act and a proposed amendment to the Ohio State Constitution, which would deny rights and benefits to domestic partners, the council resolved to send a letter of objection to Governor Bob Taft of Ohio, the mayors and directors of the visitor and convention bureaus of Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland, and to the media. General Convention is scheduled to be held at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in 2006.

The letter states the position of the Episcopal Church as expressed by its General Convention, emphasizing that "domestic partner rights are basic human rights."

The council noted that the Act and proposed amendment "go well beyond banning same-sex marriages" and "may prohibit rights for domestic partners being granted by the state and its municipalities, counties, universities, and school districts." The law and amendment may also "prohibit Ohio courts from interpreting and/or enforcing domestic partnership benefits granted by private employers."

Recognizing that the church's current discussion of marriage is often "ill informed and polemical," the council initiated a process that would lead to "a

churchwide national conversation on the subject." Some of the key points for discussion would include the theological basis of marriage; the history of marriage as an institution; economics; relations between the church and the state; the societal purposes of marriage; its characteristics; and the dissolution of marriage.

The council is urging dioceses to hold such conversations on marriage and has asked the Joint Committee on Planning and Arrangements to schedule a "Conversation on Marriage" during the 75th General Convention in 2006. "The ultimate objective," the council explained, "would be to strengthen the institution of marriage on the basis of such a discussion."

The Rev. Fred Vergara, newly appointed missionary for Asia/America ministries, added the comment that, despite opposition to the actions of General Convention among Anglicans in Asia, many also feel that the issue is one for the Episcopal church and not the entire Communion. "It is good," he said, "to perceive the context in which a community practices its ministry."

Archdeacon Helena-Rose Houldcroft of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, an observer from the Anglican Church of Canada, also noted to the council that the Episcopal Church is deeply involved in much more than just a single issue, both locally and in the world. "Here is a church that is divided on homosexuality, but of one mind when dealing with issues of justice," she commented.

Matthew Davies is staff writer for Episcopal News Service



'Male Only Priesthood'

How the Taliban Helped an Anglo-Catholic Understand the Ordination of Women

by the Rev. Bill Fleener

When the Taliban took control of both government and society in Afghanistan a few years ago, they forced a great number of women who were physicians, attorneys, professors and teachers to abandon their professions and stay in their homes. Suddenly these women could not leave their homes unless they were obscured from view by clothing and veils and 'properly' accompanied by father, husband or brother.

I began to realize that I was getting a glimpse of the world the way it was in the time of Jesus and the Early Church. I had known, of course, that Jesus broke the rules of the society of his day by talking with women in public, but I never had been able to imagine the depth of the power of the rules he was breaking.

These images linked in my mind, eventually, with something I had seen on a visit to the Holy Land several years ago. We had toured a restored ancient synagogue and had seen the heavy scrollwork of a screen through which women could observe (barely) the men's prayers and rabbinical discussions but could not take any active part in them.

With the Taliban images in mind, I began to see more clearly how outraged the men in the synagogue were on the day that Jesus healed a crippled woman during the Sabbath liturgy. For Jesus to call the woman out from behind the screen into the area reserved for men was shocking. That he would call her "Daughter of Abraham," a term that implied her equality with circumcised men, was even more shocking. That his gift of healing enabled her to stand straight and tall seemed far more powerfully symbolic than I had previously noticed.

I came upon these thoughts from a solid Anglo-Catholic background. My formation as an Anglo-Catholic began in the Diocese of Dallas before it was split into two dioceses.

I owe much of my formation to three priests who were the 'great Triumvirate' of the high school sessions at the diocesan summer camp: Dudley Reed, Homer Rogers and Richard Hayes. These solid teachers contributed to my formation by such images as 1)

"The Blessed Virgin is the only person who ever gave God anything he didn't already have—a human body," and 2) "God, the angels, and the whole host of heaven held their breath, while they waited for Mary to say yes to the task of bearing the Christ Child."

For the first two decades of my life in the Episcopal Church, it

never occurred to me that there was any thought about ordaining women as priests and bishops.

When I began to hear that ordaining women was being seriously discussed, I had to put the issue into the context of Anglo-Catholic theology and practice...but I began to wonder.

Seeing the world of Jesus and Mary through the Taliban experience helps me to affirm some of the changing I did back then in my beliefs, and some of the reasons why I had come to believe that an Anglo-Catholic could believe that God was calling us to ordain women and to stay within the Catholic tradition at the same time.

At the very core of the Catholic teaching about the Gospel was a story about a woman who made a decision on her own, without permission from or obedience to her father, her brother or her betrothed. I realized that my own mother, 1900 years later, couldn't have done that when she was Mary's age. My mother lived long enough to vote in public elections and to be considered competent to sign a contract for services with her own name, but she died before a woman could have a credit record in her own name.

I realized that for the first 17 years of my ordained life, I had used a marriage service that had

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*"At the very core
of Catholic teaching...
was a woman who
made a decision
on her own."*

Male-Only Priesthoodcontinued from previous page

different wording for the woman's vow. The man's "I plight thee my troth" was a full-fledged vow/contract. The woman's "I give thee my troth" was a word of honor from a person who could not legally complete a contract. This, from a church in which the very source of our faith and of the redemption of the world lay in a woman's binding decision!

No! It wasn't from the church! I realized that the Early Church had let a Taliban-like world set the agenda for the church for all these centuries. Without realizing it, perhaps, the leaders of the Early Church changed the image of Mary from an independent, decision-making woman to a 'properly submissive' woman.

We have all the Bible stories of the "call" of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and other men, but we refer to Mary's experience as the 'Annunciation'—an announcement of the job she had to do. The men could argue, then decide whether or not to accept their call, but Mary could only submit to the announcement? I think not!

Not if we want to continue to celebrate free will as something at the very core of our understanding of the image of God, found in male and female human beings.

As we have learned over the past few years, there were women in leadership positions in the Early Church—perhaps even some who were counted as successors to the apostles. Then how is it that some of the greatest of the 'Church Fathers' John Chrysostom, whose second name was a description of his "golden-

mouthed" preaching, said, "Amongst all the savage beasts none is found so harmful as woman." Thomas Aquinas said, "Woman is an occasional and incomplete being, a misbegotten male. It is unchangeable that woman is destined to live under man's influence and has no authority from her Lord."

Putting all these ideas together, I finally realized that, since women were not considered fully human in the world surrounding the Early Church, the phrase "Male-Only Priesthood," as used in some of the ancient Councils, really meant "human-only priesthood." Men's assumptions excluded women because they were not fully human, not just because of their sex.

As we have begun (and we have only just begun) to realize that women are equal to men in their full humanness, I believe it is time to recognize that kind of equality has been our message from the moment of the Call of Mary (which I propose as a substitute title for the feast we celebrate on March 25). We didn't, or couldn't, hear our own message, but the word was out. It took around 19 hundred years for that message to come back at us from 'the world' in the feminist voices, but those voices were speaking our message.

The ordination of women is not a matter of "letting the world set the agenda for the church" but a matter of recognizing that the world has set our agenda for 1900 years, and it is time to stop that.

The Catholic tradition is a "human-only priesthood." Anglo-Catholics need to lead the way to the fullness of the priesthood toward which God pointed us in the "Call of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

EDS Celebrates the 'Life and Courage' of Bishop Robert DeWitt

On May 15, 2004, the Episcopal Divinity School celebrated the life and courage of the Rt. Rev. Robert L. (Bob) DeWitt, former bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, who died on November 29, 2003.

Known for his outspoken advocacy and action for civil and women's rights, Bishop DeWitt is remembered for his key role in the ordination of the "Philadelphia 11," the first women in the Episcopal Church to be ordained to the priesthood in the United States.

The celebration included many of the women ordained priests by Bishop DeWitt in the "irregular" ordination of 1974 including: Merrill Bitner, Alla Renee Bozarth, Alison Cheek, Emily Hewitt, Carter Heyward, Marie Moorefield, Betty Schiess, Katrina Swanson, and Nancy Wittig along with those ordained "irregularly" in 1975: Lee McGee, Alison Palmer, and Betty Powell. At the 1999 celebration commemorating the ordination of the "Philadelphia 11," referring to the ordinations,

DeWitt had once said: "It is ironic that what happened 25 years ago here at the Advocate was for a time seen more as an issue of three misbehaving bishops than as a breakthrough created by 11 pioneering women. Make no mistake; the event was a creative action of, by, and for women. The bishops were only accessories."

"EDS is honored to host this celebration of the life and courage of Bishop DeWitt," said the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School. "An alumnus of the School, Bishop DeWitt embodied EDS' mission of advancing God's mission of justice, compassion, and reconciliation."

A scholarship fund has been established at EDS in Bishop DeWitt's name; donations in memory of Bishop DeWitt may be sent to: The Bishop Robert L. DeWitt Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Episcopal Divinity School, 99 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Salt and Light

A Report from the Li Tim-Oi Foundation

reviewed by Anne McConney

Salt and Light is a small book, not really a book at all. A pamphlet might describe it better. Twenty pages. You can read it in a few minutes, but it will enter your mind, find a place there, and perhaps change you forever.

Salt and Light was written by Christina Rees, a British woman, as a record of her recent visit to Kenya and Uganda as a representative of the Li Tim-Oi Foundation.

Li Tim-Oi, you'll recall, was the Hong Kong woman ordained in 1944, the first Anglican woman to become a priest; the anniversary of her ordination was accepted into the Episcopal Church calendar at the General Convention in 2003.

After Li Tim-Oi's death in 1992, her sister made the first, founding gift that established a foundation in her name, a foundation dedicated to helping women in Third World countries to receive the education that would enable them to serve as priests, deacons or in various lay capacities. Christina Rees' visit to Africa was undertaken simply to discover how the women who had received grants from the foundation were faring and what more might be done to help them.

The small booklet begins serenely: three women drive across an African veldt dotted with acacia trees, the sky wide and cloudless above them. They are on their way to visit the family of a woman who has just died of AIDS. She had contracted the disease from her HIV-positive husband, who then abandoned her when she became ill.

Two of the women are priests; the third is Christina Rees, author of *Salt and Light*. "This was only one of many encounters," she writes, "that showed me just what these women have to contend with."

Many of Africa's ordained women, she goes on, serve in small and rural parishes and when, as often happens, the parish cannot pay its quota to the diocese, the priest receives no stipend—sometimes for months on end. One of the priests she met survives on gifts of vegetables and fruits from the gardens of her parishio-

ners; another is—somehow—raising six children orphaned by the AIDS virus that has ravaged many parts of Africa.

In many cases, these rural priests have no transportation; one woman told Rees that she often walks up to six hours on the days when she visits parishioners.

The women themselves were quite matter of fact about such difficulties. "It was not the physical hardships that caused them to complain," Rees writes.

"Time and again the women spoke with a sense of joy and gratitude about their ministries." She notes, however, that they were often upset by the way they were treated by their male colleagues "and in some cases by the church," which often refuses them additional training and discourages them from attending conferences and seminars available to the male clergy.

Yet even these difficulties fade before the massive ills of the societies in which they live and work. There are, for example, places

in their world where 65 percent of the population is under the age of 16, many of them orphaned by AIDS and living on the street. Polygamy is common, as is female genital mutilation.

Rees tells of visiting a woman who, with her husband, had built a small library and schoolroom where she is able to teach others to read. "Alongside a colorful poster of the alphabet," she writes, "another poster caught my eye, warning parents not to support practices involving child sacrifice."

When she asked about the poster, a woman pointed to the tall buildings of a nearby small city. "Behind every large building," she said, "there is a child sacrifice." And she added, "The small buildings only need a chicken."

The practice is now illegal, as Rees carefully notes, but still occurs, apparently with some regularity.

When the women were asked to list the major issues in their parishes, the lists were long—poverty,

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"I returned to England in awe of their strength...excited and humbled to see the huge difference they are making in the lives of the people."

Salt and Light

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illiteracy, discrimination against women, domestic violence, child abuse, incest, tribalism and ethnic clashes—the shadow of Rwanda still haunts much of Africa.

Though the women were steadfast in their commitments, they were often wistful about their lack of social lives: professional women in Africa have few peers and are often resented and disparaged by their male colleagues. When Christina Rees organized a get-together for recipients of Li Tim-Oi grants in Kenya and then again in Uganda, the response was immediate and grateful. The women quickly dubbed themselves “daughters of Li Tim-Oi” and at once began to make plans for future meetings.

And they began even more quickly to generate ideas for cooperation and support, not only among themselves but among other African women working for change.

Salt and Light, brief though it is, has wisely made room for numerous pictures. Women’s faces look out at us from every page. They smile, shy and perhaps a bit wary. Even the young seem a bit tired. Some have

the beginnings of the thousand mile stare of warriors too long in the trenches.

Look again, however, look carefully at these faces, and you will begin to sense the steel behind the shyness and the will that forges hope—that hallmark of our humanity—even when hope seems beyond reason.

“I returned to England,” writes Rees, “in awe of their strength...excited and humbled to see the huge difference they are making in the lives of the people.”

Copies of Salt and Light may be obtained, or donations made to the Li Tim-Oi Foundation, by contacting the Rev. Canon Christopher Hall at achall@globalnet.co.uk or writing to

The Knowle
Deddington
Banbury OX15 OTB UK

The website of the Li Tim-Oi Foundation may be visited at litim-oi.org

A Message from the EWC Business Manager

Beloved friends, my love for the Caucus brings me to the decision that I must soon retire from the post of Business Manager. At age 73, even though I thank God that I am in excellent health, the reality is that I could become incapacitated or die sometime soon. I don’t want to leave the Caucus without someone who can make some sense out of all the records—membership, mailing lists, financial data, archives—that are in my computer, my basement and my head.

We need to find someone who has some time, energy, and computer skills. The new Business Manager doesn’t have to do things just the way I have done them, of course, but if we find someone with some skills in database work, spreadsheets, and something like Quicken, there could be an easy transition for the computer data.

I have used Microsoft Access, and have automated a lot of the procedures, especially the ones that get us the best possible Postal Service discounts and address changes, but any database manager program can do the tasks that are essential for the mailings.

Recording donations and membership gifts and sending acknowledgments, keeping fi-

nancial records and submitting to annual audits, working with the Ruach Editor/Production Manager, sending out fundraiser and membership-renewal mailings, responding to requests for information, communicating with (and aiding the communication among) the Board members, some liaison with our Web Editor—these are the primary tasks.

It would be reasonable, and possible, for the work to be split between two persons.

The Board has insisted that I take some pay for the work I do. I have tried to keep that under the amount EWC used to pay a commercial printing/ mailing house.

I would be happy to spend several days, if necessary, with the person(s) who are taking over this work, explaining my system or helping to change over to a different system.

I believe good stewardship demands that I turn this work over to other people at least by the 2006 General Convention. Interested persons can contact me at the addresses inside the front cover of this issue of Ruach.

Bill Fleener
EWC Business Manager



Love One Another as I Have Loved You

a sermon for Mothers' Day

by Elizabeth Kaeton

This Sunday presents a provocative juxtaposition of events—and a challenge to any preacher who dares to claim the authority and responsibility of the pulpit.

Let's begin with Scripture. The lectionary appointment of the Gospel lesson is a regression of sorts on this fifth Sunday in Easter—bringing us back to that upper room on Maundy Thursday. It is immediately after Judas has angrily left the evening Passover meal with Jesus and his fellow apostles, which as Jesus already knows, will forever be memorialized as “The Last Supper.” In the face of this great betrayal, Jesus gives his disciples a most amazing directive—a *maundatum*, from whence we get Maundy Thursday. He says, “*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.*”

Today is also Mother's Day—and these lovely gospel words seem especially fitting to frame the day. “*Love one another.*” How many of us have grown up hearing those words from the lips of our mothers? How many of us have said those exact words, or a variation of those words, as we pull angry children apart in an intense playground or sibling squabble? And, for our troubles, we'll be treated to dinner, given flowers and a lovely card, perhaps a lavishly expensive present, and feel self-satisfied with our roles as peacemakers and love bearers in the human family.

To leave it there would be the safe thing for any preacher. Or, perhaps, just say a few more elegant words that sound distinctly theological, give out the carnation at the end of the service, and feel self-satisfied that no one will leave here feeling the anger and betrayal that Judas felt of Jesus. You may recall that it was Judas who felt betrayed by Jesus on the public and political implications of His religious movement.

How can I ignore, from this pulpit, on this particular Mothers' Day, the disturbing and distressing images with which we have been bombarded all week? How can I gloss over the fact that it was a woman—indeed, a pregnant woman!—who is seen with a cigarette dangling from her mouth, engaging in disgusting and disturbing acts which have been designed for the humiliation and debasement of the Iraqi prisoners in her charge? How can I not offer at least a commentary on the effects of the war in Iraq in the face of these words of Jesus, which come today by no accident: “*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another*” ?

Interestingly enough, Mother's Day began as a holiday that commemorated women's public activism, not as a celebration of a mother's devotion to her family. According to historian, Ruth Rosen, the story begins in 1858 when a community activist named Anna Reeves Jarvis organized Mothers' Works Days in West Virginia. Her immediate goal was to improve sanitation in Appalachian communities. During the Civil War, Jarvis pried women from their families to care for the wounded on both sides. Afterward she convened meetings to persuade men to lay aside their hostilities.

In 1872, Julia Ward Howe, author of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” proposed an annual Mother's Day for Peace. Committed to abolishing war, Howe wrote: “We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.” She called for “a general congress of women without limit of nationality (to) be appointed...to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international ques-

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“To the [19th Century] activists,
the connection between motherhood and
the fight for social and economic justice
seemed self-evident.”

Mothers' Day Sermon

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tions, the great and general interests of peace." For the next 30 years, Americans celebrated Mothers' Day for Peace on June 2.

Many middle-class women in the 19th century believed that they bore a special responsibility as actual or potential mothers to care for the casualties of society and to turn America into a more civilized nation. They played a leading role in the abolitionist movement to end slavery. In the following decades, they launched successful campaigns against lynching and consumer fraud and battled for improved working conditions for women and protection for children, public health services and social welfare assistance to the poor. To the activists, the connection between motherhood and the fight for social and economic justice seemed self-evident.

In 1913, Congress declared the second Sunday in May to be Mother's Day. By then, the growing consumer culture had successfully redefined women as consumers for their families. Politicians and businessmen eagerly embraced the idea of celebrating the private sacrifices made by individual mothers. As the *Florists' Review*, the industry's trade journal, bluntly put it, "This was a holiday that could be exploited."

The new advertising industry quickly taught Americans how to honor their mothers—by buying flowers. Outraged by florists who were selling carnations for the exorbitant price of \$1 apiece, Anna Jarvis' daughter undertook a campaign against those who "would undermine Mother's Day with their greed." But she fought a losing battle. Within a few years, the *Florists' Review* triumphantly announced that it was "Miss Jarvis who was completely squelched." Since then, Mother's Day has ballooned into a billion-dollar industry—not limited to flowers, but including greeting cards, phone calls, and expensive gifts.

Today, we find ourselves in the midst of a provocative juxtaposition of events: Today is Mother's Day, which we commemorate in the midst of disturbing and distressing images of women at war even as the words of Jesus echo for us to "*love one another as I have loved you.*"

What is a Christian to do? Is the connection between motherhood and the fight for social and economic justice still self-evident for us in our day, as it was for women in the 19th century? Do we bear a special responsibility as actual or potential mothers to care for the casualties of society and to turn America

into a more civilized nation? Or is that an antiquated, outdated and now rather quaint piece of history which modern social capitalism has forever obliterated?

I will leave you to ponder these things today, not to disturb your peace or sour your celebration, but to inspire your hearts and stir your souls. For this, ultimately, is the awesome task and responsibility of the preacher. The sacred trust given to me is not to tell you how to live your life by following these rules: one, two three, but by challenging you to live an examined life. To embrace the formidable task of taking the gospel seriously and finding application of its principles in your own lives of faith. I remind you of the words of Jesus, and leave you with the words of Julia Ward Howe, in her 1870 call to institute an annual Mothers Day for Peace. Here, in part, are her original words:

"Arise, then, women of this day! Arise all women who have hearts, whether our baptism be that of water or of fears! Say firmly, "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience."

"We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says "Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice . . . Blood does not wipe out dishonor nor violence indicate possession."

"As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God."

Jesus said to his disciples then, as he says to us today, whether our baptism be of water or of fear: "*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

Amen. Blessings,

"Today is Mothers' Day, which we commemorate in the midst of disturbing and distressing images...."

Episcopal Justice Ministries Make Plans for 'Big Tent' Meeting in October

Even so large a dream as justice has its practical side; there must be meetings, there must be plans, there must be—most important of all—the brisk alchemy of dedicated minds and searching spirits coming together in cooperation and community.

Such a meeting will take place in October, when the various justice ministries of the Episcopal Church gather in Atlanta to assess the past and dream of the future. The Consultation, a number of justice organizations under the Episcopal aegis, will hold a “Big Tent” meeting Thursday, October 7 through Saturday October 9. The meeting will be hosted by All Saints Episcopal Church in Atlanta.

The gathering will center on a Festival Eucha-

rist, to be celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire, with a sermon preached by Winnie Varghese, Columbia University chaplain. A final night banquet will honor the “Giants of Justice” who have walked so many trails before us.

Filling every cranny of time between will be celebrations (both the Episcopal Women’s Caucus and Integrity are marking 30-year milestones), workshops, discussions and, of course, time simply to talk of problems, dreams and strategies, time to be refreshed and recharged.

The “Big Tent” gathering will end on Saturday with morning sessions and a final “send-us-out” session by a speaker still to be named.

Members of the Consultation include:

Integrity <http://www.integrityusa.org>

Episcopal Urban Caucus <http://www.episcopalurbancaucus.org>

Episcopal Peace Fellowship <http://www.episcopalpeacefellowship.org>

Episcopal Women’s Caucus <http://www.ewc-ecusa.org>

Union of Black Episcopalians <http://www.afroanglican.org/ube>

Episcopal Ecological Network <http://www.open.igc.org/trp>

Episcopal Church Publishing Company <http://www.thewitness.org>

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/peace-justice/enej/>

Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates

Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission <http://www.associatedparishes.org/>

Province 8 Native American Ministries Network

U.S. Senate Passes Hate Crimes Legislation

by John Johnson

In a surprise 65-33 vote, the U.S. Senate passed legislation in June that would extend the Federal hate crimes law to include hate crimes based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, and disability, according to the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations. The law currently covers race, religion, and national origin.

Senator John W. Warner of Virginia, an Episcopalian who is chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, voted in favor of passage.

While violent crime continues to decrease nationally, the FBI Uniform Crime Reports show hate crimes increasing.

“Passage of this legislation will help protect the lives of people in our communities,” said the Rt. Rev. Neff Powell, Bishop of Southwestern Virginia. “I’ve been concerned about hate crimes in our country since the death of Matthew Shepard and have had a height-

ened awareness in the wake of violence in my own community of Roanoke, Virginia.”

The bill has been the subject of a number of Episcopal Public Policy Network alerts since passage of General Convention resolutions in 2000, also in the wake of the tragic death of Wyoming youth Matthew Shepard. In May of 2002, more than 200 Episcopal clergy and 21 bishops sent a letter urging members of Congress to pass hate crimes legislation.

According to the Office of Government Relations, the next hurdle for proponents of the legislation is to ensure that it survives a conference between the House and Senate later this year. Swift bi-partisan passage of the bill may have occurred because the Senate GOP leadership is planning a vote on the controversial Federal Marriage Amendment sometime in July.

John Johnson is a domestic policy analyst in the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations.

Newsbriefs

Evangelical Parishes Threaten Church of England with 'Financial Ruin'

Evangelical Anglican churches are threatening the Church of England with financial ruin in protest at the appointment of Canon Jeffrey John, a homosexual, as the Dean of St Alban's Cathedral.

Several parish churches in the Diocese of St Alban's are planning to cap their financial quota contributions after Dr John's elevation.

Their move could leave the diocese several thousand pounds out of pocket, as it relies on the "parish share" to provide more than £7 million annually to pay for stipends, pensions and some administrative costs.

Each parish is given a "quota" that it is expected to pay to the diocese every year, depending on the number of its parishioners. If it raises more money than its allotted quota, this too goes to the diocese—

and it is this contribution that the evangelical churches are threatening to cap.

Parishes in the diocese of St Alban's currently donate about £30,000 a year each on average. The Rev. Charles Dobbie, the vicar of Holy Trinity Church in Lyonsdown, New Barnet, north London, said that he was "shocked and grieved" by Dr John's appointment and felt that he could not "in conscience" pay the full annual quota "if it's going to be used in the furtherance of this kind of agenda."

"We will certainly be considering every option, including the review of payment of our quota."

Although he declined to discuss the percentages involved, he said that his actions would reflect the "shock, sadness and incredulity" of his congregation.

Roman Catholics Denied Communion in Chicago, Blocked at the Altar in Minnesota

Parishioners who wore rainbow-colored sashes to Mass in support of gays and lesbians were denied communion in Chicago, while laymen in Minnesota tried to prevent gay Roman Catholics from receiving the sacrament.

Priests at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago refused to give the Eucharist to about 10 people wearing the sashes at Sunday Mass. One priest shook each person's hand; another made the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

"The priest told me you cannot receive communion if you're wearing a sash, as per the Cardinal's direction," said James Luxton, a Chicago member of the Rainbow Sash Movement, an advocacy organization for Catholic gay rights.

An internal memo from Chicago Cardinal Francis George that became public last week instructed

priests not to give communion to people wearing the sashes, which the group's members wear every year for Pentecost. The memo says the sashes are a symbol of opposition to the church's doctrine on homosexuality and exploit the communion ritual.

In St. Paul, people wearing the rainbow-colored sashes were given communion Sunday despite protests from some parishioners who knelt in front of the altar blocking their way.

Brian McNeill, organizer of the Rainbow Sash Alliance of the Twin Cities, said the local group has worn the rainbow sashes every Pentecost since 2001, but the group had never experienced such a confrontation. A Vatican doctrinal decree directed at politicians last year, stated that a "well-formed" conscience forbids support for laws contradicting "fundamental morality."

Los Angeles Bishop Blesses Same-Sex Union

Los Angeles bishop J. Jon Bruno has recently blessed the union of Malcolm Boyd and his partner of 20 years, author and counselor Mark Thompson. Bruno's blessing is thought to be the first time a sitting bishop has

presided at such a ceremony since General Convention 2003, meeting in August in Minneapolis, acknowledged such blessings to be a part of the life of the Episcopal church.

Visit Our Website

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

House Leadership Forced to Pull Arctic Bill

Proponents of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge were said to be stunned today as the House Leadership was forced to pull legislation authorizing oil and gas exploration in the Arctic, according to the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations in Washington. Debate was about to begin on H.R. 4529: Arctic Coastal Plain Domestic Energy Security and Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Reform Act (which includes the coastal plain of Alaska) when the House abruptly recessed. Fearing the vote would fail, leadership aides indicated that it was unlikely the House would have time to bring it back to the floor for a week or more.

The Episcopal Church strongly opposes drilling in the Arctic Coastal Plain, land sacred to the Gwich'in, a native people of Alaska. Reliant for centuries on what is now the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Gwich'in are ninety percent Episcopalian—a special obligation for the Church in advocating on behalf of their sacred spaces. The Arctic was the subject of an Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) alert to encourage Episcopalians to write, fax or call their House

members of Congress before the vote. The U.S. Senate has defeated legislation to open the Arctic for oil and gas exploration twice in the past two years.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold and Mark L. MacDonald, Bishop of Alaska had issued a joint statement June 15 regarding the pending vote.

Drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge would ruin a pristine wildlife sanctuary for less oil than the U.S. uses in six months. According to the Department of Energy, drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will do nothing to lower gas prices; potential oil from the Arctic would take an estimated 10 years to reach the market.

In a separate effort led by Theodore Roosevelt, IV, grandson of the former President, and Americans for Alaska, a number of Episcopalians joined a broad coalition of Americans who support protection of the Arctic Refuge. Griswold and MacDonald were among the signers that included Bishop Robert R. Shahan of Arizona and President and Dean of Episcopal Divinity School, Bishop Steven Charleston. [ENS]

AAC Vows No Retreat from Principles What, Never? Well, Hardly Ever

“The issues have been with us for some significant time,” said the Rev. David Anderson, president of the American Anglican Council, speaking to a gathering of approximately 200 persons in the Diocese of Michigan. He compared the AAC to “an army in the field [which] is worrisome for some bishops but great hope for many parishes and parishioners.”

“There will be no retreat from the call for realignment,” Anderson said. He added that “We were very well organized for Minneapolis but we did not win. We lost on the two key issues,” referring to the consent of the election of Robinson and Resolution C-051. He explained that it is too expensive and the prospects for success too unlikely to mount an effort to reverse the actions of the Episcopal Church.

“To go back and rework those same processes,” he said, would not be productive. “It is more important to build the infrastructure and the connections to the international communion where our theological home is found.”

Yet, even as Anderson appealed for Midwest-

ern support of the orthodox movement that he insisted would abide no retreat from realignment, he described how that same movement avoided a dire conundrum at its very founding last October in Plano, Texas..

Following the critical General Convention last August, the AAC held a meeting in that city to begin laying the foundation for a realigned church, but Anderson admitted at the Michigan conference that the whole movement “almost came undone” over the question of women in leadership roles. He explained that the two sides—those opposing ordination of women and others in favor of it—were at a standoff.

“We have to assure both those who do ordain and those who don’t, there’s a place for them in the emerging church. How are we going to do that? It isn’t going to be easy,” Anderson said. “At Plano, [we experienced] a wonderful coming together in a live and let live [attitude]. But both sides must give the other side the space to exist.

“We will need God’s grace to see if it works out. But I believe it can,” he said. [Herb Gunn for ENS]

Gay Pride in Fort Worth

a joyful meditation

by Katie Sherrod

Today my grandson and I walked into the main lobby of the downtown Fort Worth Public Library and I found yet another reason to love my city.

The library routinely uses its expansive lobby to display new books and books related to items in the news and to events such as Juneteenth or the anniversary of D-Day. There smack in the middle of the lobby—the first thing every patron sees as he or she enters—is a large display of books clearly labeled “Gay Pride.”

All sorts of books about lesbians and gays sit on two-sided shelves about ten feet wide and at least six feet high. Two books on same-sex marriage are prominently featured, as are books on just about every other issue of concern to lesbians and gays.

Behind the “Gay Pride” display is a timely and sensitive display of books about Ronald Reagan and behind that is a display on tornados—a subject of much interest to Texans as we endure yet another tornado season. And behind those are the usual displays of new fiction, new nonfiction, new mysteries, new children’s books, etc.

My grandson and I stopped to look at the Gay Pride display. He, being two-years-old, pointed to the bright cover on one of the books on same-sex marriage and asked his favorite question: “What’s dat?”

I said, “That’s a book about two men or two women loving each other and wanting to spend their life together.”

“Like mommy and daddy?” he asked.

“Yes, like mommy and daddy,” I said.

“OK. What’s dat?” he said, moving on to the next book on the shelf. So he and I went around the lowest shelf of the Gay Pride display and talked about all the books. As we did so, I became aware that there was a teen-aged boy standing near us, listening to what I saying to my grandson.

I straightened up and smiled at the young man. He dropped his eyes and quickly walked away. We moved on to the rack of children’s books, and as my grandson decided on a book, I watched the flow of people around the various displays. The Gay Pride dis-

play drew what was, to me, a surprisingly large number of people who stopped, read some of the titles, and moved on. A few picked up books to check out.

The longer I watched, the more I realized how jaundiced my view of my city had become, how warped it has grown by my proximity to the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.

I watched Anglo men, women, and children, Hispanic men, women, and children and African American men, women, and children stop to examine the display, and only once did I even see a negative headshake and a grim-faced remark. Everyone else was either clearly pleased, as I had been, or simply interested. Granted, I was watching this for only about a 15-minute window on a Monday afternoon. But it was the after-school, after-work busy time in the library, so I was watching a pretty big sample.

When we were leaving, I told the librarian who checked out our books that I really appreciated the Gay Pride display.

She thanked me, and said, “You know, more people have said that about that display than about any thing we’ve had up in ages. It’s been a pleasant surprise. We weren’t sure what to expect.”

As we slowly left the library—my grandson asking, “What’s dat?” every two feet—I saw the teen-aged boy who had been watching us. I gave him a smile and a wave. After a second, he smiled back.

I’ve been thinking a lot about him, wondering if he’s trying to come to terms with his own sexuality, or if he’s just trying to make sense of a subject that seems to make way too many adults stupid and mean.

God knows I would have loved to see a display like that when I was teenager. It would have helped me make sense of things the adults around me – especially the religious authorities—kept secret and hidden, buried deeply in closets of “sin” and “respectability.”

But I have been helped today, seeing that display and people’s reaction to it. It has reminded me once again that the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth is *not* the city of Fort Worth.

Thank God.

“It is always people you meet everywhere. They may look different or be dressed differently or may have a different education or position. But they are all the same. They are all people to be loved. They are all hungry for love.”

MOTHER TERESA

30 Ways to Celebrate 30 Years of Ordained Women's Ministry

The Executive Council Committee on the Status of Women met in May at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C., a venue chosen so that the Committee could meet with Maureen Shea and her staff at the Office of Government Relations. It is our belief that women and men need to take an interest in women's issues from a legislative perspective both because legislation directly impacts the quality of women's lives in this country and abroad, and also because it helps us to live out our baptismal vows.

"We found our time with Maureen and her staff extremely helpful to us," the committee reported. "It gave us a sense of being connected to a great cloud of witnesses across this country. We would urge all Episcopalians to become part of the Episcopal Public Policy Network if they are not already involved." They noted that the office can be called at 800-228-0515 for further information.

Other issues and concerns addressed at the meeting included becoming better informed about the views of young people young women and men regarding women's leadership; liturgical language that is both inclusive and expansive; noting that women are not being elected to the office of diocesan bishop and that most dioceses still have thick glass ceilings when it comes to positions of so called cardinal rectorships; concern that the current divisiveness in the Episcopal Church will create more dioceses where women's ordained ministry is not affirmed.

The committee also developed a list of "Thirty Ways to Celebrate Thirty Years of Ordained Women's Ministries" to be used joyfully between July 29, 2004 and September 16, 2006.

More information may be obtained by contacting convenor Barbara Schlachter at b.schlachter@mchsi.com.

• *The 30 Ways* •

1. Hold a forum on ordination for the girls in your congregation.
2. Send a note to a woman priest, deacon, or bishop—or all three—who has influenced your life, and a note of affirmation to a woman in seminary.
3. Put flowers on the altar one Sunday in thanksgiving for the ministries of ordained women.
4. Learn the names of the eleven women ordained in Philadelphia and the four ordained in Washington D.C. before the General Convention of 1976.
5. Send a donation to an organization that supports women's ministries or concerns and memo it in thanksgiving for women's ordained ministries.
6. Explain to people in your congregation why God is not a boy's name.
7. Work to make your congregation's language more inclusive and expansive.
8. Use the hymn Blessed Is She.
9. Buy a copy of the new hymnal "Voices Found" for your church. All the words or tunes are written by women.
10. Have women as the subject for Vacation Bible School.
11. Buy or make a stole that celebrates women's ministry for your priest to wear.
12. Work to understand and dismantle patriarchy, being aware of how its oppression affects all minorities, not just women.
13. If you don't have an ordained woman on your staff or in your congregation, invite one to preach and celebrate.
14. Send a note to a non-ordaining male Bishop and tell him how important women's ordained ministry is.
15. Find out about the history of women's ordination in your diocese.
16. Join the Episcopal Women's Caucus, the Episcopal Public Policy Network, and the Episcopal Women's History Project.
17. Celebrate our Lady of Guadalupe Day on December 12.
18. Read the Gospel of Mary by Karen King.

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30 Ways to Celebrate 30 Years

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19. Find a way to celebrate your part in the priesthood of all believers.
20. If you are an ordained woman, make intentional efforts to reach out to laywomen as peers; if you are a lay woman, reach out to an ordained woman as a colleague in ministry.
21. Thank one of the people who made the ordination of women a possibility in your diocese.
22. Celebrate Mothers Day as a Day for Peace, the way the founder, Julia Ward Howe, intended it.
23. Write a poem, prayer or hymn in thanksgiving for women's ministries.
24. Have a feast in your church and invite a woman who has been ordained twenty years or more to come and share her story.
25. Plant a tree in your church yard in honor of women's ordained ministries.
26. Add one or more mothers' names to the list of the fathers in Prayer C.
27. Decorate gingerbread cookies like women priests and serve at coffee hour.
28. Ask your vestry to find a way to celebrate the 30th anniversary in your congregation.
29. Visit the Office of Women's Ministries Web Site at www.episcopalchurch.org/women/.
30. Celebrate the Feast of Mary Magdalene on July 22 and pass out red eggs. (Learn about this story if you do not know it.) Continue the octave in celebration of all women's ministries and end on the Feast Day of Mary and Martha, the anniversary of the Philadelphia II in 1974.

The Her-Story
dates to remember

July 29, 1974

Eleven women were ordained irregularly
in Philadelphia

September 7, 1975

Four more were ordained in Washington DC

September 16, 1976

General Convention approves
the ordination of women

Can You Help?

a request from a colleague

Attention Women Priests—I am doing research on the uses of the feminine in ordained ministry. I am interested in having conversations with my colleagues on topics such as: the psychological differences between the ministry of men and women priests; the psychic experience of women in the administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, pastoral theology, administration of churches; the perceived experience of men and women to whom we minister as congregations and as individuals; uses (and abuses?) of the maternal and/or erotic feminine in ministry; experiences in transference and countertransference.

Now that women have been ordained in our church for decades, I think it is interesting to examine exactly what it is we can and do bring to ministry that is different from the masculine Father model that most of us grew up with. Note: my interest is NOT the justice

issues involved in women's ordination, or how far we still have to go in achieving parity in the church, but rather the contributions that we actually make as iconic representatives of the feminine in the life of the church.

I am going to be teaching a pastoral theology course at Union Seminary in the fall and thought this would be a subject to look at for a week with the students. I was surprised to find after consultation with academic colleagues in the field that there has been a surprising dearth of work done on this from the academic perspective.

If you are interested in talking with me about this, please respond to me at mcnishrev@aol.com. I am thinking I might do an article or maybe eventually a book on this.

My best to all.

The Rev. Jill McNish, Ph.D.

Via Media Groups Meet, Form National Alliance in Atlanta

by Jan Nunley for ENS

Representatives of 12 independent Episcopal groups opposed to efforts to “realign” the Episcopal Church along more conservative lines met together for the first time at a retreat in Atlanta March 25-27, and emerged as an alliance called Via Media_USA.

They represent laypeople and clergy from the grassroots organizations who say they hold diverse opinions about controversial issues in the church, but desire to remain in communion with both the Episcopal Church and the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Via Media groups include Albany Via Media and Concerned Episcopalians of the St. Lawrence Deanery (both in the Diocese of Albany); Episcopal Voices of Central Florida; The Gathering (Dallas); Fort Worth Via Media; Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh (PEP); Via Media Rio Grande (VMRG); E-Way (San Diego); Remain Episcopal (San Joaquin); Episcopal Forum of South Carolina (EFSC); Southwest Florida Via Media Episcopalians; and Springfield Via Media (SVM).

Leaders of the groups said they did not discuss the controversy over the consecration of an openly gay bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire or the issue of same-sex blessings during their meeting, and preferred not to reveal their individual stances.

“We have acknowledged different perspectives,” said the Rev. Michael Russell, rector of All Souls’ Episcopal Church in San Diego and a member of Episcopal Way of San Diego, at the group’s closing news conference. “We haven’t criticized or judged any of those perspectives, and that’s the kind of mindset we try to promote here and in our local communities.”

“We believe that our position represents the vast majority of the church, even if it is not perceived that way in our particular dioceses,” said Dr. Joan Gundersen of Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh. Organizers said all of the groups would consult with their own members in coming weeks about how to move forward as a group.

Most of the groups are located in dioceses that have joined or are considering membership in the newly formed Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, which is seeking to provide “alternative episcopal oversight” for dissenting congregations in mod-

erate-to-liberal dioceses. Via Media leaders said they think the Network’s ultimate goal is to replace the Episcopal Church entirely within the Anglican Communion, and that, if not opposed, its actions may result in schism.

“Fear is not the word, but we pray that will not happen,” said Gundersen.

Members of some of the groups reported that the level of anger and even “hatred” in their dioceses has increased in recent months. Some told of clergy and bishops refusing to be seen with those who did not agree with them on joining the Network, and of a rec-

tor who refused to wear vestments made by a woman who opposed his position. “It’s Donatism in a modern form,” said Dixie Hutchinson of The Gathering in Dallas.

Others, such as the Central Florida group, said

their bishop has worked for tolerance of all opinions while standing firm on remaining within the Episcopal Church. “Bishop Howe has had lots of pressure,” said John Townsend. “He has pressure from churches that want to leave, but he has stood very firmly about property and he is not going to let it go away.”

Another member, Donna Bott, said a moderate clergyman told her he didn’t feel at all intimidated by Bishop Howe, but did feel pressured by other priests, particularly on the diocesan email list for clergy. In fact, several leaders cited the Internet as a two-edged sword: a wonderful organizing tool but, at the same time, a frequent source of misinformation, confusion and ill feeling.

At the group’s closing Eucharist, Atlanta Bishop Neil Alexander quoted missionary bishop Charles Henry Brent, saying, “Unity is not a luxury, but a ne-

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[*Editor’s Note:* Donatism is a heresy that developed in the 4th century in North Africa, occasioned by clergy who handed over their copies of scripture during the Diocletian persecutions. The Donatists considered this an act of apostasy and declared that sacraments celebrated by such persons were not valid. Donatism was challenged by a number of church fathers and was rejected by the church in 411 CE, though pockets of the belief remained until the 7th century.]

Via Media Alliance

cessity. We must work for the unity of the church, 'not at all costs, but at all risks.'"

"My sense of the House of Bishops meeting is that the Episcopal Church is alive and well and vigorous and committed to the mission and gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let us have no doubt about that," said Alexander. "However, it was interesting to listen to person after person talk about the fact that, in their judgment, the church is broken.

"Friends, I don't believe the church is broken...Virtually all of those who want the church to be different absented themselves from the table, and I think that Bishop Brent would have said that, no matter what, you've got to take the risk of what it means to be in unity and fellowship—not in agreement, but in reconciliation."

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Two observers from the Episcopal Church's Executive Council attended the meeting, and Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold sent a letter of greeting to the group. "These are challenging days for our church, and yet they contain within themselves an invitation to be the many membered body of the risen Christ in a deeper and fuller way," Griswold wrote. "Rooted and grounded in common prayer, our divergent points of view find their place of meeting and reconciliation in word and sacrament and a life shared in the service of the Gospel.

"The diverse center is the overwhelming reality of our church and its voice is urgently needed, both within the church and in our fractured and polarized world."

Via Media Groups Have Strong Appeal to Centrists

by Deborah Zacher for ENS

When representatives of 12 grassroots groups of Episcopalians gathered in Atlanta recently under the umbrella of Via Media USA, they were following a 400-year-old precedent in Anglican life.

"The term 'Via Media' comes from the 16th-century Anglican theologian Richard Hooker, whose work established Anglicanism as a 'middle way' between continental Protestantism and Catholicism," said the Rev. Edward Copland of Southwest Florida Via Media Episcopalians, the newest Via Media group. "Via Media groups in the Episcopal Church provide a balance to the American Anglican Council and Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, whose Web sites and publications call for criticism of the Episcopal Church and its presiding bishop."

The first of what became the Episcopal Via Media groups, known as The Gathering, started about ten years ago in the Diocese of Dallas. "We began as a support group for clergy and laity concerned about the leanings of diocesan leadership," said convener Dixie Hutchinson. "We were more or less successful through the years in electing some moderates to diocesan positions, but now find ourselves largely outnumbered." They plan to make an effort to field some moderate candidates for diocesan Executive Council, Standing Committee and General Convention deputies at their annual convention in October.

Responding to an email request for comment on The Gathering, Bishop James Stanton of Dallas stated: "No one has contacted me. I have no knowledge of such a group. I have met with persons on the many sides of the issues facing our Church. I am wondering what 'middle way' this purported group has found between them?"

"The E-Way Via Media organization in San Diego grew out of a group that has met under various names, such as First Tuesday or Clergy 2000," said the Rev. Andrew Green. The current group has been meeting since 1999, when their goal was to send a unified deputation to General Convention in Denver.

"The hope was to elect a deputation that could unequivocally support the ministry of women in all orders. We were successful," said Green. "Since GC 2003 we have felt the need to represent a position that is focused on working out our differences within the Episcopal Church. We believe that this represents a significant majority of our diocese.

"As we move toward the election of the fourth Bishop of San Diego, we hope to offer candidates who can respond to the call of the whole diocese. We, like the bulk of our diocese, seek a bishop who will bring us together for Christ's mission. We do not minimize the pain that members of the diocese and the church at large are currently experiencing and we sincerely desire to walk through this together."

The Pittsburgh Via Media group has gone through several incarnations. "In August 2002, deputies to Pittsburgh's Diocesan Convention received notice of 'Resolution One', which would be voted on at the November 2002 convention," said Dr. Joan R. Gundersen, vice president of policy and planning for Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh (PEP). "This measure called into question a number of changes in the church since 1975, and positioned the diocese as opposed to any acknowledgment of homosexual relations. A group organized to oppose this resolution.

While it failed to block Resolution One, the group was successful in raising interest in forming a voice for

liberals and moderates in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Conversation resulted in the 2003 formation of Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh (PEP).

“By May 2003, steps had been taken to draft a mission statement, and the group began plans to present an alternative voice at General Convention. Following General Convention, membership grew rapidly as Bishop Duncan called a special convention to discuss six resolutions in opposition to the actions of General Convention and as he emerged as the leader of a schismatic movement,” Gundersen said.

Gundersen added that she believes Bishop Robert Duncan does not know quite how to respond. “He has made no overt act to completely silence us or punish us,” she said, though she feels he has exerted political pressure in diocesan meetings and has circumvented search processes in liberal parishes.

“Since the diocesan council, standing committee, and the trustees all have been sued in equity by an individual and Calvary Parish, asking that the courts order diocesan leadership to follow the canons, any action that might be seen as directly separating himself from ECUSA or alienating property now has legal ramifications,” she said.

“After General Convention 2003, Bishop Terence Kelshaw and others in the Diocese of the Rio Grande began inviting parishes to take the name ‘Episcopal’ off their signs and letterheads,” said the Rev. Brian Taylor of Via Media Rio Grande. “They assured members of the diocese that no money would be going to ECUSA, and that if parishes wanted to leave ECUSA, the diocese would help them do so. The bishop and other diocesan leaders also were active participants in the American Anglican Council meetings. People of our diocese were very polarized, and there was talk about a possible split with ECUSA. In this atmosphere many of us came together.

“We were committed to remaining under the canonical authority of and in communion with all in ECUSA, retaining diocesan and parish property, and respecting the different voices within our diocese. We had two large public meetings—over 340 attended—where many expressed relief, saying that this was the first opportunity in many years to talk in a respectful dialogue.”

But the respect wasn’t necessarily returned, said Taylor. “A February letter from our Standing Committee, mailed to all members of our diocese, included a letter that Via Media had sent to all bishops and standing committees of the Episcopal Church asking them to withhold consent for the election of a new bishop in our diocese, and citing the reasons for this request,” he said.

“The Standing Committee included their letter of response which they sent to all bishops and standing committees. In this letter they emphasize that they are duly following canonical process, have no intention of

splitting from the Episcopal Church, and defend their decision to not meet with us as something that would have contributed to a politicization of the process of discernment.

“In regards to Via Media, they claim that ‘misunderstanding about this process’ has led us to ‘attempt to block the election.’ Further, they called our attempts to subvert the due process of the election ‘reprehensible, destructive of the life of the diocese.’”

Bishop Terence Kelshaw responded to an email request for comment on Via Media Rio Grande, but said he preferred to absent himself from the discussion.

Fort Worth Via Media started in November 2003. “Bishop Jack Leo Iker was the issue that led to the formation of the group,” said spokesperson Barbi Click. “Our goal is to disengage ourselves from the stronghold of the NACDP (Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes).” Fort Worth Via Media’s Web site states that it is “an organization of ordained and lay Episcopalians in the Diocese of Fort Worth who are going to remain within the Episcopal Church of the United States of America.”

“After General Convention Bishop [John-David] Schofield called an emergency meeting with eight deputies to report to members of the diocese,” said the Rev. Rick Matters, co-chair of Remain Episcopal, San Joaquin. “That report included statements/opinions from the bishop and others that the Spirit of the Lord has left the Episcopal Church in those people who voted in favor of the consecration of Gene Robinson. At that time, very much in line with the AAC, they were talking about a parallel or separate province and using the language of divorce. One person asked whether the diocese needed to use the word ‘Episcopal’ in its name.

“Nancy Key, co-chair of Remain Episcopal, and I spoke publicly in favor of the convention votes. We met afterwards and realized we were a minority but recognized there were probably others who thought like us,” Matters recalled. “At our October diocesan convention the language of divorce had disappeared but there was a lot of condemnation, not from the bishop but from other people in convention, including the keynote speaker and others.”

In fact, Matters said, the bishop has discouraged such behavior. “At the diocesan convention, Schofield spoke about his own experience as an evangelical in a more liberal diocese prior to his election and consecration and asserted that he wanted everyone to have a voice in this diocese. So we have been accepted and tolerated, and I think he is honoring his stated openness.

“There are passionate feelings, of course, strong feelings, and there was a lot of condemning during our diocesan convention which was unpleasant, but it was not from the bishop; it was from others.”

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Via Media Groups Unite

Episcopal Forum of South Carolina was instituted following a special diocesan convention held in October 2003. "EFSC was organized on December 20, 2003 by five founding Episcopalians," said spokesperson Lynn Pagliaro. "EFSC's goal is 'to insure the continued existence of an Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina that is in full participation with ECUSA, its constitution, canons and leadership.' EFSC states that it cannot support the Diocese's intention to join the Network because, by its own current self-definition, the Network is a divisive force within ECUSA.

"If Network membership is sustained by the Diocesan convention, members of EFSC intend to exclude themselves from Network participation 'because the Network represents a particular advocacy to the exclusion of others held by a majority of ECUSA dioceses, parishes, clergy and members.'"

Contacted by email, Bishop Edward Salmon of South Carolina reported that he and Bishop Suffragan William Skilton met with five members of EFSC in February. "Their stated purpose is unity, their actual purpose is to support the consecration of Gene Robinson and same sex blessings," said Salmon. "We have those in the diocese who do support it and they have always been supported by me, even though we don't agree."

Salmon said that the diocese does not have a policy to deny anyone appropriate news coverage and that the group's events could certainly be listed in diocesan publications. He said he knows who the members of EFSC are, since "I have been bishop here for 15 years."

Salmon also was adamant about his commitment to staying in the Episcopal Church, saying "my family has been in it for generations. The fact is that the Via Media group is not nearly as diverse as the diocese. In fact it has almost a singular point of view," he added. "I am impressed that Via Media groups are found only in conservative dioceses and nowhere else. Dioceses like Pennsylvania and others who have persecuted orthodox Episcopalians have no such groups."

According to Albany Via Media's Web site, the organization was founded when Bishop Daniel Herzog, a board member of the American Anglican Council, and Bishop David Bena, a member and leader in the AAC, spoke of realignment and impaired communion with the Episcopal Church USA following General Convention. Albany Via Media...was created to keep the Diocese of Albany in communion with the Episcopal Church."

"The Diocese of Albany called a special convention on September 20 to vote on five resolutions responding to General Convention 2003," said Andrew Grimmke of Concerned Episcopalians of the St.

Lawrence Deanery (CESLD), another Via Media group in the Diocese of Albany. "Four of the founding members of CESLD were in attendance and found the proceedings unfair and one-sided." The mission of CESLD is to gain support for the Diocese of Albany to remain in full communion with all churches in the Episcopal Church, USA and resist efforts for realignment.

Episcopal Voices of Central Florida was formed in December 2003. "We were concerned about statements being made by leaders in the diocese and by resolutions adopted at a special September convening of our diocesan convention that pointed toward a potential break with ECUSA," said spokesperson Leslie Poole. "Although we are of differing opinions about sexuality issues within the national church, Episcopal Voices represents the voice of Episcopalians in Central Florida who do not want a break with ECUSA and the Anglican Communion. We are striving for unity, despite differences of opinion, and are committed to remaining in communion with ECUSA and the Anglican Communion."

"Bishop John Howe and our diocesan leadership have not opposed Episcopal Voices," said Poole. "However, there have been a number of untruths about Episcopal Voices spread throughout the area by others."

Springfield Via Media (SVM) was formed in January, 2004. Betsy Rogers, media director for the group, stated that SVM has three overall purposes: "to keep the Diocese of Springfield within ECUSA; to open the channels of communication and disseminate balanced information in the diocese; and to refocus energies on the mission and ministry of Christ to which we are all called."

"The members of Springfield Via Media are confident that they represent the majority of laity and clergy within the Diocese of Springfield," said Chuck Evans, president of Springfield Via Media. "We believe that the voice of the laity has been suppressed and that only by organizing can we regain our democratic voice and be effective in thwarting the drive to move the diocese into the AAC and the Network."

Bishop Peter Beckwith did not respond to an email request for comment.

Southwest Florida Via Media Episcopalians, formed in mid-March, 2004, is the newest Via Media group. "Concerned clergy began meeting after our October diocesan convention when Bishop [John] Lipscomb introduced the idea of withholding funds from our giving to ECUSA," said the Rev. Edward M. Copland, convener of the Southwest Florida group. "We had another convention and achieved some compromise, but there was no clear leadership support for ECUSA. This concerned many of us. In December

the Diocese of Southwest Florida was erroneously named as part of the Network, and our bishop acknowledged he had been one of the authors of the Network's 'theological statements.' The concerned clergy decided to form Southwest Florida Via Media Episcopalians."

Lipscomb of Southwest Florida said he had learned most of what he knows about the development of the Via Media organization in his diocese from the media. "One presbyter who is a founding member contacted me. I have not seen a roster of members and do not know who gave their assent to the formation of a so-called Via Media organization in this diocese.

"It is unclear what the real agenda of the Via Media organization might be," Lipscomb went on. "I am not sure that the current group calling itself Via Media represents the Anglican concept of a middle way as expressed in classical Anglican theology and prac-

tice. I am also unclear how this organization understands Holy Scriptures and the role of the wider communion of faith. I believe the globalization of the Church requires us to look beyond our borders when we take actions that depart from the teachings of our Communion."

He said he has not been invited to meet with Southwest Florida Via Media Episcopalians, but is ready to do so when they request such a meeting.

Bishops Howe (Central Florida), Iker (Fort Worth), Duncan (Pittsburgh), Schofield (San Joaquin), Beckwith (Springfield), and Herzog and Bena (Albany) did not respond to email requests for comment on the Episcopal Via Media groups in their dioceses.

As of March 23, 2004, the dioceses of Central Florida, Fort Worth, Pittsburgh, Rio Grande, San Joaquin, South Carolina and Springfield had voted to join the Network of Anglican Parishes and Dioceses.

ALBANY VIA MEDIA (AVM)

<http://www.albanyviamedia.org/>

The Rev. John Sorensen, Co-President
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CONCERNED EPISCOPALIANS OF
ST. LAWRENCE DEANERY (CESLD)

<http://www.cesld.org/>

Andrew Grimmke mail@cesld.org

E-WAY, SAN DIEGO

The Rev. Andrew Green

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EPISCOPAL FORUM OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

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Lynn Pagliaro, EFSC Board Member
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EPISCOPAL VOICES OF CENTRAL
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FORT WORTH VIA MEDIA

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BURGH (PEP)

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SPRINGFIELD VIA MEDIA

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Diane Butler tierradiane@msn.com

The Rev. Richard Murphy, Media Contact

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The Rev. Brian Taylor (briant@all-angels.com)

A Statement from the Board of Trustees of Episcopal Divinity School

issued May 20, 2004

On May 19-20, 2004, we, the members of the Board of Trustees of Episcopal Divinity School, met during an historic moment for the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Only two days before our meeting, the right of same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses had become legal. Hundreds of people were responding to this unique opportunity and were already in the process of seeking the blessings of matrimony. For those of us within the Episcopal Church, however, there was a serious issue of obedience to the canons which bind us into community. The Diocese of Massachusetts had asked its clergy to refrain from performing such marriages in keeping with the national canons of the church. Thus, we were in the midst of a time of both intense celebration and of equally intense controversy. Like all Episcopalians, we were in the tension between matters of conscience and questions of community. In short, we were in a time of need for reconciliation.

Our first response was one of deep prayer and deep listening. We invited men and women from our faculty, students, staff, and alumni/ae to join us for dialogue and discernment. We heard the voices of our Gay and Lesbian brothers and sisters for whom this is a profoundly personal concern. We heard from those who supported a strict adherence to the canonical interpretation on marriage and from those who counseled direct action to allow our clergy to perform same-sex marriage. We heard the thoughtful opinions of ethical, theological, and ecclesiastical positions that comprise the parameters of justice on this issue. We prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in making our shared response.

In solidarity with all those whose aspirations for full equality before the law have for so long been denied, in support of the Church to which we all proudly belong, and in the spirit of the mission of our school as a reconciling community, here is what we believe will engage a process of reconciliation in the days to come:

1. We endorse the statement of our President and Dean, the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, as published in his remarks to the "Blessings on the Eve of History" Interfaith Celebration delivered at Christ Church, Cambridge, on May 16, 2004, as accurately expressing the sentiments of this Board in regard to the issue of marriage.

2. We respect the authority of the Bishops of the Diocese of Massachusetts to ask that their clergy refrain from performing same-sex marriages

at this time and request that EDS facilities be used consistent with that authority.

3. We respect the dignity of Gay and Lesbian Episcopalians who will consequently be denied the benefit of marriage services at EDS, and therefore join the Ordinary of the Chapel in announcing that St. John's Chapel will not be available for opposite-sex, Episcopal marriages until further notice.

4. We recognize and will honor other Christian traditions that do permit same-sex marriages.

5. We pledge our support to the EDS faculty in immediately undertaking the task of preparing a strategy for actively supporting a change to the Canons of the Episcopal Church to either permit the marriage of same sex couples or to remove the Episcopal Church from the position of being agents of the state in performing any marriages.

6. We pledge our support to the EDS community in developing a specific educational resource to engage people of faith in overcoming the fear of same sex marriage by helping them to understand the moral, theological and social dimensions of this issue of human rights.

7. We invite the Diocese of Massachusetts to join us in an intentional dialogue to consider options for justice in support of GLBT persons.

8. We reserve for ourselves the right to review progress on each of these steps at our next and subsequent meetings and to determine if further actions may need to be undertaken to both accelerate the process of reconciliation and/or to express solidarity with the GLBT community.

In conclusion, we know that our decisions will not please everyone. We accept that reality as a prerequisite to any meaningful effort at reconciliation. We offer this statement not as our last word on the subject, but rather as an invitation to all persons of faith to join us in actively pursuing justice while maintaining community. Knowing how difficult that challenge is, we invoke the blessings of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, to help us as we pray together:

O Jesus Christ, you have called those of us who are near and those of us who are far on the question of holy matrimony to come to the healing center of your love. For the sake of that love, give us the gifts of your justice, your compassion and your reconciliation as we work together to build your faithful community. For it is in you that we trust and in your holy name that we pray. Amen.



Apples and Spaghetti

an editorial

by Katie Sherrod

One of the favorite conservative arguments against developing a liturgy for blessing same-sex unions is the old “slippery slope” argument.

It goes like this: “Oh sure, it starts out optional but then it will be forced down our throats, just like the ordination of women.”

The problem with this argument is that it’s not even comparing apples to oranges. It’s more like comparing apples to spaghetti. One is canonical, the other liturgical.

The ordination of women involved a canonical change. Unlike resolutions, canons are binding. The only reason there was ever any confusion about the canon on ordination was that the House of Bishops took unilateral action at the 1977 Port St. Lucie bishops’ meeting and passed the infamous so-called “conscience clause.” This was after the 1976 Minneapolis General Convention at which the canon on ordination was amended to make it “equally applicable” to women and men. This “gentlemen’s agreement”—because then all the bishops were men—was never adopted by the full General Convention.

But it did serve to give opponents of the ordination of women a veritable fog machine with which to fuzz up the issue. It was to clarify that the canon on ordination was binding, not permissive, that another amendment was passed at General Convention in Philadelphia.

And even so, since Philadelphia, not one thing has changed for the three bishops who still refuse to ordain or license women in their dioceses, so obviously, despite their cries of persecution, they aren’t being coerced on that issue.

The issue of blessing same-sex unions is a liturgical issue, not canonical. The resolution asks for authorization of an optional liturgy for blessing of committed relationships other than marriage for inclusion in the Book of Occasional Services.

In Denver in 2000, General Convention overwhelmingly recognized that committed relationships other than marriage exist in the church and that they can and should be, as stated in Resolution D039, “characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God.”

Since we acknowledge these relationships exist, and we expect them to meet these standards to the glory of God, why deny those in such relationships a public rite to celebrate that reality and to support them as they strive always to be faithful to God and to each other?

A priest seeking to pastorally support a couple seeking such a rite would be able to find it. Those who choose not to use it will never even have to look at it, just as now there are liturgies in the Book of Occasional Services that priests simply never have occasion to use. But if they find they have a need, for instance, to do a public service of healing, or to commission a lay ministry, or prepare a vigil on the eve of baptism, the liturgy for doing so is there for their use, in common with other priests who have had similar needs.

For a people of common prayer, making an optional liturgy for the blessing of committed relationships other than marriage in the Book of Occasional Services available to those who choose to use it as a pastoral tool makes common sense.



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