



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

A Christian Liberation Community
in the Episcopal Tradition

CROSSROADS



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Baptism, Confirmation and Reception: What Are They All About?

by the Rev. Phillip Wilson, Rector

Being a Christian is not a requirement to be a member of the Church of the Redeemer. Often I remind people that neither God nor Jesus are Christians. Here we hold up the experiences of God as what we share in common more than specific words and stories of God. For most of at Redeemer we capture up that experiences in the word "Liberation" as that which sets people free to be whom God created them to be. We look for liberation and name it in ways that are personal, spiritual and political.

At the very same time Redeemer is a community with powerful and poignant Christian roots that give many of us a larger framework in which to talk about our experiences of God. The "Jesus story" is also a "liberation story." We can approach the "Jesus story" in two ways: one, with an intellectual distance or two, by embracing it, personally, as our story.

Baptism is the way we embrace it as our story and state publicly that the "Jesus story" is the way we name our God, who we are, our priorities in life and that for which we are willing to suffer. Baptism is not about what we believe in our head as much as it is for which our heart yearns. It is about declaring that we are part of a larger Christian family and therefore, are part of each other's growth and well-being. It is about accepting our inherent worth as a child of God and then working for the justice that treats everyone else in the same way. Baptism is about claiming a Christian identify and membership in a family where people are supporting each other to live into the fullness of that identity.

Baptism is usually done with infants and small children with their parent(s) making commitments and talking vows in the child's name. Baptism takes on an even more powerful focus when it is done with an adult. Here we see adults making profound statements about who they are and what they most value in life. On April 24, 2005 at the 10:30 am Eucharist we will have a Baptism Service just for adults. The sermon will focus on what this decision means. At one time in our history it was a decision that could cost you your life. Any, adult who has not been baptized and would like to have a conversation about this, contact Phillip.

From the Pastoral Assistant

by L. Edwin Hamil

Just a few moments before I began writing this article, I looked out my office window and saw the first robin of the season. This, as well as noticing as I left the house this morning that both the daffodils and hyacinths were rising magically from the cold earth, has convinced me that spring has finally arrived and that flowers and warmth will soon replace the snow and cold of this past winter.

It's always that way, isn't it? The patterns of nature continue uninterrupted since the beginning of time. And these patterns are comforting; we know that spring will indeed always follow winter and that these patterns are reflective of similar patterns in our lives and in our liturgical seasons. After all, haven't we just completed the death and life pattern of Good Friday and Easter?

I think we need to take time to think about and reflect upon these patterns. We need to accept that the human experience involves patterns of joy and grief, of gain and loss, of hope and despair, of life and death. And we need to acknowledge that at the center of it all is God - the same God who sustains us and who teaches us that, only by experiencing and accepting these patterns, will we come to terms with our full humanity.

So, let us welcome spring and fully experience its possibilities:

Spring

Now come the jonquil days
And the airs for new hearts.
Winds look white
And branches toss
And hope is
In the up and down.

Everywhere, O everywhere,
Are grackle, cowbird,
Redwing, robin,
Blue jay, finches,
Purple, gold;
And morning waking
To the mourning doves.

O God, you come to us
In colors, skies,
The days, the nights,
In touch dream, smile.
O marvelous, fabulous, great
Is your coming among us. Amen.

Poem from Arnold Kenseth's, *Sabbaths, Sacraments and Seasons: A Collection of Meditations, Prayers and Canticles*. Permission is freely given to copy for church newsletters.

Letting Go and So Much More

by Donnalee, a Member of the Congregation

On July 14, 2004, I almost died. I was driving home from work, it was late and it was raining. I had yet another 'bad' day and I was still very upset from an earlier interaction with my boss. I had called my wife to let her know that I was going to be home late, again. She had just picked up the phone and I had barely enough time to hear her voice when I something surreal happened. Seemingly out of nowhere came a black blur headed toward me and then I heard the loudest, most horribly indescribable sound that sometimes still resonates in the still of night today. I realized that I had been hit by something and that I was spinning uncontrollably. Thoughts went racing through my mind. I remember thinking that I was going to die; yet I didn't feel frightened. I heard my mom singing "Silent Night" to me. I remembered driving to work with my best friend Marygrace's in her old Chevy Caprice, the very car that I used to tease her about when we were in our 20's. I felt my beloved beagle kick her leg over mine as we watched TV. I saw my wife Jen, as I did on our wedding day, as she walked down the aisle toward me at our Ceremony in Canada. My heart fluttered as it did that very day. I felt her lips pressed against mine and I heard her say, "I love you more than that." Everything then went black.

I smelled smoke. I opened my eyes and realized I was still alive. The smell was strong. I could taste blood but I couldn't move. I threw my body against the driver door but it barely budged. Suddenly, I was moving. Someone was carrying me. It was cold, and warm and wet all at the same time. I called for Jen and there was a woman asking me my name. I needed to call Jen. I had to get my phone ...

They never found my phone. We think it was embedded into what was left of my three month old Mini Cooper, the car Jen and I bought together because she said my Ford was getting too old and wasn't safe. The car that by its design saved me life. The woman, who turns out was the same person who pulled me to safety and put the fire out in the car, had called Jen. I was transported to the trauma center in Newark. I had to give permission for the hospital to let Jen into the ER to see me because they didn't acknowledge her as my wife. Marygrace lied to them and said she was my sister and she got in as well. I never saw Jen look so frightened, so pale and helpless. I never remember seeing fear in Marygrace's eyes in all of the many years we have been friends. I never saw anything so beautiful as the sight of my wife and my best friend in front of me-even if they were blurry because parts of my glasses had become one with my car.

Amazingly, not only was I alive but except for a concussion, some head wounds, burns on my fingers and hands, a broken knee, ribs and nose, I was intact. I couldn't move my neck and I had tremors in my right arm but I was alive.

Everyone at the scene, the woman who pulled me to safety, who was several months pregnant as I later find out, the police officers, the ambulance attendants and even the insurance adjustor who called Jen and I a few days later to say the car was a total loss, they all told her I should have died. It seems a black SUV that was traveling East on Route 280 swerved to avoid another vehicle, struck me as I was traveling West almost head on. The spinning I felt was the car being hurled across the highway and hitting a tree. I should have died they all said but what they didn't know was that I was already dead.

I started to die back in 1990 when I forsake God for not sparing my mother from Cancer. I continued my terminal demise when I denied who I was and entered into a heterosexual marriage to please my father. I continued my downward spiral working for a company that didn't treat people right and for a boss who took what little I had left and consumed it. I was a shell going through the motions until I met Jen and I finally knew what it was to be loved and alive. But instead of taking the gift, I continued in the toxic work environment and each day, the oppression and hostile work conditions stole my soul. I was dead before I got behind the wheel that day, only I didn't know it then.

Weeks past and Jen helped me get strong enough to walk with a cane and go to physical therapy. My job kept calling for work related issues and I felt guilty all the time for not being at work. I wasn't healing fast and I became anxious and depressed. I lost 20 pounds and stopped eating. My muscles atrophied. Two months after the accident, my company fired me. Their reasons were contrived. Their actions were cruel. The result was my nervous breakdown and attempted suicide. Jen once again saved me and got me help. I was admitted to Ramapo Ridge Psychiatric Hospital. During my time there, the pastoral representative asked me what religion I was and I told him I wasn't anything anymore but I needed help and I wanted help. He gave me the name of Redeemer.

Weeks later, after dropping to 97 pounds and wallowing in depths of depression and despair that I can't even describe accurately, Jen and I came to Redeemer.

We walked through the doors and we saw a rainbow flag. A rainbow flag, in church! It's blasphemy I thought as all of my Catholic trappings hit me full force. We sat down and listened to the sermon and we knew this was no ordinary church. In fact, ordinary is not a word you can use to describe Redeemer or all those who make Redeemer what it is. We never experienced such warmth and friendliness. We came the next week, and the next and met Dottie and Dolores. They invited us to their house for a holiday party. People who had known me for years avoided me since the accident and here were two strangers opening their arms, hearts and their doors to us. We were hooked.

Slowly, things started to turn around. Yet I still struggled with depression and the loss of my identity, as I was unemployed for the first time since I was 14 years old. I was no longer the marketing director, I was just Donna and I didn't know how to be me nor did I want to know how. Time passed and I started to heal physically. I managed to get back to a healthy weight and was ready to find a new job-but who would hire such damaged goods. I was unworthy and I felt guilty and ashamed.

Ash Wednesday came. I did not want to go to mass because again being raised Catholic, Lent was about pain and sin and penance and suffering. I had had just about enough of all that already and dreaded identifying yet another thing to give up. I'm embarrassed to admit that as it sounds so selfish but it was true. Besides, I lost God years ago and I wasn't convinced He wanted me to find Him. Luckily, Jen pushed for us to go and Phillip knew something that I didn't and he shared it with me that night. Phillip stood in front of the congregation and told us all that God loves us and forgives us. That only God is perfect and therefore God does not expect perfection. Phillip shared with us the idea that God wanted us to let go of whatever it was that was holding us back and hurting us, not to give up something that we enjoyed. This was indeed alien to me yet it also was freeing. I sat in the heart of Redeemer, holding my wife's hand and for the first time, I realized that God was with me. He has always been with me. He had not wanted me to die in that accident but He had wanted me to live. I was not perfect but I was His child and He loved me and He wanted me to let go of my feelings of inadequacy, guilt and shame. It was as if a huge boulder that was sitting on my chest was shattered into a million pieces and I could breathe again and hear my heart beat. I went home that night and realized that I was much more than what I did for a living. A few days later, the doctor said I was strong enough to start to work part time and I actually got a job offer! Within a week's time I had gone from life looking bleak to life looking sweet.

I continued my letting go in the 5 classes that Phillip and Sister Shane led during Lent. I still have so much more work to do but I am finally on the right path. The car accident that should have killed me actually saved my life. I am imperfect. I get angry. Sometimes I don't do the right thing. I am a sinner although I try so hard not to be. Yet, no matter what, I am God's child and God loves, accepts and forgives me. There is no power greater than knowing this. God has given me the wonderful gift of life and another chance to live it. He has given me more love than I could ever have prayed for in the form of my beloved wife Jen, my supportive best friend Marygrace, my sister EJ and my cousins Deneen and Donna and our three, yes three wonderful dogs, Raidan, Reed (named after Redeemer) and Bailey (named after George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life" and the name coincidentally of our wedding photographer) and of course, Phillip, Shane, Larry, Colleen, Stephanie, Dottie and Dolores and the love and support of our Redeemer family and everyone who stood by me and helped me during the past 8 months. The words thank you hardly seem adequate enough to express my love and gratitude.

I never thought that letting go could give me so much. Enjoy the beauty and rebirth of Easter and Spring and remember that we are God's beloved children and that we are accepted, forgiven and never forgotten, even when we forgot ourselves. Shalom!

I Am Who I Am

by a Long-Time Congregant

"I am who I am." I am I. My body structure; my personality; the pitch of my voice; my sexual orientation; the color of my skin; my ability to adjust to my environment and to the society in which I am a part. These are the physical characteristics with which I am endowed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to be the individual that I am.

My soul, which is the center of my spiritual life, serves as a compass to direct my physical life through the guide posts life as expressed by God, Jesus Christ, in admonishing us to "love god with all out hearts, with all out souls and with all out minds, and to love each other as ourselves."

I am a part of human society and I shall be judged by my response to the rules of human conduct and expressed in the Ten Commandments, as ordered by my ancestors thousands of years ago. And when the time comes that my earthly body has completed its purpose, my soul, the Holy Spirit is returned to God, the everlasting life.

As a spiritual being functioning in the physical form of the human animal with a central nervous system consisting of a brain, the center of thought, and the organ which controls my sensory impulses through sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, I am "one of a kind." I am as unique as my fingerprints and the composition of my D.N.A.

I am like the colored bulb on a Christmas tree. My certain color glows through the power which comes from the electric power cord to which I am attached. Then, when the elements which have made me glow (my human life) have served God's purpose. My light dims and goes out. But my soul (who I am) lives on forever as the Holy Spirit.

This is my thinking about my life. I am a spiritual being, incarnated for a limited period of time. Then when I die, my soul continues on in life eternal with God, the Holy Spirit.

Redeemer Parents Explore Answers to Their Children's Questions

by Dan Goldman

Phillip says, "Love the questions!" And who has more questions than our children? One reason we joined Redeemer was so our children would be exposed to the diversity of ages, colors, ethnicities, family lifestyles, and religious backgrounds that are so well represented by the Redeemer Family. When faced with this variety at Redeemer, children are bound to have questions about issues and people that they've previously been unfamiliar with.

These questions can range from, "What's a Nun?" or "What does an intercessor do?" to "Why does Julia have two Moms?," "Is Sam a boy or girl?," and "What does 'transgendered' mean?" As parent, these are questions we can't just sit back and admire- We have to attempt answers. On March 6, Mary Jane and I met after church with some parents and parishioners for a Parent Forum to discuss strategies for addressing sensitive questions from children-and to ask even more questions!

One important thing to remember is to keep answers simple, age appropriate, and narrowly tailored in response to the question. It's often useful to answer a question with another question ("Why do you ask?," etc.), to determine the scope of the child's question. A preschooler's question about where babies come from does not necessarily require a detailed dissertation,

with illustrations from Gray's Anatomy. After a simple answer, asking, "Is that what you wanted to know?" could help.

For example, the answer to "Why does that man wear a dress?" does not necessarily require talking about gender reassignment surgery. It opens up a "teaching moment" to talk about varieties of dress in different cultures, gender stereotypes, and possibly the spectrum of gender identities and choices people make.

It was also pointed out that it's all right to admit you don't know the answer. It's worse, of course, to lie or make something up.

We were fortunate to be joined at the forum by parent and vestry member Lauren, and parishioners Sherry and Stephanie, who helped give us perspective on addressing questions about transgender issues. It was agreed that the life stories of transgendered individuals are as varied and unique as anyone else's: We shouldn't generalize about or stereotype members of the transgendered community. One resource recommended for anyone looking to learn more about this community was "She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders," by Jennifer Finney Boylan, a Professor of English at Colby College who came out as a transgendered woman after having taught and published as a man.

Lauren, Sherry and Stephanie expressed a willingness to discuss these issues with others at Redeemer, and Redeemer may schedule a forum in the next few months about transgender issues that will be of interest to all, not just parents.

In fact, talking about our children's questions was a learning experience for parents as well. We hope in the future to schedule additional Parent Forums to address other parenting concerns and issues, especially those that arise in Redeemer families, such as adoption.

Meet the Vestry - Pauline Primus

by a Vestry Member

I grew up in Berlin, located on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland - that large swath of land that makes up the majority of the Delmarva Peninsula. Although it was a segregated society, my world was insular in that my needs were met and provided for by the tightly woven social structure in place at the time - family, friends, and community. It was a vibrant community - a culture within a culture. As a child, my sense that all was right with the world was shattered with the Emmett Till lynching.

Our elders instilled in us (siblings and cousins) with a rich view of self - history, religion, education. That is, we must not ever take lightly or even forget whom we are, where we came from, and how far we had to go.

Let me encapsulate some of the stories... During antebellum Maryland, slavery was prevalent on the Eastern Shore. Livelihoods were sustained by either the land or the water (*the Bays [Chesapeake and Sinepuxent], rivers, ocean, inlets*); cheap labor was required to reap the bounty.

- "My Great-Great-Great Grandfather arrived in America as a slave from Morocco. He eventually bought his freedom through an agreement with the slave owner and went on to purchase a large tract of land in a section of Berlin he named Millertown (*named for himself*). He was considered a man of means and was favorably looked upon within the Black community.
- "My Great-Great Grandfather, also a slave, eventually married my Great-Great Grandmother after he bought his freedom. As a child, all of his family (Mother, brothers, sisters) was sold south except for him. The only reason he escaped sale was because he hid as the slave sellers approached. He came out of hiding after they left. The slave owner discovered him, took pity on him, and promised him he would never sell him. He remained with the household, worked, and saved enough money to eventually purchase his own freedom. Like his father-in-law, he also purchased a large tract of land south of Berlin and was considered a man of means. Regrettably, he never saw his family again.
- "His wife, my Great-Great Grandmother, and daughter of the ex-slave from Morocco, was born a free woman of color. She related a story (to her children, who eventually passed it down to us) of the negative impact slavery had on families. There were no protections under the law for slaves and their families - they were considered chattel. Your existence to be where contingent upon the decisions of your owner. She and her cousin, a slave, were outside playing when slave sellers came [for her cousin]. Her cousin was sold, without prior warning to her cousin or her cousin's mother; they never saw each other again until after the Civil War, and then by accident.
- "My Great-Great Grandmother's sister married a slave. Her soon-to-be husband had to get permission from his owner to marry. In spite of his slave status, all their children were born free because she was a free woman of color. One of her children, Dr. Charles Albert Tindley, was a renowned theologian and a prolific hymn writer. His songs are found in most church hymnals, especially Methodist and A.M.E. I also found two of them in Redeemer's hymnal - pages 444 and 447.

There was a lot of passion in the stories as they were related to us.

My Great-Great Grandfather was a slave in an Episcopalian household. He remained an Episcopalian even after obtaining his freedom and remained one until he died in 1884. (*My brother was doing some research and found his name in the Church's membership registers from long ago.*) It is my theory he was an Episcopalian because it was the faith of his slave owner. (2) It

was the only church available where Blacks could attend during that time. (3) He found comfort in the Church's tenets.

In 1914, four of his children banded together along with several others and founded Tyree A.M.E. Church in Berlin, MD. It was the first church in Berlin and the surrounding area where the church hierarchy and governing body was exclusively Afro-centric. In an A.M.E. church, you have three different backgrounds melded into one. There are the African-American mores, which permeate everything; the Methodist and the Episcopal sacraments.

To say they were proud of belonging to a religious organization specifically established for the African Diaspora minimizes their pride - they were ecstatic. In addition, they ensured everyone around them shared in their pride. As a child, religion was a major part of our (siblings, cousins) lives. As far back as I can remember, we attended Tyree in "rain, snow, hail, or blow". You dressed up (*hat, dress, Mary Jane [patent leather] shoes, gloves, laced socks - the works*) to do nothing but sit for hours on end. To a child, that is exquisite torture. And the sermons - oh, those sermons! First of all, you're a sinner and you're going to Hell. No matter that you're there and trying to do the right thing, it wasn't good enough - you (*meaning the congregation*) WILL be berated (*uh, sermonized*) - guaranteed! From the time it took the minister to deliver one sermon, several presidential administrations came and went. Mentally, I could not make the connection between church and God. Other than the singing and fellowship, mandatory attendance was excruciating. (*How does four hours in one sitting grab you?!*) To this day, whenever I hear a minister state, "let me say just one more thing before I finish", I shudder, because I know what the real deal is. You have at least one more hour before he wraps it up (*if you're lucky*). To steel myself against guaranteed ennui, I sit near the exit - prepared to flee at the first sign of an extended sermon.

When each of us (my siblings and I) was 12, my Mother announced, "Jesus was 12 when he set out to do his Father's work. Now, I'm giving you the same option. I will not force you to go to Church - you can make the decision whether or not you want to attend." Needless to say, hearing that was like manna from Heaven. I immediately ceased attending and never looked back. Through the years, I sporadically attended church - for special events ONLY and never on a regular basis.

So, what brings me to Redeemer?

We were living in the Washington, DC area and Bill accepted the offer to return to NJ to run the Urban League of Morris County. I followed and we eventually settled down in Ledgewood. Once settled, he broached the subject of church attendance several times, but to me, the words were like water on a duck's back. He saw his hints were ineffective so he delivered an ultimatum. We will go to several churches and the one I liked the best is the one we shall regularly attend. But, which one? There were several in the Black community and I did not want to get caught up in that again. Although they may be of different denominations, to me they were the same church but with a different "prayer cloth" and I voiced my objections. As a gesture of good faith, I acquiesced but mentally prepared to visit them all and reject each in kind. Then he mentioned Phillip. He told me about this minister who spoke at the MLK Prayer Breakfast, some positive things about his speech, and concluded with I might like his church. By the time he finished, my curiosity was heightened. We agreed to attend the following Sunday.

When I walked through Redeemer's door, I was literally blown away. Here was everything I ever envisioned a church should be. It wasn't nebulous - I could see it in action - it IS the church alive. It's a come-as-you-are party from beginning to end that stimulates the senses. Everyone is welcomed, no one is marginalized, and everyone is empowered to get involved. Best of all is the diversity, the inclusiveness, and its proactive stance on social concerns. These issues, from personal experience in living in America, are very important. The sermons are meaningful - causal relationships between today's events and Biblical events. Redeemer in every aspect challenges me to reach beyond what I ever thought possible. I serve on some of the ministries to ensure this vision endures. To make a long story short - I came, I saw, I stayed. My Great-Great Grandfather would be very proud.

On a more personal note...

"Getting a good education" was another mantra that was drummed into my head on a daily basis. It stuck because I could actually see its potential and privately, I felt guilty not pursuing one. I received my B.A. in Secondary Education/History - Social Studies from Rhode Island College in Providence and my M.S. in Telecom Management from the University of MD in College Park. I am seriously thinking about pursuing my doctorate.

Bill and I have five wonderful children and two handsome grandsons - Allen (16) and Ben (7 months). I am adventurous - always had a penchant for beating my own drum or championing the underdog. Some of my hobbies - from most passionate to "gee, I haven't done this in a while" are: (1) Vintage Cookie Jar Collecting (2) Collecting Vintage Cookie Jars (3) Cookie Jar Collecting - Vintage (4) Coin Collecting (5) Art Glass Collecting. I also dabble in gardening, antiques, art, and eBay. In contemplating my life's journey, I feel I am truly blessed. My only complaint is there aren't enough hours in the day to do what needs to be done or to see what needs to be seen.

China - Part I

by John Dewees



In the space of 500 meters on any road in coastal China it is normal to see the following:

- A modern factory employing >300 people.
- A 100 year old house
- 5 small rice fields
- 2 small vegetable fields
- Modern housing of brick, stucco and glazed tile
- 30 year old housing of ...?
- 2 shops selling house hold items
- Bicycles, cars, scooters, small trucks on all sides of the road going different directions

But the most amazing thing about China is the rate of change. It cannot be comprehended without experiencing it.

- Four months ago the field was full of crops. Today there is a highway interchange and eight toll booths.
- Last time it took an hour to drive from Tangxia to Guanming. This time it takes 35 minutes on a brand new road.
- In Shanghai 5 years ago the east side of the river (Pu Dong) was a swamp. This trip we have a drink in a bar 87 stories above the river.
- The thirty-five kilometers taxi ride from Shanghai to the airport used to take about an hour. The maglev train delivers you in 7 minutes. TWENTY TWO MILES IN SEVEN MINUTES.

China has compressed 5 years into one. In ten they have come 50. In 20 they will match us or beat us. I saw a young Chinese girl with a pierced nose. China sent an astronaut around the earth and claim they will reach the moon in less than 10 years.

This rate of change and the language, the signs, the way people drive, the smells, and the lack of rhythm in the work week all conspire to make China to the uninitiated really ugly. But when you finally accept that you are truly and totally lost, your eyes and ears change. You see and hear the same things differently, the vision and sense you had shift, and what was ugly before is now fascinating and hopeful.

I visited a plating factory just recently opened by two mainland Chinese men (not Taiwanese). Their chemically base process allows plating of plastic parts without the degradation associated with traditional plating techniques. Their factory is new, has about 30 employees, and deals with some wicked chemicals, like sulfuric acid. In the old days, the waste would be poured down the drain and whatever happened is what happened. Organic life does not like sulfuric acid much.

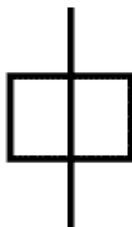
But now there are new regulations regarding the disposal of such chemicals that require real and sophisticated water treatment. I asked how they dealt with this and very proudly (interesting) they insisted that I take a walk through the rather stiff rain to another building about 50 yards away. A plain block building with a small metal door and some gated windows standing alone at the edge of the steep hill. Inside this 300 square meter building was a tertiary water treatment plant that took both stinky green acidic and gross brown basic solutions and emitted clear sweet water out the other side. The water actually leaves the building through a 6 inch pipe and goes into a small fish pond where there were about 30 orange and white Koi swimming around looking for something to eat.

Power is the biggest issue in China right now as there is not enough capacity to provide energy for the machines and production lines along with the increased desire to have heat and air conditioning. The Chinese government has instituted new building codes and restrictions and are using the leverage provided to slow the 10% overall growth of the Chinese economy. Until the government provides more energy capacity (that power is government owned is still a big problem) there will be issues like unannounced rolling black outs- which impact production schedules. At many factories it is common to lose about 10% average daily production.

China has huge coal reserves and most of the country relies on coal burning for electricity, which creates its own air and waste pollution issues. Many large companies (you can see it from the road as you travel) have built their own coal fired generators for electricity and steam, so they are not at the whim of the local power authorities (other than the graft). One large finished petroleum product suppliers, Nan Ya, maker of all things plastic, has a generating plant in one of its Shanghai facilities that looks like it could handle Newark pretty easily.

Shanghai is a city of 20 Million people. It is the size of Los Angeles and the height of Manhattan. There is more neon in the downtown Shanghai than Honk Kong and Times Square put together. Shanghai is like NY - a blend of very old and very new- but it has more money. Really.

The Chinese culture is about 3000 years old. The symbol for China is:



and represents Middle Kingdom or the center of the World. Believe me, today it is the center of the World.

Who's Coming to Dinner?

by Father Stephen Gerth

*From THE ANGELUS
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The Weekly Newsletter from the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin*

Let me see if I have this right. Rowan Williams has asked Frank Griswold not to come to dinner because if he shows up Peter Akinola and his friends won't come. Rowan Williams is the archbishop of Canterbury. Frank Griswold is our presiding bishop. Peter Akinola is the archbishop of the Church of Nigeria. Akinola thinks Griswold does not belong at the archbishop's table any more. I wonder why Williams is letting Akinola get away with this. Akinola isn't the only bishop who thinks his way. Griswold isn't the only bishop in favor of an inclusive Church. The primates have also asked the Anglican Church of Canada not to send representatives to meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council for the next three years. We are told this will give us the opportunity to explain ourselves. I find myself thinking about the opportunity Jesus was given to explain himself. But Jesus wasn't on trial. Pilate was. And I don't think the Episcopal Church is on trial. The Archbishop of Canterbury is. He has to decide who is invited.

I'm stunned that the Archbishop of Canterbury would go along with uninviting people to the table. He has never found it necessary not to invite divorced and remarried bishops to Anglican gatherings. I find it amazing that he has allowed himself to be held hostage over this issue of the sexual orientation of an American bishop.

When I was in France in 1999 I visited the British military museum in Normandy at Arromanches. While there I found myself wondering whether the political leadership of my own country in 1999 was more like the leadership of France in 1940 or England in 1940. I wonder where Canterbury is today. When Churchill first became prime minister his immediate problem concerned cabinet colleagues who wanted to make peace with the enemy.

I'm not suggesting that all of the issues raised directly and indirectly by the ordination of the Bishop of New Hampshire are simple ones. What concerns me has to do with the deeper issues of communion and excommunication. The Christian Church has no older traditions. Communion in a real sense goes back to Jesus himself. Excommunication does not.

If Paul's New Testament letters are any indication, it took Jesus' followers very little time to invent excommunication. I think at the beginning of the twenty-first century we should be very careful about making peace with persons who want to kick people

out of the Church. I've been under the impression that in our day excommunication was a Roman Catholic answer to difficult questions, not an Anglican one.

I can't help wondering whether Rowan Williams really wants to be held hostage by Peter Akinola and his friends over this issue. Does he really want the Anglican Communion to solve its problems by excommunication? Is Canterbury still in England or did it move?

Stephen Gerth

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Book List for Parenting Issues Workshop

After the March 6th parenting forum it was suggested that a list of books about issues like Transgender people, different families and adoption be put together. The following list contains some books that are good starting points in understanding these issues:

Transgender issues:

She's Not There, by Jennifer Finney Boylan. A personal memoir that is both funny yet personal, about the author's struggling with her gender identity and her coming out process that included dealing with her marriage.

True Selves, by Mildred Brown and Chloe Ann Rounsley. This is one of the classics in the field that was written to help people understand transgender/transsexual people.

Confessions of a Gender Defender, by Randy Ettner. Written by a therapist, this book is a personal view of transgender people and their stories that instead of being analytical is passionate.

Wrapped In Blue: A Journey of Discovery, by Donna Rose. A personal account of transition that gives an in depth portrait of the pain, confusion and joy that is part of the process, and that glosses over few issues.

LGBT parenting:

The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Guide, By Arlene Ishtar Lev. This book is aimed at perspective LGBT parents that also contains a lot of powerful information for others seeking to understand the issues surrounding different families. A lot is told in people's stories, something we commonly do at Redeemer.

Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is, by Abigail Garner. A book written from the perspective of children who have grown up in same sex households that is very personal and emotionally written.

Lesbian and Gay Families Speak Out, by J.L. Drucker and H. Schulweis. Description of LGBT families, of their experiences and issues of being a different type of family.

Gay and Lesbian Parenting, by D.F. Glazer and Drescher, J. A reference guide that contains a lot of general information about gay and lesbian family formation.

Adoption issues:

Telling the Truth to Your Adopted or Foster Child, By Betsey Keefer and Jayne Schooler. A decent guide on how to deal with the inevitable questions of adoptive/foster children, also can help others understand the issues of adoption.

Raising Adoptive Children, Revised Edition by L.R. Melina. Practical advice on adoption and the issues surrounding it, including issues around international/transracial adoption that is valuable both for potential adoptive parents and for those wishing to know more about the issues surrounding this.

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