

ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL HOUSE OF STUDIES

# Perspectives

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL 2009-10

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ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL HOUSE OF STUDIES

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**I** REMEMBER CLEARLY ONE PIECE OF ADVICE I RECEIVED when wondering “which seminary?” 20 years ago. “It doesn’t matter where, so long as it’s a place where you think you’ll learn to engage God, where you’ll learn to pray,” said my former college chaplain.

I’m still learning to pray, but I do look back with gratitude at those who have helped me to engage God in the midst of learning and practicing the faith. Loving God with our minds, we might call it. It is not something that happens automatically in a seminary, whether in daily chapel or in the New Testament class.

Certainly there were some students who were good at making the connections for themselves—turning papers into spiritual journeys or turning classes into a form of devotion—but I needed help. Old Testament, for example, consisted mainly of cultural anthropology and archaeology of the ancient world: the (conjectured) history behind the text. I needed help finding God within the text. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Old Testament became my subsequent field of searching and researching.

What I think I and so many of my fellow classmates longed for was a theological approach. An approach that keeps the question “What does this say about God?” as central to the task of study, whether that study be Early Church History or Liturgy and Worship. The constant search to engage God does not advocate a particular method or technique. It is not even just learning about God. Rather, it is a mode of being, a spirituality for living, a constant openness to

the Divine—not, first and foremost, as understood by individual experience but as we mine the riches of our tradition.

If there is a Duke “brand” in the seminary world, I think and believe it is just this: about theology being, indeed, *theological*. It is, as Augustine and Anselm termed it, faith seeking understanding. And, once understanding is gained, relating it back to the life of faith, the people of faith, and the call of faith. Such an approach is necessarily confessional: that is, I bring my own confession to bear on my studies. I do not pretend to be objective. At the same time I resist personal subjectivity: for the confession of faith is ecclesial. It is something the church does collectively. Our studies are undertaken to serve that church, to build up the institution that exists as the corporate composite of our faith and action, so it may better be passed from one generation to the next.

We are all called to love God with our minds, even if some are more specifically called to be pastors, teachers, and leaders. God grant us all the gifts and graces to continue to raise defenders of the faith and guardians of the Church.

**Jo Bailey Wells**, *associate professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Bible at Duke Divinity School, is the director of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies.*



MEGAN MORRY/DUKE PHOTOGRAPHY

## OF DUCKS AND 'HIPPOS'

BY COLIN MILLER

**WHEN I CAME TO DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL** in 2005, I had never heard of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS) or Dr. Jo Bailey Wells. I had come here to obtain a doctorate in New Testament and go on quietly to be an academic. But here I am, four years into the Ph.D., one year into the ordination process in North Carolina, and finishing both a dissertation on Pauline theology and a Certificate in Anglican Studies. The bishop has made it clear that both of these things are important parts of training for the priesthood.

This state of affairs makes me an odd duck in AEHS. I'm a bit older than most of my colleagues but not as old as those called to the priesthood in midlife. Most of my schooling has been academic: theology, biblical studies and philosophy. I do not and will not have a Master of Divinity when I leave like everyone else. Most of my "field education" has taken place informally at a small local parish rather than through the divinity school.

Despite this, AEHS is a perfect fit for me. Professor Wells has often said that one of the goals for AEHS is that it be a place working to "raise up" the next generation of Anglican theologians.

In a sermon at the opening Eucharist of the 2008-09 academic year that coincided with the Feast of St. Augustine of Hippo, she coined a new understanding of the word "hippo" that had nothing to do with either the seaport of ancient Numidia where St. Augustine was bishop or a large herbivorous mammal. It quickly became a byword in divinity school hallways.

Professor Wells exhorted her seminarians to imitate the great *Doctor Gratiae* (St. Augustine) and those like him as both devoted servants of the church and hard-working theologians. Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the head of the Anglican Communion, she pointed out, is a hippo. Tom Wright, the bishop of Durham in the Church of England and a leading New Testament scholar, is another.

Exclusive company, to be sure. Yet it was not the stature of these hippos that Professor Wells was emphasizing in her sermon. Rather, she was reminding us that the



teaching office of the church belongs to the episcopate and the priesthood.

In an age when the university claims to be doing the only serious theology and where clerics are seminary-educated administrators, Professor Wells was reminding us that the highest and deepest theology the church ever does arises from the glorious rote of pulpit and prayer, altar and absolution. She was holding up the call to be priests and bishops who enter passionately and at length into the depths of the theological disciplines to faithfully lead the church into the future.

Hippos, I now realize, have something to do with what this odd duck is doing at Duke.

**Colin Miller, Ph.D. '10**, is an aspirant in the Diocese of North Carolina.

## TALKING LIKE CHRISTIANS

BY JORDAN HYLDEN

**WE ANGLICANS DO A LOT OF TALKING**, especially here at Duke Divinity School. We have lots of different words for it: dialoguing, meeting, discussing, conferencing, and even discerning if we're feeling particularly theological. This is all very good, of course. But one must admit that it can at times, such as after a long day full of meetings and discussions and dialogues, grow tedious. What does it accomplish anyway?

It's an important question for Episcopalians and other Anglicans today. We have a "listening process," *indaba* groups, a covenant conversation—the list goes on. But even with all of that, Anglicans worldwide have had a remarkably hard time talking to each other. Some are frustrated that others have "left the table." Those who "left" are frustrated because they feel like a real conversation wasn't occurring in the first place.

Where do we go from here? How do we re-start a genuinely Christian conversation with one another? St. Paul gave us a good place to begin. "We do not proclaim ourselves," he wrote. "We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Christ's sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). And St. Peter, never one to shy away from speaking up, had some important advice for us as well: "Whoever speaks," he told us, "must do so as one speaking the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:11a).



Does that sound daunting? No doubt it is, but I would argue that it's the very first thing that characterizes Christian speaking and listening. It also has a lot to do with why all of us at Duke spend so much time in common Scripture reading and common prayer. Before we speak a word to one another, we know that we need to listen first for a word from God.

Can we do that together? It's certainly not an easy solution to our problems, but it's the only one we have. At our best, it's what we try to do here at the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies. We don't all come from the same place, but we're all looking to the same God, searching the same Scriptures and praying the same prayers.

We don't proclaim ourselves—we're called to speak the very words of God. That's a tall order, but we in the larger Anglican Communion will only find our way back to speaking with one another if we can trust that we're all listening first for a word from God. If we do that, we might even find new words to speak that are "living and active"—amidst all our talking. Far more than just talk, these words can bring life, hope and the reconciliation of Christ Jesus.

**Jordan Hylden, M.Div. '10**, is a candidate for ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of North Dakota.

## OUR SUBSTANCE, GOD'S BOUNTY

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS AND PRAYERS** for the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies. We continue to expand in numbers and programming because you have given sacrificially and prayed without ceasing.

During the 2008-09 academic year, we welcomed 35 charter members to the Friends of AEHS fellowship and were blessed with 40 financial gifts.

Your gifts have supported twice-monthly house gatherings and provided hospitality to visiting bishops and priests, many of whom have sent seminarians into our care. You have partially funded field education placements, which form and transform not only the seminarians but also the parishes they serve. You have equipped the students for

worship and prayer, as well as for celebration of our participation in the Anglican Communion.

In this newsletter you will find a pledge card. We invite your continued support for programs that shape students as they answer the call to theological education and formation in the Anglican tradition, nurture clergy, and excite laity to learn more about their faith and tradition.

The *Book of Common Prayer* reminds us to "honor [God] with our substance and be faithful stewards of [God's] bounty." Thank you for sharing faithfully in this stewardship.

**AEHS Faculty and Staff**

## THE LISTENING PROCESS

BY ELYSE GUSTAFSON

**THE VISIT BY THE RT. REV. V. GENE ROBINSON**, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, to Duke University last October sparked mixed reactions and emotions among Duke Divinity School students.

Some students saw Bishop Robinson as a champion, fearlessly refusing to back away from the prophetic role in which he has found himself as the first openly gay, non-celibate priest to be consecrated a bishop in a major Christian denomination. Others were disappointed with Robinson's treatment of Scripture and longed for him to articulate a clearer theological vision of his ministry. Some saw him as an exemplary pastor, kind and generous with his time and sympathy. Yet others found themselves wanting to demand an apology and to know if he weeps over the brokenness of the church.

Many of us in the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS) felt bits of all these perspectives. After Bishop Robinson's visit, Duke Chapel Dean Sam Wells guided a follow-up session for AEHS in which the conversation revealed the varying dimensions and frustrations.

As the conversation continued in my own pod group (a small formation group of three to four house members),

we worked hard to clarify our perspectives. We discovered that each of us held a different view. One thought Bishop Robinson was a prophet, while another thought he needed to be a better theologian; a third thought he was an excellent pastor; and the fourth group member thought he needed to be a better church member. Six months and countless weekly group conversations later, each of us still held our original view.

Needless to say, our conversations sometimes were uncomfortable. We noticed different things, cared about different matters and hoped for different outcomes. The people in my group made no sense to me sometimes. Shouldn't everyone have been disturbed about a bishop's questionable exegetical skills? Shouldn't everyone have been able to see when a bishop loved his people? Shouldn't everyone have had conflicting feelings for the same reasons I did?

Despite the struggle, it was important for us to experience the differing and complex reactions by AEHS members to Bishop Robinson's visit because it is within such a fellowship of trust that we may learn to listen deeply, without fear of what other people see.

Admittedly, other people's perspectives sometimes feel like a threat to my own. If someone sees something that I don't see, then I probably have a lot of work to do, work that might be hard and even painful. But that's how I know that this is church. It is how I know that I won't be left alone with my own flawed and incomplete vision of God's work in the world. It is how I know I am growing.

Bishop Robinson's visit exposed differences among people in AEHS, differences that still exist and confuse most of us, but we are learning how to listen to each other and discover each other's gifts. I have realized that this is the "listening process" to which the 1998 Lambeth Conference asked all provinces to commit. The process is difficult, but I would have it no other way.

**Elyse Gustafson, M.Div. '10**, is an aspirant in the Diocese of Chicago.



An AEHS small formation group meets for study, sharing and prayer.

### ON THE WEB

For more information on the listening process within the Anglican Communion, visit its website at [www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/listening/)

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

BY ROXANE GWYN

**TEN DAYS IN ANAHEIM, CALIF.**, with several thousand of my Episcopal sisters and brothers has convinced me that everyone in discernment for holy orders should have the opportunity to attend a general convention before ordination. I recall that those Anglican Episcopal House of Studies students who served as stewards last summer in Canterbury felt the same about attending a Lambeth Conference before ordination.

In July the Episcopal Church held its 76th General Convention, which was a dynamic blend of critical debate and legislative work, a gathering of friends and colleagues, and spirituality embodied by prayer and worship.

I was the AEHS representative at a display and information booth in the exhibit hall, where presentations from more than 150 ministries and vendors formed us into our own small community.

Visitors to our booth confirmed the particular strengths offered by Duke Divinity School: an outstanding faculty and rigorous academic program, a diversity of denominational tra-

ditions and theological perspectives, and its location within a major university. Our program's existence and the Certificate in Anglican Studies surprised folks from many dioceses, providing opportunities to enlighten them about the particular niche we fill in theological education and spiritual formation.

I am only now beginning to comprehend how privileged I was to sit in periodically on committee meetings and sessions of the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. My appreciation for the legislative process, for the depth and value of deliberation, debate, reflection, and compromise was greatly expanded.

In meeting scores of bishops, clergy and laity, I gained new insights into the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion and the Body of Christ. I witnessed the convention's theme of *ubuntu* ("I am because you are") in action. Participation in diverse liturgies taught me new approaches to preaching, celebration and music.

"You are a very open church," said the Rev. Luiz Alberto Barbosa, president of the House of Clergy and Laity of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil. "The way you decide, the way you think, even your conflicts: it's very open so we can all see and be a part."

Elyse Gustafson, D'10, helped staff the AEHS booth at the convention. She commented that "being here makes the structure of the Episcopal Church seem more human—not so much a mechanistic system as people trying to build something together." Indeed, could that something be the Kingdom of God?

**Roxane Gwyn, D'07**, is a postulant in the Diocese of North Carolina.

Roxane Gwyn, M.Div. '07, provides information to a convention participant at an AEHS exhibit booth at the General Convention. Professor Lauren Winner (left) spoke at a reception hosted by the house for alumni and friends during the event.



## THE POWER OF MINISTRY Being with Those in Need

BY FRED BROWN

**“THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME OF WHO I AM AS A PRIEST.”**

These words of gratitude, expressed by a local Episcopal priest, captured the spirit of participants at the first annual Clergy Study Day sponsored by the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies in March.

Not only were seasoned clergy reminded of what being set apart means in their lives and ministries, but those of us preparing to enter their ranks were given a realistic picture of what being a minister of God demands. Duke Chapel Dean Sam Wells’ lectures on the “Power of Ministry” provided us with language and images that continue to influence my presence with people.

As a clinical psychologist, I should know how to talk with struggling people and indeed, in that role, I do. But what of the role of minister? Wells drew our attention to three approaches to ministry in relation to the portions of Jesus’ life: **one week** *working for* us in his Passion, death and resurrection; **three years** *working with* us in his ministry; and **30 years** *being with* us in Nazareth. The real power of ministry lies in Nazareth: in being with God’s people wherever they are. As Wells pointed out, the ministry of *being with* a person can only be done in love, for God is with us only out of his patient unending love for us.

Wells told the story of a bus driver who, upon seeing his clerical collar, asked Wells if he would hear his confession. Being a deacon at the time, Wells dutifully directed the driver to a priest—instead of *being with* him in the



moment. Wells said he has always regretted that choice.

I have had three recent encounters with colleagues and friends who have been suffering. Rather than taking the easy way out and *working with* them to get help or find answers, I have instead chosen *to be* with them: simply to be as present as I can be to them.

These experiences reveal the transformation occurring in my life through seminary as I build on my career as a psychologist and realize God’s calling to a vocation as priest. But, as with the seasoned clergy, I will need reminding: priestly presence is grounded in the loving presence of God, demonstrated over the 30 years of Christ’s life that reveals the courage and love we need for *being with* his beloved in their darkest moments. That is the power of ministry!

**Fred Brown, M.Div. ’10**, is a candidate for ordination to the priesthood in the Diocese of East Carolina.

**ON THE WEB**

Listen to or download audio recordings or read transcripts from lectures by Sam Wells on “The Power of Ministry” at [www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs/education/studyday](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs/education/studyday)



## CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF ’09!

The AEHS graduating M.Div. class gathers before the Duke Divinity School Baccalaureate Service in Duke Chapel in May. Pictured (from left, back row) are: Ross Kane, Sam Keyes, Thomas Kincaid, Reggie Simmons, Cindy Briggs, and Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, director; and (from left, front row) graduates Julie Cate Kelly, Elizabeth Costello, Susan Polk (UMC), and Claire Wimbush, as well as Wimbush’s service dog “Willa.”

**ON THE WEB**

To find out where these graduates are now, visit [www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs)



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## A VISITING SCHOLAR'S TIME OF RENEWAL

**AS THE FALL 2008 VISITING SCHOLAR** with the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies at Duke Divinity School, I



found renewal in the daily rhythm of morning worship and deep reading. I delved into some of the hard questions posed by the Old Testament and wrote my way toward some answers.

In fellowship with Episcopal students, I pondered the way Anglicanism in the United States is the same yet different than in my home country of Australia. What an encouragement to find that the divisions concerning the place of women in church

leadership or the place of social justice in gospel witness do not seem so rigid here.

Attending Asbury Temple United Methodist Church, visiting the Saturday farmers' market and seeing good movies at The Carolina Theatre added to the richness of my time. Serendipitous acts of kindness from fellow students in divinity school classes frequently warmed my heart.

Thank you to all who offered me the warm hand of friendship during my time of renewal at Duke.

**Barbara Deutschmann** coordinates the Indigenous Program with TEAR Australia, a Christian aid and development organization, and is a lay leader in the Diocese of Melbourne.

**ON THE WEB**

For more information about the AEHS Visiting Scholars program, visit [www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs](http://www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/aehs)

ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL FACULTY AT DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

- Dr. Raymond Barfield, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Christian Philosophy
- Dr. Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology
- Dr. Ellen Davis, Professor of Bible and Practical Theology, Associate Dean for Faculty Development
- Dr. Susan Eastman, Assistant Professor of the Practice of Bible and Christian Formation
- Dr. Joel Marcus, Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins
- Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, Associate Professor of the Practice of Ministry and Bible
- Dr. Samuel Wells, Research Professor of Christian Ethics and Dean of Duke Chapel
- Dr. Lauren F. Winner, Assistant Professor of Christian Spirituality

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