

THE BISHOP'S ADDRESS

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Clear to Our Sources

¹²“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 12:12,13

“They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my fountains are in thee.” Psalm 87:7

For the last few three nights, as we have been making our way around the Diocese with our Convention guest, the Most Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane, the Chinyakare Music and Dance group performed a Zimbabwean dance, a welcoming dance, using jugs of water balanced on the heads of vigorously dancing women. The precious water almost all stayed within the jugs, which were then reverently set on the floor. Then a young man made a mirroring dance that culminated with his gratefully drinking from one of the jugs.

When we think of baptism, in water and the spirit, I think we most often envision the water rite, a washing and immersion of the baptizand. The New Testament points us beyond the water rite of immersion that signaled repentance, to a deeper, greater aspect of baptism, baptism in the Spirit, that was as transforming as fire.

A stranger drinking precious water offered in hospitality, and becoming by so doing no longer a stranger but one known and accepted – this seems to me to express what St. Paul means by the Body of Christ having all drunk of the same Spirit. Thus, we find a corollary to the baptismal image of immersion in the drinking of water. One, the immersion, is for repentance; the other, sharing water, signals transformation of life.

The transformation of Baptism is the movement from an illusory life of isolation and independence to a clarity about our existence in mutuality with one another and with all that is other. Our beautiful individuality is preserved, even enhanced, by our consciousness of our connection to the great web of creation that is our individuality's source, and the fountain of God that causes all creation to be.

The Episcopal Diocese of California exists within the world of the Bay Area, and as with every faith community we are in the world but, we pray, not of the world. Because the extreme individualism of our culture has yielded the rewards of creativity and

inventiveness, we see a cultural feedback loop, reinforcement of the very trait, individualism, identified as the source of creativity.

It is a fiction, though, that I accomplish anything apart from a great web of creation, to which I contribute and from which I draw my life. Drinking the shared water of the Spirit signifies the process of becoming clear to the sources of our lives, first to the many who participate in life with us, and ultimately to the fountain of all life and creativity, and indeed of individualism properly understood – God.

Last year I talked at Diocesan Convention about our entering the dance of the Trinity. Returning to this theme, and extending it, I am reminded of the quotation from Psalm 87, *“They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my fountains are in thee.”*

As Christians we have, through Baptism, been disillusioned about the reality of life. While the saving act signaled in Baptism is accomplished in Jesus the Christ, Christians are always in the process of appropriating the gifts of Baptism – we are always being transformed. So, within the Diocese of California we have attention to our own life, always inviting the Spirit to make us one in our diversity, always drinking, that is, of the same Spirit. This means resisting again and again, by resorting to the saving help of the Spirit, the world’s tendency to see oneself as a monad, cut off and independent of others, always taking the proffered opportunity to share the gift of water, inclusion and welcome, with others.

And for the world within which we live, this baptismal reality means offering the precious water of the Spirit to the world around us. It means offering the gift of individuality and creativity that is clear to its sources, the ever-flowing fountain of God.

All my episcopal ministry is founded in the ideas of this baptismal reality. I believe that the particular ministry of the episcopate calls me to both always seek to discern the reality of our common life founded in God, and point the Diocese to it. I would like to review our ministry and mission from the year past with you, and indicate some directions for the coming year.

We have made changes and progress in how we are organized to do the work of the diocese in a transparent and efficient manner.

Governance Review

I requested a review of our diocesan governance, specifically with attention to be given to transparency and best practices for our three major governing bodies outside of Diocesan Conventions: the Board of Directors, the Diocesan Council, and the Standing Committee.

A Working Group and Steering Committee have been working throughout the year with me, with all three governance bodies, and with our deaneries. Their recommendations are excellent, accomplishing my goals for the review, and taking us towards a governance structure that will serve the Diocese well for the future.

Staff

It was my goal for the past year to reconfigure the diocesan staff to better reflect my sense of the leadership needed to best minister in the context of the world within which the Church is embedded today. We worked to create a more collaborative, horizontal structure.

The accomplishments of the Diocesan staff under Bishop Swing's leadership were remarkable, and the staff configuration of that time served those times fittingly. Particularly, I want to thank the Rev. Canon Michael Hansen, Canon Holly McAlpen, and Jackie Fielding for their service to the Diocese during Bishop Swing's leadership. We all begin with the solid legacy they left for us.

In addition to the administrative foundation, we have begun our work to know where the Spirit is leading us as a body, in our common life.

Visioning

At Diocesan Convention 2006 I called on the Diocese to begin a broad-based visioning process that would lead to a set of shared priorities to focus the mission of the Diocese for the next three to five years. It was my hope that the process we created would be organically related to the worship life of the Church, and not an off-the-shelf strategic planning process laid down on top of our unique, vibrant life.

A working group, led by Julia McCray-Goldsmith assisted me in creating the hoped-for process, and last May 5 over three hundred people gathered for the initial visioning event, held at Grace Cathedral. The day generated a great deal of enthusiasm, and over fifty pages of comments and ideas about how we in the Diocese might manifest being the Beloved Community, the place where the voiceless have a voice, where all are lovingly, attentively seen by all, where we have all drunk from the same Spirit and become one Body.

Following the first event, four more regional visioning events are planned around the Diocese, and a "playbox" is being prepared that any congregation or specialized ministry can use to contribute to the final vision.

Part of the Visioning process is that it is a “wiki” process, an evolving process, that incorporates comment on each iteration as it unfolds. Preliminary results can be viewed on the diocesan webpage, and you can comment on the comments, and also find yourself influenced by the thoughts of others in the Diocese as you yourself participate in the visioning.

Let me mention some of the nodes of interest that have emerged from the first Visioning event, as a step in this wiki process. First, there is a strong interest in the Diocese becoming inclusive to the point of reflecting in its membership the demographic makeup of the Bay Area. There is an oft-noted sense that we need to strengthen the communication within the Diocese. Youth and young adult ministries need to be strengthened, and the deaneries need to be reinvigorated.

After the 2003 General Convention, I began thinking about how global reconciliation could be brought close to home, into the lives of Episcopalians. It occurred to me that companion diocese relationships, many of which already exist across the Church, could be the medium for this practical engagement with the relief of global suffering and the promotion of global flourishing.

I proposed at our last Convention that we begin a process to identify a new companion diocese for the Diocese of California. A diverse, talented committee, under the leadership of the Rev. Ted Thompson, worked to identify not a community of several possible companion dioceses, as I had first thought, but one. It was their suggestion that we establish the first relationship and then, in partnership with our new companion diocese, identify a third companion to make a multi-diocese relationship.

The diocese they have proposed is that of Curitiba, in the Province of Brazil. One of the criteria I proposed to the committee was that our new companion diocese not have other companions. While dioceses like Haiti can use the partnership of almost as many dioceses as they can manage, at the same time it is true that there are more than ninety dioceses across the Communion desiring companion relationships, which either have never had one, or do not at the present time.

Curitiba is a very new diocese, having been in missionary diocese status until 2003. They are located in the extreme south of Brazil. The entire Province of Brazil has been in solidarity with the Episcopal Church in the tensions that emerged after General Convention 2003. The province has been deeply shaped by liberation theology, and they have a profound commitment to justice founded on their liberation theology reading of the Gospel.

It is my hope that if we enter this exciting new possible companion diocese, we would pattern the relationship through the lens of the Millennium Development Goals. This

means that Curitiba would present themselves to us in terms of the MDGs, identifying their development priorities such as universal primary education, or the eradication of pandemics like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in their diocese, inviting us into mission with them; and that we would do the same regarding our own self-understanding of development needs within the Diocese of California.

I also believe that the varying ways that each diocese has understood and received Christ would lead to a deepened way of being Christians for us both; that is, we would be growing in our spiritual understanding through this relationship.

Also at the last Convention in addition to calling for the Visioning process, the Governance Review, and the Companion Diocese identification process, I named some of my own priorities as your bishop.

Youth and young adult ministries, environment, and peace were areas where I've directed my energies and those of the Diocesan staff. Also, from the walkabouts on I have shared my conviction that we must move to new modes of congregational development for the renewal of our Diocese. It must be noted that I and the diocesan staff view all of the above, indeed all our ministry as interconnected, even unified, rather than as separate containers of ministry effort.

Susan Peek has been supporting regional youth efforts throughout the Diocese, has reshaped the youth and young adult department, and working with a consultant, has initiated an action-oriented Mission Initiative program that holds great promise for further reinvigoration of Diocesan youth and young adult ministries.

Working with Environmental Commission co-chairs Barbara Bisel and Sally Bingham, I have asked each congregation to identify at least one person to serve as a liaison to the Commission. To date about sixty liaisons have been identified, a great group with whom we will be working in the coming year for coordinated Earth stewardship across the Diocese.

Environmental stewardship was the theme of this year's Clergy Conference, with a record attendance of two hundred clergy and with the participation of our Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori.

Last spring I led the second Pilgrimage for Peace to the TEAM Conference, hosted by Archbishop Ndungane, in Boksburg, South Africa, where the theme was mission in the Anglican Communion framed by the Millennium Development Goals, which include environmental sustainability. Working with the directors of the Bishop's Ranch and St. Dorothy's Rest, we are planning a Young Adult Environmental Pilgrimage that utilizes

both facilities, introducing young adults to the different ecosystems and the connected economies, all in the context of sacred pilgrimage.

Promoting peace has been a deliberate, sustained effort throughout the year. The December 7 peace event in front of the Federal Building had close to three hundred participants representing 40 of our congregations. Since then we have worked to help promote a locally-produced documentary on conscientious objection in the Iraq war, called "Soldiers of Conscience," and in interfaith peace events this fall.

The position of Working Group Head for Congregational Development, which was slated to disappear after the three years of *Jubilate Deo*, seemed vital to me for leading the diocese into patterns of renewal and growth. The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe is in this leadership position, and is working vigorously to help the diocese adapt models of congregational development that transition away from atomistic, disconnected congregational life and into more porous, interdependent models that honor the contributions of the laity.

Other notable efforts during the past year have included fundraising and supporting strategic planning efforts in diocesan institutions. With a gap of \$1.7 million lacking last spring for the William and Mary Swing Pavilion at the Bishop's Ranch, we are now within \$600,000 of raising the full funding for this important facility for the life of the Diocese. The Episcopal Charities board has undertaken and nearly completed a strategic planning process that is using the lens of the Millennium Development Goals for creating new vision for the future, and we have been working with the Partner Agencies to deepen their work together using the MDGs as well. The Episcopal Homes Foundation had a name change, to Episcopal Senior Communities, that reflects a deliberate move on their part to extend their service to low-income seniors.

For me, all of the above is within the container of being the Beloved Community, this place where we drink of the same Spirit and become one Body in Christ.

What of the year to come? We will continue with all the efforts I've outlined above, as well as prayerfully manifesting the Beloved Community in the following ways, with your approval and support.

We are already responding to the emerging diocesan priority on increased communication that emerged in the first Visioning Day. Under Sean McConnell's leadership the web page is being completely redesigned, *DioBytes* is now html-based and available to everyone in the Diocese, communication liaisons will be identified in all our congregations and specialized ministries, and a diocesan database is currently being developed.

With the closure of Incarnation Priory in Berkeley and in conversation with Brother Tom Schultz, Clergy Chaplain, I have begun a conversation to expand the scope of clergy chaplaincy, with the aim of having a college of chaplains, able to respond to the differing needs of women, LGBT, and ethnic minorities within the clergy community.

I am exploring how we might establish a Wisdom Christianity center within the boundaries of the Diocese that would provide a nexus of chaplaincy services for the clergy, spiritual direction training and service for laity as well as clergy, and of ferment for contemplative-based action for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

I will follow the natural consequences of the Governance Review and the emergent Visioning process priority on strengthening the deaneries, including the revitalization of our clericus structure.

I will continue to represent the Diocese in the ongoing Church and Communion-wide conversations on the full inclusion of LGBT people, and in the global flourishing promoted by the MDGs. In this connection, let me say that I welcome the resolution on marriage and blessing being offered at this Convention. I think the resolution properly augments my pastoral goal of caring alike for all of the people of the Diocese, not reinforcing damaging distinctions. I also think, at the same time, that the resolution writers have honored the spirit of the Windsor Report and subsequent requests from the Primates of the Communion not to develop “public rites.”

Finally, I want to return to the shaping of the diocesan staff. It is my belief that the unity in diversity of the Diocese, our manifestation of being the Beloved Community, would be furthered by having an assistant bishop share ministry with me and the diocesan staff. This would be true in terms of modeling shared *episcopé*, and in terms of providing connections by episcopal visitations more often than every two years.

Further, you and the whole Diocese are served by a relatively small, highly competent diocesan staff, a staff that is working beyond what should be normal loads in effort and hours. The Diocese of California, served by this staff, while lively, committed, and spiritually mature is, in terms of growth, reflective of the Episcopal Church as a whole – in serious decline.

I am committed to turning this decline around with you, as I know you are, not for the purpose of institutional replacement, but because I am convinced that the Diocese of California is a gift to the people of the Bay Area, a way of being Christian that deeply resonates with the area we serve. Thus we have an evangelical possibility and responsibility. I believe an assistant bishop would help me and the diocesan staff help you in what, I believe, is a sacred goal – the extension of the Gospel to those we are called to serve.

In addition to sharing in *episcopé*, the assistant bishop would lead our multicultural and ethnic ministries work. It is not certain that if Convention gives me approval to hire an assistant bishop that an appropriate bishop could be found to lead this extremely important work in the Diocese of California. We will begin a national search for a staff person to head up multicultural and ethnic ministries work as a parallel track to the search for an assistant bishop. Approval by Convention would give me the ability to search for an appropriate bishop to fill this position, but the first priority for me is filling the multicultural and ethnic ministries position. Approval only increases the flexibility I would have.

An assistant bishop is an already-elected and consecrated bishop who has either retired or is ready for new ministry assisting a diocesan bishop. An assistant bishop is not tenured. I would use a search committee composed of members of Diocesan Council and Standing Committee to advise me in the selection of an assistant bishop. I would not begin a search for an assistant bishop until after the Visioning process has concluded in May of 2008, near the end of this second visitation rota. I would envision an assistant bishop beginning work no sooner than fall 2008.

The national canons indicate that the call for an assistant bishop is initiated by the diocesan bishop, but that the election of a suffragan is discerned by the diocese. One member of Standing Committee expressed the hope, while supporting the hiring of an assistant bishop, that in time the diocese might call a suffragan. That is a desire I support; it points to our overall development as a faith community. I firmly believe that within the foreseeable future we will have the institutional and financial capacity to discern a call for a suffragan to share in *episcopé* in the Diocese of California.

It has been an exciting year for me and Sheila in the Diocese of California. Many people have asked if we are happy here, if it feels like home here, for us Southerners. The truth is we have felt the great peace with coming to a work to which we feel deeply called. It is also true that while the Diocese of Alabama and the American South in general have many measurable and striking differences from the Diocese of California and the West Coast, this move has taught me that the Episcopal Church has an abiding unity in our way of being Christian, and that our true home is in God, who creates and sustains the whole Body. As I remind myself in prayer and study of the clear source of my life, I find the Psalm to be true,

*They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.*

And, again, *"They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my fountains are in thee."*

In this truth I find both peace and energy for ministry and mission with you.