

ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL HOUSE OF STUDIES

Perspectives

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL 2011-12



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ROOTS DOWN – into our rich tradition
WALLS DOWN – in God’s church today

Lean and Green?

FOR THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, the median age of incoming M.Div. students at Duke Divinity School has been 23. That means our new juniors were in middle school when the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks rocked our world. They were in high school when Gene Robinson became a bishop. (Now, as they reach seminary, he is retiring!)

Life moves fast—lessons are learned fast—at this age and stage. That has always been the case for young people in their twenties. But this is Generation Y, the tech-savvy generation for whom life functions electronically. That is, friendships are sustained through Facebook. Experiences are lived through YouTube. Reflections are expressed through Twitter. And all of life is “hand-held,” with multiple Windows open simultaneously.

What does this mean for the process of discernment, seminary education and spiritual formation?

First and foremost, it spells hope for the church. Of the half-dozen colleges and schools across four different continents in which I have served in training leaders for the Anglican world, I have never been surrounded by so many bright young people as in the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS). These individuals are investing in graduate school in eager expectation of a lifetime in service to Christ. Any whose horizons are shaped by decline should come visit—to glimpse

the dedication of these young people at the start of their working lives. Yes, in keeping with the character of Generation Y they are confident, ambitious and achievement-oriented. But imagine that ambition channeled into commitment to the mainline church—and stand back!

Secondly, it means that we must “seize the moment” in these young lives. They have a lot of energy to give, but if the moment of their offering is missed, then the church may miss their full-time ministry. Patience is not their prime virtue, just as the bureaucracy of an institutional church is not their comfort zone. They will take their gifts elsewhere. A discernment committee that cannot meet until next year may—inadvertently—encourage some alternative discernment that ushers them in a different direction.

Third, the young energy is looking for wisdom. The Duke “roots down” approach holds surprising appeal for this fast-moving generation that knows—yet shuns—superficiality and self-invention. They are longing for an immersion in their spiritual tradition—just as they seek how they may impact it, how they can make a difference. That is, they learn the disciplines of the past so that their imagination is kindled for the future. Reality and idealism do not clash; indeed, they foster one another.

Finally, this generation is high on

authenticity and integrity. If I do not practice what I preach, they will smell the rat a mile away. How they cry out for spiritual formation! They know the inner life needs to match the outer life: that loving God demands mind, body and soul in sync. Thus education must be holistic: head, hands and heart. This is only possible where relationships of deep trust—and honesty—can flourish.

In my mid-forties, I’m sometimes viewed as young and upcoming. No. At Duke I delight in finding I am old and gray—and making way.



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



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“HOLD FAST TO GOD’S DREAM.” That was the message of the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry during a service commemorating the feast of Absalom Jones earlier this year. God’s dream, he said, is a vision of an alternate reality, a vision of a world set free from its imprisonment to patterns of oppression, manipulation, violence and hostility (sin, in a word), a vision that challenges our sometimes overwhelming impression that these dark realities have the last word.

Anyone who has heard Curry, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, preach knows that he never fails to send an electric charge through any service of worship. His exhortations to “keep going”—even if we hear the barking dogs on our trail or see the light of the torches of those coming after us—left us worshippers with goose bumps on our necks.

But how do we do it? How do we “keep going” in the direction of that vision of an alternate reality, or for that matter even believe that such a reality is possible?

One striking feature of the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS) at Duke Divinity School is how many of us have been drawn into this tradition by the wisdom and riches of its liturgy. The postures and movements of our souls and bodies in the liturgy tell us the truth about the world and about ourselves, even when we have a hard time naming it or believing it. The liturgy also trains us to see the world in a new way: to see our need of repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace, and at the same time, to see how God has provided for these needs in the Eucharist.

Through the power of the liturgy, the Absalom Jones service held in Goodson

Holding Fast to *God’s Dream*

BY NITA BYRD AND MAC STEWART



PHOTO BY DARRELL HARRIS

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Bishop Michael Curry celebrates the Feast of Absalom Jones.

Chapel opened our eyes to God’s “alternate reality” once again. Crafted through the partnership of AEHS and the Black Seminarians Union, the liturgy sought to be honest about the scars that remain to be healed as a result of the legacy of racism in American Christianity; while also renewing a vision for genuine reconciliation and peace—where the gifts of every family, language, people and nation are recognized and celebrated in Christ.

For example, the spiritual, “Poor Wayfaring Stranger,” accompanied by the interpretation of liturgical dance, lamented the state of exile into which we are all imprisoned by racism, powerfully expressed in the language of the African-American tradition. The liturgy told the truth about the history of racism in our country, yet in such a way that the alternate reality of peace and diverse giftedness was visible.

The liturgy also sought to reverse some history. Whereas Absalom Jones

and other African Americans were previously “removed” to the balcony of the church during the era of segregation, so in this service the Divinity School Choir was “removed” to the balcony while the Gospel Choir sang on the main floor of the chapel. At the liturgy of the sacrament, the Divinity School Choir descended from the balcony to join with the Gospel Choir. At the final recessional, both choirs recessed in unison, encircling the congregation with the sounds of the hymn, “I’m Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table.”

The alternate reality of God’s dream is often hard to see—until we immerse ourselves in worship and find again the liturgy correcting our vision, to make it 20/20.

Nita Byrd, M.Div. ’12 is a postulant, and **Mac Stewart, M.Div. ’13** is an aspirant, both in the Diocese of North Carolina.

A Step in the Right Direction

BY STEWART CLEM

THE NEWLY REFORMED CHURCH OF ENGLAND was still in its adolescent phase when George Herbert, without a hint of irony, described it as the unique recipient of God’s grace on earth. Two centuries later, F.D. Maurice described the English church as “the only firm, consistent witness” of the true human community intended by God.

Today, it is difficult to read such self-congratulatory remarks without a snicker. I wonder what these divines would have thought of the following scenario: a classroom in a Methodist divinity school filled with “Episcopalians,” other “Anglicans,” and a few inquirers, all under the tutelage of a Church of England priest. No, it’s not the beginning of a bad ecclesial joke—it’s the Anglican doctrine class taught by

Sam Wells, dean of Duke Chapel and research professor of Christian ethics at Duke Divinity School.

The consensus of my classmates after completing the course was that the Anglican tradition, if nothing else, is extremely broad. Perhaps not the most earth-shattering thesis, but the reality of this platitude was felt more poignantly after the dozens of readings and lectures. Dean Wells structured the course thematically rather than chronologically, which enhanced the sense of this breadth. What this means is that, rather than moving from the 16th century to the present, we began with traditional theological topics, such as Christology and Trinitarian theology, and ended with mission and globalization. After reading selections within each topic, it was

easy to see that “What Anglicanism says about X” is not an easy position to articulate.

Given the obvious breadth of our tradition, a latent question surfaced: if Anglicanism has been a diverse body throughout most of its history, what is it that now separates the “Anglicans” and “Episcopalians” in the room? Does it really boil down to certain

controversial events that occurred within the last decade? As Professor Jo Bailey Wells points out, most students in the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS) are “children of divorced parents.” That is, most of us aligned ourselves with some form of Anglicanism after the recent fault lines were drawn. What is it, then, that led us to—and keeps us in—the churches we have joined? As we approached the end of the semester, we set aside some time in class to discuss this question.

What was remarkable about our discussion was the unanimous sense of brokenness about our current situation. No one seemed happy about today’s ecclesial climate, convictions notwithstanding. But it is a conversation that needed to happen and needs to continue. I’m convinced that AEHS is one of the few places where such conversations are taking place, and I am thankful to be a part of them.

After taking this course, I’m more certain than ever that Anglicanism has many wonderful gifts to share with the Body of Christ, but I’ve also learned that it is not immune to the conflicts that have wounded other branches of the church. Given this reality, it is vital that we continue to study our tradition together. Taking a course together may only be a small step, but it’s a step in the right direction.

Stewart Clem, M.Div. ’13, is a postulant in the Diocese of Oklahoma.



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Dean Sam Wells leads a class discussion.

The Shape of Hope

BY LUBA ZAKHAROV

SO HOW DOES HOPE HAVE A SHAPE?

The title of last year's AEHS Study Day led by Professor Jeremy Begbie intrigued me. As a dimension of the Gospel, I understood that hope has a language and a form. But at the "Sound of Hope: Exploring How Music Informs and Shapes Our Imagination for the Way the World Could Be," I glimpsed how both are freshly captured through the arts.

One way that Begbie suggested we begin to see the shape of hope is by using a "reversed imagination," by starting at the end of time and thinking backward, rather than starting from the present and imagining the future. It is a way of reading the Biblical text that asks one to reimagine the Gospel as a "divine wind that blows in from the future," a future already born into the resurrected body of Christ.

We can see glimmers of this future depicted in the 15th century transfiguration icon from the Novgorod School, a Russian school noted for its icon and mural painters, suggested Begbie, the Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology at Duke Divinity School.

At the study day especially for clergy and church musicians, he projected an image of this icon: Christ, in robes of white, stands as though floating atop

broken rocks or crags of earth. Behind him are shapes of color: red and blue or black with Moses and Elijah to his right and left, balancing on the ragged rocks with the disciples below them, sprawled as though hit by light or wind. Christ is transfigured: death has been shattered, and God has plummeted the dark places to re-imagine a new heaven and a new earth where Christ now reigns.

For me, seeing this icon was the beginning of hope. But there was more. Begbie then taught theology from his seat at the piano by playing music in such a way that we could hear how it reconfigures time.

Music does this with metre and rhythm, with tone and voice, building yearnings and resolutions that its sound can deliver. But the resolutions aren't always immediate. As in the Gospel stories, we need to wait: just as Mary waited, not knowing that after his death Jesus would rise. In music, this delay in time can be heard as one listens to the



space between the notes. Metre, that which underlies the music, breaks open a way of thinking that does not rely on only one way of playing music.

Could this multi-leveled metre deepen Christian faith by teaching us the "unforced rhythms of grace" so that we walk in God's time and not our own? I find myself now listening for the sound of hope as well as seeking out further glimpses of its shape.

Luba Zakharov, M.T.S. '96, is the reference and serials librarian at Duke Divinity School and a member of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Hillsborough, N.C.

ACQUIRING A HEART: THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN US AND THE MINISTRY WE SHARE

A day retreat for clergy led by
Bishop Frank Griswold
Oct. 21, 2011
Duke Divinity School

CHURCH-AND-WORLD SPIRITUALITY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Study Day for Clergy and Laity led by
Dr. Lauren Winner
March 12, 2012
Duke Divinity School

ON THE WEB For more information: www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/aehs
or dsteenbur@div.duke.edu

Healing a Hurting World

BY TOM WARREN

AS WE TOOK TURNS POURING, the water splashed out of the clear plastic bucket we used as a baptismal font and spread onto Goodson Chapel's hard stone floors. It wasn't the sanitized-looking water I am accustomed to seeing in fonts. This water was murky and bits of vegetation floated about as it might on the sea floor. It was raw, unprocessed water that each delegate of the Episcopal Relief & Development Seminary Network Conference had collected and carried, feeling its weight with every step along a solemn procession from a pond at Duke Gardens. It was messy.

In fall 2010, the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies (AEHS) hosted 25 representatives from 10 seminaries (eight Episcopal seminaries and two Methodist institutions with Episcopal houses of study) for a three-day event about the ministry of Episcopal Relief & Development. The conference explored how seminarians might participate in this work as students and later as clergy.

We worshipped together, broke bread with one another, shared stories from our various experiences of

formation at our sponsoring schools, and learned how Episcopal Relief & Development goes about its mission of "healing a hurting world."

We also wrestled with the degree to which explicitly Christian relief and development work can be done faithfully alongside secular partners without losing the Gospel message and impetus that should be at its heart. In addition to disaster response and economic development programs coordinated with and through Anglican parishes all over the world, one of Episcopal Relief & Development's most visible campaigns is NetsforLife, an effort to distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets to combat malaria in sub-Saharan Africa

With significant financial contributions from massive corporations like Coca-Cola and ExxonMobil, NetsforLife has delivered 4.8 million nets and trained 43,000 local malaria control agents throughout 17 countries in five years, likely impossible benchmarks without secular partnerships. Yet it begs the question: does the church forfeit its truest life-giving ministry of sharing Christ's Gospel when that Good News is made more palatable to secular powers that enable unparalleled humanitarian assistance?

Needless to say, no consensus was reached on this issue, but we departed each other's company with a palpable reminder of our common membership in

It was a bitter-sweet synthesis of this world's brokenness and the hope that Christians have in the promise of new creation and resurrection through Jesus Christ.

the faith that beckons us to persist through our differences.

The water-walk, which served as the concluding liturgy for the conference, involved participants carrying water from Duke Gardens to Duke Divinity School's chapel as an act of solidarity with the millions of people around the world who do not have ready access to clean water. The service ended with a blessing of that same water by AEHS Director Jo Bailey Wells and a recommitment to our baptismal vows.

It was a bitter-sweet synthesis of this world's brokenness and the hope that Christians have in the promise of new creation and resurrection through Jesus Christ. The messy water that splashed about on Goodson Chapel's floor was not crystal clear, but neither is life in the world into which baptized Christians are called to love and serve the Lord.

Tom Warren, M.Div. '11, is a transitional deacon in the Diocese of East Carolina.



Conference attendees gather at Duke Gardens during the water-walk.

ON THE WEB For more information on Episcopal Relief & Development, visit www.er-d.org

DIVERSITY AS A MEANS OF *Grace*

BY CRAIG UFFMAN



treatment of illegal immigrants), there is a great clamoring for an authority figure to stand up and relieve the tension by declaring one side as righteous and the other as sinful, to declare one group as “in” and those with opposing agendas as “out.” While certainly there are times when wisdom may require that the

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I learned while attending Duke Divinity School is that diversity and unity are not opposites, but rather are inseparable. Our diversity is the material in which our unity in Christ becomes concrete.

To be of “one mind,” as Paul calls us to be, is not to be homogeneous in our descriptions of truth, and it is never merely unison; rather, our sharing the mind of Christ presses us inexorably towards symphonic, *polyphonic concord*, so that, over time, we learn to sound together the truth of Christ. Our song, the unity that perfects our diversity, is the means through which the Spirit invites the world to receive its identity in Christ. In other words, the unity the Spirit creates within the raw material of our diversity is the very means through which the Word of God is proclaimed to the world. Our unity is essential to our mission.

If one doesn’t learn this while immersed in the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies, then one isn’t paying attention. AEHS Director Jo Bailey Wells drove this point home by shocking me with a description of an imagined meeting with the Lord in which I will be held accountable for the flock entrusted to me: “I gave you 100 sheep to shepherd, Craig, but I see only

30 here now...*and where are all the others?*” The question haunts me still.

I see my call to the priesthood as a sacred trust in which my pledge to our Lord is that I will do all in my power to care for and protect 100 percent of his sheep. As I imagine my accountability before the Lord, I can conceive of no words that will excuse division of Christ’s Body or the abandonment of any member.

However, it takes time for disciples to learn the habits of holiness that make possible this “unity with diversity” we are to embody. Unity is hard and painful and takes patience. Meanwhile, we are tempted to justify our divisions in ways that justify ourselves. We are tempted to erect boundaries that protect our positions of power or protect the salvation we perceive to be threatened by others in our midst. We are tempted to accept of ourselves the false unity we construct by declaring the other as “merely different” from us, which is a way to avoid the serious engagement with our differences that authentic love of neighbor demands.

Whenever the church goes through periods of difficult discernment about profound issues of justice, charity and ethics (such as our struggles with deeply embedded racism and our

priest take such a stand, there is a great temptation for the priest to surrender to the sin of hubris, to be seduced by the prospect of playing the hero who relieves the tension inherent in our diversity by blessing one side and condemning the other.

However, my immersion in AEHS taught me that the task of the priest is to point resolutely to our deliverance on the cross, and to help others to see that, in spite of our differences, in spite of our culture’s comfort with ceaseless division, our mission as the household of God is to walk together through the wilderness, to walk as one out of reverence for Christ.

The flock must not be divided, and every sheep is precious in the eyes of the Lord. None can be abandoned. This means that, as clergy, our task is to cultivate our diversity, and to see the tension that such diversity brings differently than many others in our culture see it: not as stress to be avoided or suppressed, but rather as a means of grace by which the Spirit forms us into the Body of Christ.

The Rev. Craig Uffman, M.Div. ’08, is rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Rochester, N.Y., and a Ph.D. candidate in theology and ethics at Durham University.



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Congratulations CLASS OF '11!

MEMBERS OF THE 2011 Anglican Episcopal House of Studies graduating class: *(from left, back row)* Eric Prenshaw, Michael Boone, Bradford Acton, Nathaniel Jung-Chul Lee, Thomas Warren; and *(from left, front row)* Joshua Caler, Adrienne Koch, Heather Bixler, Joseph Lenow, Adam Urrutia, and Director Jo Bailey Wells. Not pictured is graduate Leigh Edwards.

ON THE WEB For information on where the graduates are now, visit www.divinity.duke.edu/initiatives-centers/aehs/graduates

ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL FACULTY AT DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

- Dr. David Aers, *James B. Duke Professor of English and Religious Studies*
- Dr. Raymond Barfield, *Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Christian Philosophy*
- Dr. Jeremy Begbie, *Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology*
- Dr. Ellen Davis, *Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology*
- Dr. Susan Eastman, *Associate 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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