



## Perspective

# Staying Together Not New for Us

By R. William Franklin  
Dean, Berkeley Divinity School at Yale

The greatness of Anglicanism is that at times of polarity, whether that be division between Rome and Geneva in the England of the 16th century or between monarchy and democracy in the American Colonies of the 18th century, or between Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics in the 19th-century United States, or between Scripture and the Saeculum today, Anglicans have articulated theological and practical models of Christianity that seek to keep in tension two ultimate polarities: the Catholic structure and authority of a historic faith, and Christian liberty.

In the Episcopal Church particularly, since the 18th century and the creation of the General Convention, we have sought to hold together a tension in which the primary authority of Scripture could be recognized, but always as that has been interpreted within the historical teaching and the public practice of the ongoing Church.

Some things in Scripture have had authority for us and some things have not, and in our United States experience, that determination has been made through reasonable dialogue within the community of faith. Our first great Presiding Bishop, William White of Pennsylvania, defined that community of faith for us at the end of the 18th century as the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, whose political structures bring bishops, priests and laity into a grand convocation where the future parameters of the Christian life are determined. White believed that within the dialogue of the General Convention things thought to be mutually exclusive actually could become mutually illuminating.

White was confident that reasonable dialogue be-

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## The Sexual Resolution

"Do you know what a compromise is?" Atticus asked.

"Bending the law?"

"No, an agreement reached by mutual concessions."

—*To Kill A Mockingbird*

Today the Episcopal Church has the opportunity to reach a compromise on the issue of human sexuality.

The House of Deputies will consider a resolution crafted by the Committee on The Church and Human Sexuality (Special Committee) which is a classic "agreement reached by mutual concessions." It deserves passage, with modification.

We applaud the fact that among the diverse committee members there was consensus—unanimity, even!—on the first seven resolves. The overall resolution, without the eighth and final resolve, could be a genuine gift both to the wider Anglican Communion and to other denominations. It acknowledges, descriptively but not proscriptively, that there are couples who live in a variety of relationships (homosexual, elderly with pension/tax ramifications) that are "life-long committed" but are not marriages. Given that it articulates and sets a high standard for those relationships, it provides a real tool to parishes seeking to provide better pastoral care to such couples.

The eighth resolve is well-intentioned, but by starting the ball rolling for officially sanctioning same-sex unions through the provision of rites within the Book of Occasional Services, it puts the cart of liturgy before the horse of theology. We propose that the eighth resolve be replaced with language directing the Executive Council to monitor ongoing conversation in the dioceses, and to report back to the 2003 General Convention, so this difficult but fruitful conversation can continue.



*Convention veterans expected these folks, but the vitriolic message reduced some deputies to tears. As several people learned, there is no dialogue here. Take our advice: walk on. And head straight to the House of Deputies, where the opportunity to dialogue on human sexuality is scheduled for today. See what people are saying about the compromise resolution on page 3.*

## Watch out for ...

Another hot topic coming to Deputies, probably today, is A045a on monitoring the implementation of the ordination of women in San Joaquin, Fort Worth and Quincy. The amended resolution presents the most constructive approach offered so far on this topic.

**H**earing schedule for Tuesday, July 11. Sites and subjects reflect information posted by the Secretariat of the General Convention as of 7 p.m. yesterday. For more information on meeting room assignments, call the Convention staff at 303/228-8520.

- **Canons**, Westin, Horace Tabor, 7:30 a.m.: Committee deliberation only.
- **Committee on the Church and Human Sexuality**, Marriott, Mattie Silks, 7:30 a.m.: Committee deliberation only. *\*Note room change*
- **Ministry**, Westin, Molly Brown, 7:30 a.m.: Open hearing, D099
- **National and International Concerns**, Marriott, Salon B, 7:30 a.m.: Open hearing, B050, D061, D063, D074, D076, D087
- **Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music**, Executive Tower, Symphony Third Floor, 7:30 a.m.: Open hearing, A068, B017, B034, B038, B039, D048, D062
- **Social and Urban Affairs**, Executive Tower, Brahms, 7:30 a.m.: Open hearing, B035, B037, C044, D052; 1:30 p.m., Committee deliberation only
- **Stewardship & Development**, Westin, Lake, 7:30 a.m.: Open hearing, C005

## Restating Her Remarks

Thank you for your very helpful daily newsletter. I am afraid that your reporter ("Yes Convention, There Is Another Way," July 8) misunderstood my remarks in testimony before Special Committee 25.

The resolution on which I was testifying (B008) would have authorized a pastoral teaching on the "sin of heterosexism as a systemic form of injustice." I simply pointed out that the only legal economic, social *system* of heterosexism that I could identify was marriage. Our society does indeed offer special protections of and support to marriage. So, identifying systemic heterosexism as a sin was, I argued, "a frontal assault on marriage."

My comment on "cultural suicide" was aimed not at same-sex unions. I was quoting the prestigious 1995 report on "Marriage in America," which chronicles the collapse of marriage over the last 40 years. Clearly, much of the erosion of marriage and family life in American society is the misuse of sexuality by heterosexuals (promiscuity, adultery, divorce, pornography, premarital experimentation, etc.). However, I do believe that the movement to extend moral legitimization to sexual relations between persons of the same sex is integral to the 40-year sexual revolution. It is this revolution that has caused much, much more harm than benefit in our society.

**Diane Knippers**

Alternate from Virginia

Institute for Religion and Democracy

## A Clarification on Soulforce

Because I have so enjoyed the coverage Center Aisle has provided on issues and events of Convention, I wanted to correct some misinformation provided in the July 8, 2000, article, "There is Another Way." Soulforce is not "rigid" or "fundamentalist," nor is it "a disdainful claim of 'I'm right you're wrong.'" Furthermore, there is a useful and important place for outside activism. Soulforce reminds those of us who already know that God loves us that too many of God's children, especially God's gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered children, are dying both physically and spiritually because they do not know that God loves them.

Far from saying, "I'm right and you're wrong," the Soulforce demonstration was a reminder that while our conversations with others are valuable and important, there is a wider context. The wider context is our call to proclaim the good news of God's love beyond our walls.

**Kristin K. Rasciner**

St. Luke's, Denver  
Convention Volunteer

## The People Respond

Join us in the walk down the center aisle by writing us at Suite 322, Holtze Hotel, 818 Seventeenth St., Denver (just drop it by the front desk and they'll get it to us, or give it to any member of the Diocese of Virginia deputation). Or you can send your letter to [centeraisle@thediocese.net](mailto:centeraisle@thediocese.net). As space permits, we will publish your letters and commentary. Please try to limit your letters to 150 words. Your letters may be edited for length and clarity. Please be sure to sign your correspondence and let us know how we can contact you.

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## The Compromise Resolution

Convention will consider compromise resolution D039 on human sexuality today. Center Aisle endorses resolves one through seven but not eight. Here are three other views on the proposal.

### The Rev. Ed Bacon, rector, All Saints, Pasadena, and one of the founders of Beyond Inclusion:

*"I'm delighted with the resolution and see it as an invitation to the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops to open the windows of the Church and let the fresh breath of the Holy Spirit blow through it. [On the last resolve, concerning new rites to bless same-sex unions], I would be deeply disappointed if it doesn't go through. The rest of the resolution is a healthy step forward, not a long stride forward as the Holy Spirit is calling us to make in the year 2000."*

### The Rev. Susan Russell, from Los Angeles, Voice of Integrity spokeswoman:

*"This resolution is not an 'anything-goes' resolution. It sets a high standard of Christian relationship that is mutually applicable to all people in relationships. It is a model not only to the Church but also to the culture."*

### The Rt. Rev. John Howe, bishop of Central Florida, member of the Special Committee:

*"I think it's a positive contribution in the midst of what remains a very complicated debate. I don't think there is anything like consensus on the development of rites and [passage of resolve eight] would constitute rejection of ... the rest of the Anglican Communion. I think the first seven [resolves] reflect very careful listening to the witnesses at the hearings and suggests standards for relationships that make it very clear this Church is not in the business of endorsing promiscuous behavior or any sexual relationship that demeans persons."*

## Two for ECW President

Today the Episcopal Church Women will elect a new president. Center Aisle tracked down the candidates and asked them what gifts they would bring to the office of president of the Episcopal Church Women. Here's what they had to say.

### Cynthia S. Bartol, Virginia

*"I bring a love of our Lord and the feeling that women have many gifts to be shared with the entire Church and I would like the opportunity to promote those gifts."*



### Pamela G. Stewart, Long Island

*"I bring a great love for the Episcopal Church Women and a tremendous enthusiasm for my Church and the ministry of the ECW."*

## No Stipend

**W**e're all for exploring ways to make General Convention and the Church's governing boards more open to people in the pews. It made sense to take a fresh look at everything from the length of Convention to term limits for key officers. But we draw the line on the proposed stipend for president of the House of Deputies, approved yesterday by the Structure Committee.

Yes, the position of president is a monumental drain on the finances and talents of any individual. But the answer is not to professionalize the Church's volunteers. The Deputies, including their president, are General Convention's direct link to the laity in our dioceses and parishes. Adding another paid position to the Church bureaucracy would do nothing to further that goal.

## We Endorse ...

**Y**esterday we presented a slate of candidates for election to the Executive Council, a slate we believe reflects the unity and diversity of the Church. As an example of what we mean by that, we profiled two of the candidates, Louie Crew of Newark and James Simons of Pittsburgh. If you missed that issue, you can get it online at [www.thediocese.net](http://www.thediocese.net) under General Convention.

Today, we present again that slate, as well as additional endorsements for election as trustees of the General Theological Seminary.

Today, the House of Deputies will hold both elections. Center Aisle endorses these slates of candidates, who are committed to maintaining the unity of the church while honoring our diversity as well.

### Executive Council

*Laity*  
(Deputies elect, Bishops confirm)  
Six to be elected for six-year terms

Martha Bedell Alexander  
Louie Crew  
Theodore Mollegen Jr.  
Russell V. Palmore Jr.  
\* Sarah Harte  
D. Rebecca Snow  
\*nominated from the floor

*Priests/Deacons*  
(Deputies elect, Bishops confirm)

One to be elected for three-year, unexpired term:  
Philip M. Duncan II  
Two to be elected for six-year terms:  
William D. Nix Jr.  
James B. Simons

### Trustees of the General Theological Seminary

(Deputies elect)  
*Laity*  
Two to be elected for six-year terms  
Marjorie Christie  
Robert Wright

*Priests/Deacons*  
Two to be elected for six-year terms  
Mark Dunham  
Frederick Williams

## What Denver thinks of Episcopalians

With 10,000 Episcopalians roaming the Mile High City, it's hard to find someone on the street not wearing a nametag. Everywhere you go, there's another collar. So, what do Denverites think of us? Center Aisle set out to ask that very question. Here's what we found out.

*"They are really fun, very polite, cool people with a good sense of humor. This is actually a group we would want back."* –Hotel clerk

*"Even when they are really tired, they aren't cranky."* – Monica, hotel clerk

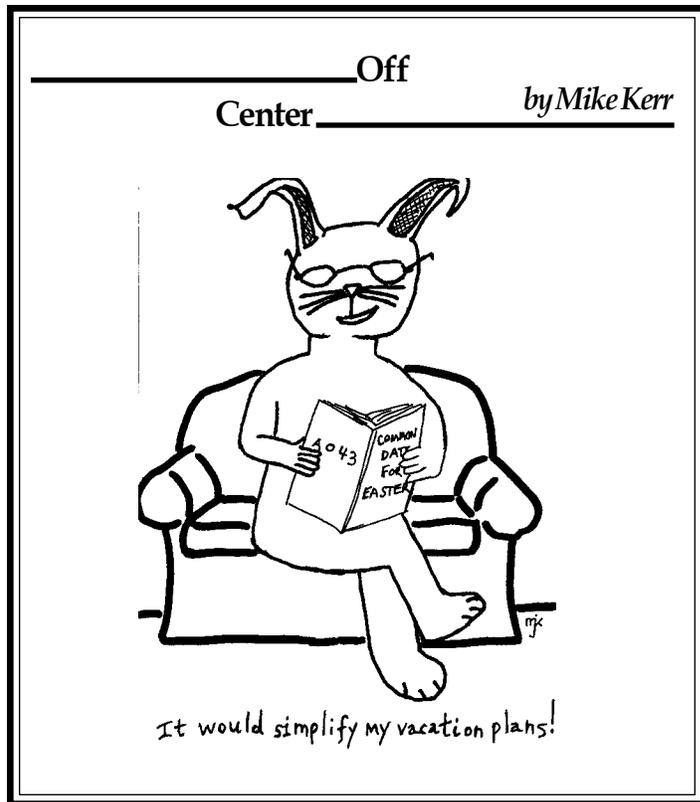
*"They don't tip very well."* –Paula, Starbucks

*"Seem to me to be kind of traditional."* –Susan, Starbucks

*"By far the heaviest religious drinkers I have ever seen."* –Hotel concierge

*"High maintenance, very needy and sometimes not satisfiable."* –Hotel clerk

*"They are very friendly and hopeful for business. Come Jamba with us!"* –Clerk, Jamba Juice



## Perspective *continued from front*

tween the bishops and the elected representatives of the Church would produce the authentic road to the future for Anglicanism on this continent: It was a road of balance—neither authoritarianism nor uncontrolled liberty, neither the darkness of a rigid biblical literalism, not the emptiness of secular rationalism.

White's 18th century vision of a church of moderation is scriptural and, I believe, worthy once again as our model for the 21st century. In the fourth chapter of the letter to the Ephesians, we find a similar conception of Christian moderation that seems particularly fitting for this time in the life of our Church. In this chapter, Paul begins by emphasizing the Church's unity as being grounded in the Spirit and in baptism—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (vv. 5-6). Paul immediately shifts, however, to the diversity of the Church and of the vocations within it. The purpose of these vocations, Paul indicates, is in "building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (v. 13).

There are two types of unity in this text—the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" described as an immediate characteristic of the community at the start of the passage, and the "unity of the faith and of the knowledge

of the Son of God," presented as an ultimate eschatological reality at the end of the passage. The unity of the Spirit and of baptism should already be manifest in a "bond of peace" within the community. But how is this second unity, the "unity of faith and knowledge" reached?

Paul suggests it is only through the community's diversity that its members attain spiritual maturity and grow into the fullness of the body of Christ. The measure of authenticity of a Christian community is not uniformity of understanding. Rather, it is unity in the Spirit and in baptism that knits the body together until, through life together, a common maturity ultimately emerges out of that diversity.

This Pauline understanding of the body of Christ strikes me as particularly consonant with Anglicanism and with White's founding vision of the General Convention. It says that our faith is incomplete unless it is nurtured in relation to those who have different views from our own. At the same time, we share a deep unity in the Spirit—having been reconciled in Christ—that finds expression in a common life to which our baptism calls us. Each diverse member of the church possesses a gift that informs and enriches the whole.

The strength of the Episcopal Church historically has been to keep these diverse expressions of the Gospel together under one roof. The mission of the Episcopal Church for the future is also to keep diverse expressions of the Gospel together under one roof, and it is the duty of this General Convention to preserve, protect and defend this diversity for the next triennium.