



## Does My All Really Mean All?

By Rev. Troy Plummer

In my white mind, it took a bit to sink in. The white electricians left because we had persons of color on our mission team. OK, still more time, still sinking in. Having been rejected from one work site for being reconciling people, my white mind said the electricians abandoned the worksite because they noticed our women tended to have better tool belts than our men and had identified us as LGBTQA. In my white mind, it was our queerness that scattered the electricians from the Katrina relief site. But Holly knew. As a person of color and the first person out of the van and onto the worksite, Holly knew racism lives on.

In my matched male-mind-male-body being, my heart sank. I put a transgender person at risk. But it was just a typo, wasn't it? Even though the registrar smiled, Sean's fear of being homeless at a reconciling meeting was real. His experience had taught him so. The registrar exclaimed, "I knew it must be a mistake. 'Sean Patrick' certainly could not be female. I'll get you set up with a male roommate." If she requested legal identification, the female birth sex would not match the man she saw before her. Transgender folk have been put out on the street for less than that.

In my temporarily-abled body and mind, I worked hard to make sense of the caller's words. "Are

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## God's Unfolding Story

By Laura Rossbert

Once upon a time is a fine way to begin a story, but our Christian lives are not simple fairy tales which end in "happily ever after." Rather, we find ourselves in the midst of God's unfolding story of redemptive and reconciling love. This story beckons us to be faithful disciples by reaching out to share our stories with others and calling them to create a just and welcoming United Methodist Church.

On a rainy Saturday morning in January, thirty folks – some who drove 100 miles to attend – gathered in Nashville, TN to follow the call for an inclusive Church. This was groundbreaking work in the Bible Belt of the south, where the Nashville Area Reconciling Methodists ("NARM") had only started meeting last fall. All who graced the doors of Edgehill UMC were greeted by handmade signs of welcome. We came to share stories, learn valuable tools and create an action plan for the Tennessee Annual Conference. While sharing delicious homemade lunch of soup and sandwiches, we created a vision of a more just Nashville.

As a trainer, nothing could be more rewarding than experiencing a sharing community by hearing people's stories. Coming from the safety of Washington, DC to the "South," I had been prepared to encounter different ways of being; however, as people shared words of what brought

them to the training, our commonality shone through. People spoke out of their "hope" for all to be welcome in our churches, the beauty of "tradition," the importance of "justice," and the "joy" of a community gathered together to follow Jesus.

We shared many moving stories. One gay man had been told not to return to a specific church but then

found a home in a loving Methodist congregation; another, a former Mormon who came out, found beautiful community at a reconciling congregation. People made themselves vulnerable, and in that intentional safe space, we gained healing and power from our

stories. Some realized that if members of their community were going to take a leap of faith, they could too, and members of NARM pledged to support one another by driving together to their meetings with District Superintendents and, afterwards, analyzing the conversations.

Our task at hand is incredibly simple and wildly radical. Help our church realize that their doors aren't open to all, a reality which harms God's children. This work can seem overwhelming and incredibly lonely at times, but that is exactly why so many of us are brought into the Called to Witness work. We build relationships with those who might not understand the importance of

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# Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry!

By Sue Laurie

As we celebrate 25 years of Reconciling Ministries, we remember the first congregations who challenged the majority rule of General Conference (GC).

In 1984 the GC created a brand new rule against the ordination of “self-avowed practicing homosexuals”.<sup>1</sup> Members of Affirmation were ready that day. They had planned and prepared. The next day they greeted the

GC delegates with an opportunity to offer a Christian response. They invited our church family, the ones who knew this law was a mistake, to give witness that their church doors were truly open to all people. Here would be the chance to publically affirm the lives, families, and ministries of gay and lesbian people. They were invited to become “Reconciling Congregations”. There were ready congregations; most of whom already understood diversity as a gift, not a fright, and were willing to extend an authentic welcome to whomever God gave them as neighbors. When you visit their websites today, you see ministry that goes beyond charity and insists on justice; that does not rest with patience for inequalities.

Reconciling Ministries has experienced an acceleration in growth the last three years ~ our list has grown by an annual average of 20 congregations and 15 communities since the

controversial Judicial Council ruling that permitted bigotry against gay and lesbian United Methodists. Injustice can spark action ~ but let’s not wait for more harm. For those who attend Reconciling Congrega-

tions, can you find ways to spread the Good News? Consider ways you may seed and nurture neighboring congregations in your Annual Conference.

For information on the Reconciling Process, see our website


<http://www.rmnetwork.org/process.asp>. You may also order our DVD on the Reconciling Process and contact us for support and ideas.

## New Reconciling Communities since October 2008

### Congregations:

*Langley UMC*, Langley, WA  
*Sebastopol UMC*, Sebastopol, CA  
*Hilltonia UMC*, Columbus, OH  
*New Horizons UMC*, Columbus, OH  
*Franksville UMC*, Franksville, WI  
*First UMC*, Kalamazoo, MI

### Communities:

*Nashville Area Reconciling Ministry*, Nashville, TN  
*Reconciling Journey Sunday School Class*, West End UMC, Nashville, TN 

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Jack Tuell “How I Changed My Mind”. <http://www.rmnetwork.org/other.asp>.

### Reconciling Churches of 1984

*Washington Square UMC*, NYC (merged into The Church in the Village)  
*Wesley UMC*, Fresno, CA  
*St. Paul’s UM*, Denver, CO  
*Wheaton UMC*, Evanston, IL (merged into United Church of RP)  
*Bethany UMC*, San Francisco, CA  
*Central UMC*, Toledo, OH  
*Edgehill UMC*, Nashville, TN  
*Sunnyhills UMC*, Milpitas, CA  
*Wallingford UMC*, Seattle, WA

### Funny Thing!

Did you know that sometimes congregations achieve their Reconciling goal and forget to let RMN know ☺. Go to our website [www.rmnetwork.org](http://www.rmnetwork.org), click on “Find a church” to see if your congregation is listed.

If “no”, *take action*. Check whether your church already has a mission or welcoming statement that names “people of all sexual orientations and gender identities” or “LGBT”. Contact [Audrey@rmnetwork.org](mailto:Audrey@rmnetwork.org) to see what you need to get your congregation on the list.

## RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

is a national grassroots organization that exists to enable full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life of The United Methodist Church, both in policy and practice.

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# Heterosexism/Homophobia Resolution

By Audrey Krumbach

I was bursting with excitement as I entered Cokesbury to buy the book seminarians fondly call “The Holy Doorstop.” This nickname for *The UMC Book of Resolutions* indicates both the generous size and common neglect of these valuable Methodist insights. These official United Methodist declarations include topics from ethical tourism to stem cell research. Resolutions have the power to guide the agenda of General Boards and release Methodist agencies from the unjust policies and funding practices of our past. In obedience to *The Resolution to Oppose Homophobia and Heterosexism*, the General Board of Church and Society has already established a taskforce to advocate and educate churches about these social ills. This group will study the prevalence of homophobia, collect stories, and write and distribute study materials.

How to get involved:

- Send in stories of homophobia; Suggest resources.
- Watch the RMN and GBCS websites for upcoming resources.
- Send a designated gift to GBCS.

All suggestions can be emailed to [Audrey@rmnetwork.org](mailto:Audrey@rmnetwork.org). 🌈

## Edgehill UMC

*Edgehill UMC has been Reconciling since 1984.*

“Believing that diversity is God’s creative intention, this congregation values the many differences among us. All are welcome in God’s family and we strive to offer true welcome here. This vision brings challenge and with it an ongoing need for reconciliation. We are willing to learn more, to refresh our understanding. We believe deeply that our wholeness as a community depends on everyone having a place at the table.” Rev. Judi Hoffman, pastor Edgehill UMC, Nashville, TN. 🌈

Banner from Edgehill UMC. Visit <http://www.edgehill.org> for info.

### Opposition to Homophobia and Heterosexism

*Submitted by Kansas East Annual Conference, adopted on April 30, 2008*

**WHEREAS**, homophobia<sup>1</sup> is the discrimination of people perceived to be non-heterosexual, regardless of the victim’s actual sexual orientation or sexual identity; and,

**WHEREAS**, heterosexism<sup>2</sup> is a self-justifying system of homophobia that

- 1) perpetuates stereotypical categories of what is essentially “masculine” and what is essentially “feminine,”
- 2) provides a privileged status for people who identify as culturally defined heterosexuals, and,
- 3) discriminates against persons who, regardless of their sexual orientation or sexual identity, do not appear to fit within the particular category defined as appropriate for their gender; and,

**WHEREAS**, actions rooted in homophobia and heterosexism, including violence, threats, ridicule, humiliation, discrimination, isolation, and rejection, is damaging to persons of all sexual orientations and identities,

**WHEREAS**, homophobia and heterosexism are manifestations of sexism in general in that they foster stereotypes based on arbitrary distinctions of gender categories,

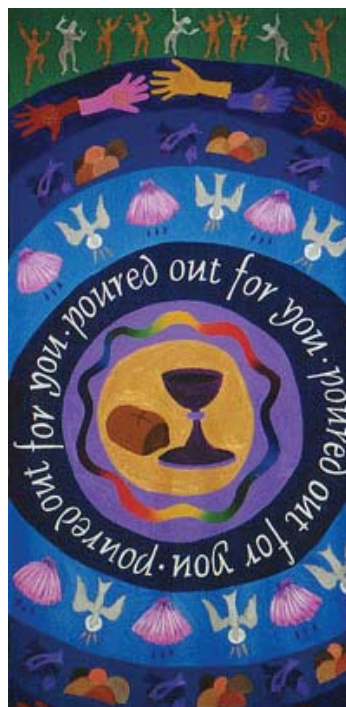
**WHEREAS**, The United Methodist Church is committed to the eradication of sexism (#48, 2004 Book of Resolutions),

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that The United Methodist Church strengthen its advocacy of the eradication of sexism by opposing all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice or sexual orientation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the General Board of Church and Society develop resources and materials aimed at educating members of the local churches about the reality, issues, and effects of homophobia and heterosexism and the need for Christian witness against these facets of marginalization.

<sup>1</sup>Homophobia, “Fear or contempt for lesbians and gay men.” The American Heritage Dictionary (1992).

<sup>2</sup>Heterosexism, “Discrimination or prejudice against lesbians or gay men by heterosexual people.” The American Heritage Dictionary (1992).



### “God’s Unfolding Story,” Continued from Page 1

full inclusion and strengthen our ties to those who share our common vision for our church. With this strength we go out and make disciples boldly, knowing that we have hands to hold and friends to lift us up when we have a difficult interaction. In newly formed communities and those that have been coming together for decades, we find the strength to share our stories and change our Church. The road ahead will not be easy, but that is never what Jesus promised to his disciples as they set out on their paths. Being a disciple means leaving my comfort zone of Washington, DC to work in southern conferences, and having faith that the way will be made known and the divine comforter will be at my side. So, let us go out boldly to find our shared path and heal our beautiful but broken church! 🌈



Recent studies by the Barna group report that 91% of young people describe Christianity as “anti-homosexual” and thus, less attractive. Do you know a few young people who want to change that perception? This spring, MOSAIC is embarking upon a national campaign of local-regional gatherings of welcoming young adults. Gatherings will occur in more than 30 cities and towns, including Jackson, MS; Omaha, NE; Nashville, TN and Troy, AL

*Do you want to take part in this exciting (low-cost) opportunity?*

Email [Audrey@rmnetwork.org](mailto:Audrey@rmnetwork.org) or to get these resources:

- A toolkit with information about planning, recruiting, and enjoying your gathering
- A conference call (9pm EST on Tues., Mar. 10) to help planners and answer questions
- Web space on the MOSAIC Facebook group and RMN-MOSAIC webpage for advertising
- Meeting content materials: discussion guides, introduction strategies and more!

*Come celebrate, learn, and grow with us!*

One of the most exciting things about grassroots social movement work is knowing that people all over the country, whom you may not know (yet) are working with similar passion! To bring together our local efforts, MOSAIC will be publishing success photos, videos, announcements, and stories on Facebook, our website, and the RMN blog! Send your regional “w00t” to [Audrey@rmnetwork.org](mailto:Audrey@rmnetwork.org).

## ■ Top Five Reasons to Save For Convo

5. Plenary speakers will teach us ways to make disciples and transform the world
4. To worship with Marcia McFee & Jorge Lockward
3. The estimated cost of \$475 is less than a single credit hour at many universities.
2. To see my reconciling friends like Caleb from North Carolina, Deborah from Oregon, Julie from Georgia and Becca from California.

And the #1 reason why I’m saving for Convocation is...

1. To get a glimpse of the church as it can be: joyful, diverse, and inclusive of all persons!!

Details about the program will be online and in the next issue of Katalyst.

### Expense Overview

**Costs:** Registrations fees are \$210 for adults and \$110 for students

**Room and Board:** Ranges from \$48 to \$185 per person per night

**Transportation:** A shuttle from Denver International Airport to the YMCA is available for a special rate of only \$50 (round trip)

### Register and Learn More!

Go to <http://www.rmnetwork.org/convo2009.asp> to register and learn more about Convocation 2009! 🌈

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#### “Does My All Really Mean All?” Continued from Page 1

you the church that accepts those people?” I couldn’t be sure from the slow slurred speech if this was a hostile call. Whenever I hear “those people” my hackles tend to go up. But Nancy continued, “I figured if you accepted those people, you might accept somebody crazy like me.” After her aneurism, she felt crazy trying to put words together. She called the church flying the rainbow flag to see if it was true that she could be welcome too—wheelchair and all.

In my Midwestern U.S. mind, I had to hear the anti-gay speeches by some African delegates more than twice to really believe them. When faced by U.S. persons stereotyping the rest of the world, Antony, who was raised in South Africa asked “Do we care about the struggle of our lgbtq brothers and sisters in Africa?” Yes, leaders from Kenya, Nigeria, and also Uruguay, the Philippines, will join us at Justice and Joy in the Rockies to see what all means to us. My “colonial” mind will have a chance to expand.

As we seek to transform our church to be the full expression of Christ’s love where all means all including God’s lgbtqa children, we must ask of ourselves the same transformation. For those we know—Holly, Nancy, Sean Patrick, Antony—it may be easier, but how about for those we don’t know or even “those people” with whom we disagree. Is our all that big? Does our all really mean all? My gay, white, male, temporarily-abled, Midwestern U.S. mind surely has much to learn! 🌈





# Justice and Joy!

RMN's 25TH ANNIVERSARY

10TH NATIONAL RECONCILING CONVOCATION

United Methodists from around the world, representing a diversity of sexual orientations & gender identities, races, ages, classes, and abilities, called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and boldly proclaiming God's justice and joy.



**Dr. Marcia McFee**  
(worship leader)  
renowned consultant  
in worship design,  
preaching and arts



**Jorge Lockward**  
(worship leader)  
coordinator of United  
Methodist Global  
Praise Program



**Dr. Amy Oden**  
(Bible study)  
professor of History of  
Christianity at Wesley  
Theological Seminary



**Vincent Cervantes**  
(preacher)  
theatrical  
performance  
activist



**Rev. Drew Phoenix**  
(preacher)  
openly transgender  
United Methodist  
pastor



**Rev. Dr. Eunice Musa  
Iliya** (preacher)  
director of Evangelism  
& Stewardship of the  
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Church in Nigeria



**Bishop Grant Hagiya**  
(preacher)  
bishop of the Seattle  
Area of the United  
Methodist Church



**Roland Stringfellow**  
(speaker)  
coordinator of Bay Area  
Coalition of Welcoming  
Congregations and  
Proposition 8 activist



**Evan Wolfson**  
(speaker)  
executive director of  
Freedom to Marry



**Rev. John Makokha**  
(speaker) United  
Methodist pastor and  
coordinator of Other  
Sheep East Africa



**Anne Khadudu  
Baraza** (speaker)  
Reconciling United  
Methodist educator in  
Nairobi, Kenya



**Rev. Araceli Ezzatti**  
(speaker)  
Methodist and  
Metropolitan Community  
Church pastor in  
Montevideo, Uruguay

**YMCA of the Rockies**  
**Estes Park, Colorado**  
**September 4-7, 2009**

More details and registration at:  
[www.rmnetwork.org/convo2009.asp](http://www.rmnetwork.org/convo2009.asp)

## "Gifts In Honor of.."

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## 2009 Reconciling Sunday

By Audrey Krumbach

New worship materials are now available from the Reconciling Ministries Network website and office. In 2009, we encourage all United Methodist churches to observe a Reconciling Sunday that celebrates and proclaims God's radically inclusive love.



We seek to open our hearts and lift our eyes toward a vision of full inclusion of Every Body, in Every Place, with Every Diversity and in Every Circumstance. We believe that as we seek to love our neighbor, our lives and communities will be transformed into wholeness in the Body of Christ. This radically inclusive justice is God's joy and will become our joy.

Materials for this prophetic worship celebration are available online at <http://www.rmnetwork.org/prayers.asp> and by calling the RMN office at 773-736-5526. 🌈

## New Board Members

**Vincent Cervantes** is our new board member from MOSAIC. He lives in California and is attending the University of California, Riverside with a double major in psychology and religious education. He and his partner Ben have been united in covenant for two years. Vincent says his main efforts have been shaped around speaking out against ministries like Exodus and in their attempts to enable LGBT folks to "change". Vincent participated in the 2007 Soulforce Equality Rides and volunteered at General Conference last April.

**Rosario L. Quiñones** is a member of the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference. Rosario is a lawyer and a CPA licensed in Puerto Rico, with experience in accounting, tax, and audit of non-profits. She received a Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology in 2004 and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Biblical Studies: New Testament and Early Christianity in the Graduate Division of Religion of Drew University. Rosario and her partner started the first LGBT church in Puerto Rico in 1994. Together, they have been involved in various LGBT ministries in Puerto Rico, Columbia, Mexico and the U.S. 🌈

### An Affirmation of Faith For a Sunday of Justice and Reconciliation

I believe it is a matter of faith to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

I believe it is a matter of faith to recognize equally and love all members of God's human family. There are no exceptions to God's love.

I believe God's creation is good, beautiful and sacred; therefore to condemn any portion of God's creation is to condemn a portion of God. This is sin.

I believe Jesus Christ came to us to free all people from sin and to make disciples – people willing to live Christ's discipline of love and justice for all.

I believe the Holy Spirit is that power within us that gives us courage and stamina to face the truth and to live it, even to die for it, as Jesus died.

I believe in the resurrection, the victory over death, and the truth that is life for all in Jesus' name.

Glory to God, the One in Three: Creator, Savior, and Holy Power of love.

From 2009 Reconciling Sunday materials and published in *Shaping Sanctuary*, p. 91, adapted by Ruth Duck and Maren Tirabassi



# Reconciling Ministries Network

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## About *Katalyst*

A quarterly publication of RMN, this *Katalyst* and other editions are available online at <http://www.rmnetwork.org/katalyst.asp>. Hard-copies of the most recent editions can be ordered at:

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