

# Open

*Journal for Associated Parishes for Liturgy & Mission*

ADVENT 2012



FROM THE EDITOR

## *Shaped by liturgy*

Looking back, I recognize that the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission has done so much good work for me and for our church – much of which I have taken for granted. We are shaped by liturgy and directed by God's mission so our understanding and practice must continue to be faithful and responsive to God's Spirit. It is a delight for me to serve as the editor of OPEN: Journal of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission. I consider this work a thank-offering for the many gifts this organization has bestowed on me and the people I love and serve. Thank you. Please take note of the great care the contributors have given to their writing in this issue. It is a sign of the goodness of God and "confirmation" of their passion and for our common sacramental celebration.

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## Presidential Ponderings:

### *Tackling a Sacramental Enigma*

by D. Jay Koyle

I believe that the time has come for APLM to tackle the chronic sacramental enigma of our church; it is time for us to devote renewed attention to Confirmation.

There is no doubt that this pastoral rite continues to hold a cherished place in the life of The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). This in itself is not the reason for my call to action, however. (Though APLM's commitment to resourcing the church in matters liturgical may make it reason enough.) Rather, my exhortation is prompted by a growing inclination amongst many in the church to adopt or maintain Confirmation practices that undermine, rather than support the baptismal identity and vocation foundational to our shared life and ministry. It is my conviction, too, that such practices undermine Confirmation as well.

Confirmation is one of the pastoral offices within the Book of Common Prayer (TEC, 1979) and the Book of Alternative Services (ACC, 1985). Though rooted in baptism and communal in nature, these rites are designed to be responsive to times of transition, moments of crisis, or decisions of renewed or deepened commitment in the lives of individual Christians. They are meant to be prompted by the rhythms of personal life rather than the church's corporate rhythm. The pastoral rites are given as occasions through which individuals and their communities may find further meaning and transformation in the paschal mystery during the key turning points of human experience.

There remains a preponderance of understandings and uses of Confirmation, however, that unhinge the rite from this crucial dynamic and, instead, compromise the profound implications of baptism as "full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church." (BCP 1979, p. 298, emphasis mine) This became apparent in a disturbing way at this year's General Convention of TEC. For many years it was said that Confirmation is a sacrament in search of a theology. Well, now it appears this quest has rendered Confirmation a sacrament bloated and overburdened with a plethora of theologies, many of which contradict one another. At General Convention, I was astonished at the number of people arguing to co-opt Confirmation, yet again, for the service of purposes other than what is expressed in the rite itself.

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*cont'd from pg. 1*

As you can read elsewhere in this and the previous issue of *Open*, APLM helped to advance a legislative platform at General Convention that would have gone a long way in addressing many concerns voiced by TEC's House of Bishops and others in recent years. I am persuaded that these resolutions would have addressed not only such problems as the admission to leadership positions of people without sufficient knowledge and appreciation of Episcopal history, structure and governance, for example. I believe that they also would have allowed for the strengthening of Confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation as lively pastoral celebrations of renewed or deepened faith. Rather than treating Confirmation as a requirement to be ticked off on a legalistic checklist, or a ceremony hijacked to buttress a struggling institution, the rite would be freed to serve in the responsive and dynamic way envisioned by the BCP and BAS.

Yet, despite the promising aims of these resolutions, there was significant resistance by a sizable number of committee members and deputies. Part of the problem, it seems, was that people had not read the background material to the resolutions, particularly the quality papers produced by the national baptismal consultations of 2007 and 2010, co-convened by APLM and generously funded by Church of the Holy Cross, Shreveport, LA. That being said, however, I suspect the resistance resulted from something more deeply rooted than inadequate briefing.

Consider the smorgasbord of theologies set out in both hearings and committee sessions. Some voices argued passionately that Confirmation should be required for anyone to hold office in The Episcopal Church because, after all, the Laying on of Hands confers Episcopalian identity. (Where does the rite ever make that claim?

When did any sacrament become inherently about denominational affiliation?)

Coat-tailing on the previous notion, others turned to Confirmation as the remedy to assuage the fear of "missionaries from other denominations" coming in and taking over. (I am curious as to how Confirmation provides ecclesial border security against that kind of insurgency?)

Despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary, a surprising number of deputies esteemed Confirmation as some sort of panacea to make up for our failure to ensure that baptism is accompanied by formation, or as an inoculation against the effects of neglecting to nurture a culture of life-long formation in the church.

Others implied (actually, one bishop said explicitly) that Confirmation is necessary to complete what had been only half-done in baptism (i.e. baptism isn't really full initiation).

I even heard expressed the fear that Confirmation could disappear if we do not shore it up with "leverage" or specific penalties -- like inadmissibility for office as a warden -- just as the church tried to shore up this rite in the 13th Century by making it a condition for admission to the Lord's Table. (This position implies the abandonment of any argument for Confirmation's inherent benefits.)

Could it be that a colleague of mine is correct when he suggests that many in the church are scared to death about the future and are grabbing onto anything to give them a sense of security? If so, we must face the fact that a false sense of security will not stimulate the conditions for renewal. Rather it is confident living by God's promises, and deliberate engagement with vigorous baptismal celebration and formation that will shape a community hospitable to such renewal.

Misguided attempts to "save"

Confirmation will not provide the church any greater security for the future. They will not guarantee that Confirmation plays a vital role in the liturgical celebration of the gospel and the formation of disciples. They will, however, distort baptism's key role in our Christian identity and ministry, and divert us from the tremendous opportunity to realize a high standard of formation and an experience of profound renewal.

APLM must continue to "stir the waters," fostering vigorous catechumenal and missional practice, because a robust baptismal ecclesiology is essential to a vital church that emphasizes God's gracious action and aims to express what life is like in the Kingdom of God.

APLM must continue to address concerns related to Anglican identity, adequate preparation for church leadership, and the nurture of a culture of lifelong formation because TEC and ACC need to be populated by faithful and capable disciples in order to be such a vital church.

Yet, the way Confirmation is understood and practiced has significant implications for the extent to which these objectives can be successfully realized, as well as the degree to which individuals and their communities find meaning and transformation in the paschal mystery during the key turning points of human experience. Therefore, I submit that it is imperative for APLM to give fresh attention to the question of Confirmation, that enigmatic rite, between now and the next General Convention.



*Jay Koyle is President of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission.*

# A (Very) Brief History of Confirmation in the Episcopal Church

by Jason Haddox

The physical gesture of laying on hands to bless or to confer authority or power is an ancient one, and well-attested in a number of New Testament references. As to any normative use of such a gesture in baptism, we know little about early Christian baptismal practices. Such early sources as are available indicate that customs varied from place to place and over time. No “proto-liturgy” of baptism handed over by Jesus to the disciples before his ascension has come down through the centuries. Where early liturgical sources mention a post-baptismal laying of hands upon members of the community, this gesture seems to serve as a formal, public recognition of the water bath that had occurred (usually immediately before) in private, in a baptistery or other space separate from the location where the congregation gathered for the Eucharist. Most of the congregation would not have seen the administration of the water bath to the candidate; the handlaying with prayer (where it was used) served as a ritual announcement/approval of what had already taken place.

The sources also indicate that baptism was followed by immediate admission to the eucharist.

There was no waiting for “First Communion” at some later time. From water bath (in private), to welcome into the eucharistic assembly (in the presence of the community of the baptized), to receiving the eucharistic gifts in the midst of the assembly, was a single event. As chief pastor, the bishop presided over the entirety of the baptismal rite, though other ministers (deacons, readers, etc.) served in their appointed roles as well.

Over time as Christianity grew in prestige and authority and spread out into larger geographic areas, local bishops found it increasingly difficult to be present at all baptismal services. The authority to baptize began to be delegated to the local presbyters, but at Rome and in the churches under Roman jurisdiction/influence, the rite of handlaying and a final postbaptismal prayer were reserved to the bishop. In centuries to come, in the dioceses of northern Europe wherein a single bishop had great territories to oversee, this would prove increasingly problematic.

With the increase in the number of candidates for baptism, especially as the practice of infant baptism

*cont'd pg. 6, became more prevalent..*

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## A Never-Ending Quest for the Meaning of Confirmation?

by John W. B. Hill

It may be painful to acknowledge, but the ‘meaning’ of confirmation that we inherited seems to have been the result of a series of accidents.

Long ago, the final episcopal gesture in baptism<sup>1</sup> in the ancient Roman rite of baptism got separated off and became a distinct rite<sup>2</sup> (later to be called confirmation).

<sup>1</sup> The bishop recognized publicly before the congregation the fact of baptism, which had just taken place out of their sight, by laying on hands and anointing the new Christian and then marking the forehead with the sign of the cross.

<sup>2</sup> This separation became the norm in areas of the western Church beyond Rome, where bishops were few and far between but were required to imitate the Roman order anyway. Originally this separate episcopal signing was required only in for those baptized in extremis, but eventually it came to be required for all the baptized.

As long as bishops insisted on the necessity of this new rite, a meaning for confirmation different from the meaning of baptism had to be found. If confirmation was to continue to be the final ceremony of initiation – the ‘completion’ of baptism – then baptism would have to be considered ‘incomplete’ without it.

But the difficulty of enforcing the confirmation of someone baptized in infancy resulted in its administration at an increasingly later age. In England (and in some other jurisdictions), it eventually led to the attempt to enforce confirmation by withholding communion. This, of course, only strengthened the impression that confirmation was needed for ‘complete’ initiation.

*cont'd pg. 6, Prior to this...*

# A View From the Booth:

*Come on in!*



## The Water's Fine



by R.C. Laird

This year at General Convention, APLM did a lot of teaching and a lot of learning, much of which centered around our booth.

Our theme, "The Water's Fine," was designed to assist in our efforts at teaching, as it plays on both baptism (and communion) and confirmation. These were two of the hot-button topics at the convention, and we worked on behalf of both of them. There was a great deal of discussion about communion of the unbaptized, which the church voted against, as well as around requiring confirmation as a prerequisite for serving as a leader in the church, which the church sustained. I'd say we batted .500 on our policy issues for the year.

But more importantly, we learned a lot from the hundreds of people we talked to. We learned

that the church needs APLM to help provide leadership on issues like communion without baptism, and on the meaning of confirmation.

We also learned that people in the church, both lay and ordained, are hungry for opportunities to learn and reflect together. Based on feedback we got from both renewing and new members, we began working on a new initiative. We will be inviting liturgical thinkers from around the church to present their work in a webinar format, which will be made available to our members for free, in order to encourage collaboration among our members and provide resources for both our members and the greater church. Everyone we spoke to was excited about this idea, and it provided a reason for some new

folks to join who wouldn't have otherwise.

We also confronted a difficult reality: we of APLM haven't done a good job of articulating who we are, and why we're still an important part of the churches of North America. Too many people had never heard of us, too many people weren't sure why we were there. We need to do a better job of telling our own story, and showing the church why we're relevant to today's church, and not just a historical footnote.

All in all, the convention was a great launching pad for a year of exciting things to come for APLM, including our webinar series, more work on confirmation and its meaning, and looking forward to General Synod in Canada next summer. APLM is in a good position to launch into the future, if we can retain the momentum that was generated in Indianapolis this summer.

*R.C. Laird is a member of APLM Council. An enthusiastic bicycle commuter and dog owner, R.C. serves as Vicar of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle, Washington.*

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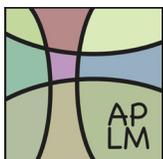
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# General Convention Report

*"The Water's Fine"*

by Robert J. Brooks, APLM Vice President

Many years of work at meetings of the Council of APLM, at two previous General Conventions, two meetings of the baptismal ecclesiology consultation, and various other meetings culminated at the 77th. General Convention of The Episcopal Church, July 3-12, 2012, in Indianapolis, IN. Working in consultation with APLM, the Standing Commission on Life-Long Christian Formation and Education sent resolutions A041-A044 to General Convention that brought the canons of the Church into conformity with the baptismal ecclesiology of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer and provided training in the history, governance and structure of The Episcopal Church for all assuming any office or ministry. APLM deployed a major, comprehensive presence at General Convention in support of these resolutions with the theme of "The Water's Fine".

Throughout its history, APLM has been characterized by three interrelated elements: a cutting-edge liturgical think tank; advocacy, directly and through networks, for the ideas it develops; and provider of basic liturgical resources to congregations and those engaged in preparing liturgy. All three of those elements were part of APLM's presence at General Convention. The APLM booth both supported advocacy and made resources available. The banners at the booth carried our theme and the booth distributed both buttons with the logo and copies of the General Convention issue of *Open* enhancing our advocacy. That issue of *Open* also announced a "Stirring the Waters" Conference jointly with the North American Association for the Catechumenate next summer which will resource folks in parishes and dioceses as we explore new dimensions of



**The Rev. Canon Robert J. Brooks responds to his introduction by Bishop Joe Doss at Speaker's Corner at General Convention 2012.**

baptismal community. Hard copies of APLM brochures and thumb drives for new members, with all brochures and many issues of *Open* going back to the late 1970's, provided resources to people. R. C. Laird, Jason Haddox, and Jay Koyle made our booth a real draw for folks. Through our membership in the Consultation Steering Committee, Jason Haddox and I were able to coordinate APLM's legislative strategy regularly with a large, effective network.

Of course, the focus of our presence was resolutions A041-A044. Hearings by the cognate Committees on Education of the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops were held for one and a half hours on Thursday, July 5. The committees then met for an initial conversation for another half hour. Bishop Neil Alexander of Atlanta and House of Bishops' Theology Committee Chair Bishop Joe Burnett of Maryland led off the testimony followed by Ruth Meyers, Jay Koyle, Jason Haddox, Joe Doss and me from APLM. Other speakers for and against the resolutions participated. Besides the critique that the opponents had

not read our resolutions and saw themselves as defending Confirmation from what they viewed as our attempts to abolish it, the definitions of Confirmation were all over the place- even contradicting each other! The claims made for Confirmation far exceeded what the rite in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer claims for itself. There was a palpable undercurrent of free-floating fear and anxiety that characterized some arguments by opponents who insisted on Confirmation as the great bulwark to keep out those who would destroy The Episcopal Church. The argument that proponents made about baptism as full initiation into membership was simply dismissed. Jay Koyle summed up things well after the hearings when he called for a major project for APLM Council going forward on Confirmation. The fact that a stream of opponents could successfully make the assertions that they did about Confirmation 33 years after the adoption of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer shows that there is new work for APLM to do in educating and providing resources for the Church.

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became more prevalent, children were baptized in their parish church at any time of the year (not just at the Easter Vigil). However, the post-baptismal ceremonies were delayed until the child could be taken to the bishop's church or the bishop could visit the parish to "confirm" the baptized. It was often impossible even for a conscientious bishop to travel his entire diocese in the course of a normal episcopate.

...It was not uncommon for bishops to confirm on horseback as they rode through their dioceses and for canons to require parents living within a certain distance from the bishop's projected route to bring their unconfirmed children to line the roadside so that they could be confirmed as the bishop passed.

The catechetical requirements for confirmation ordinarily consisted of the child's memorizing the primary texts of the Christian faith: The Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, and the Creed. After the child was able to recite these texts, the parents and godparents were charged that "...the infant be confirmed as soon as the bishop comes within a distance of seven miles."

Although in the West confirmation had long been a canonical requirement for admission to communion (although as we see above, this obligation was often more honored in the breach than in actual practice), a renewed emphasis on education and catechesis prior to confirmation received new energy in the reformation movements of the sixteenth century. In the Anglican reformation, those being prepared for confirmation

were expected to be able to recite (now in English) the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Decalogue. The Prayer Book Catechism formed the backbone of the "curriculum", and the parish clergy were required by canon to regularly catechize the young people of their parishes. Although confirmation continued to be held in great esteem in theory and canon law, the size of dioceses in England (and the absence of resident bishops in the American colonies) meant that frequently unconfirmed persons were, in fact, being regularly communicated in the parish churches.

Indeed, knowledge of the Catechism was taken to be the essential prerequisite for the reception of Communion. ...The mechanics of [diocesan] enforcement [in England], which largely ignored confirmation, zealously sought out ministers who failed to catechize and sought to exclude from communion those were uninstructed. Catechizing, and not confirmation, was the essential rite of passage into adult membership in the Church of England before the eighteenth century.

Much the same standard was used by Anglican clergy in the North American colonies. ...[T]he missionaries and other clergy catechized the youth and through that prepared them for adulthood in the church."

This practice of catechizing, then admitting to communion, continued to be normative until early in the 18th century in England, and early in the 19th century in the United States. Changes in theology (both Evangelical and Anglo-Catholic) made confirmation increasingly desirable, while changes in technology (the growth of cities and urban areas during the Industrial Revolution, and the coming of the railroads) made it increasingly possible. By the mid-nineteenth century, in general the confirmation rubric was uniformly enforced in practice, prior to one's admission to communion and full

## A Never-Ending Quest...

*cont'd from pg. 3*

However, in the 20th century, we began to recognize confirmation for what it really had become: an accidental assault on the integrity of baptism that actually excommunicated the newly baptized. We decided to set aside the inherited logic of confirmation as the 'completion' of baptism<sup>3</sup> and to permit baptized but unconfirmed children to receive communion. The original relationship between baptism and eucharist was restored: baptism was 'consummated' immediately in communion.<sup>4</sup>

This change also helped establish an alternative meaning for confirmation that had been emerging in the Prayer Book tradition:<sup>5</sup> confirmation could serve as a rite of reaffirmation of baptism instead of 'completion' of baptism.<sup>6</sup>

*cont'd pg. 8, My image of...*

<sup>3</sup> See the BCP 1979, page 298, the first rubric. The shape of Holy Baptism in both the BCP 1979 and the BAS 1985 presupposes these decisions: even if the bishop presides and confirmations are included in the rite, the confirmands are not the newly baptized but those who have renewed their commitment to Christ (BCP, page 309; BAS, page 161). The second rubric of the BCP, page 412, which seems to undermine this understanding, was not part of the Draft BCP presented to General Convention in 1976 but was added under pressure from the bishops.

<sup>4</sup> The BAS avoids saying that "Holy Baptism is full initiation" (as the BCP does) because it sees baptism and first communion as full initiation.

<sup>5</sup> Some local church councils of the 13th century encouraged the delay of confirmation until a child had learned certain texts, and the earliest editions of the Book of Common Prayer linked the laying-on-of-hands with the recitation of the catechism. This already suggests a shift away from the sense of 'completing baptism,' yet the refusal of admission to communion until after confirmation continued to reinforce that sense. The reaffirmation of baptismal promises as the 'meaning' of confirmation first came to expression in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

<sup>6</sup> The Roman Catholic Church continues to insist on an order of the sacraments that is even harder to understand: infant baptism, then, sometime later, penance, and then first communion, and later still, confirmation. Catholic historians and liturgical scholars recognize this order to be theologically indefensible, yet bishops will not agree to correct it. Paradoxically, confirmation in the Roman Catholic is now administered by a priest in certain circumstances.

adult membership in the life of the church.

Along with these changes in practice, the understood meaning and significance of “confirmation” shifted from the action of the Holy Spirit, to an action on the part of the individual confirmand. This shift had been underway since before the sixteenth-century reformations, but by the mid-1800s was thoroughly established as the principal meaning of the rite. Confirmation was seen “...as a pre-eucharistic rite marking the completion of one’s formation in the Catechism and subsequent admission to the Holy Communion. In the Prayer Book tradition, the meaning of the term ‘confirm’ shifted from the bishop ‘confirming’ the Holy Spirit in the life of the baptized, to the candidate ‘ratifying and confirming’ his or her own personal faith.” This remained the case throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as did the requirement of confirmation prior to admission to communion. Both popular concept and pastoral practice reinforced each other, to place confirmation and admission to communion as the transitional moment when an individual truly “joined the church.”

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer names baptism as “full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body, the Church.” If this is truly the case, then confirmation as a postponed rite, enacted at some later time in the life of the individual, cannot be understood as “further initiation” among Episcopalians. (Note, however, that confirmation is understood as “a rite of Christian initiation” among Roman Catholics, which has sometimes confused our reading of Episcopal/Anglican baptismal theology.) Prior American editions of the BCP placed Baptism among the pastoral rites of the church, along with Holy Matrimony, the Communion of the Sick, and other such rites which ministered to individual members of the congregation

who were going through particular transitional moments in their own lives (marriage, grave illness and the like.) In the BCP79, Holy Baptism is placed immediately prior to the eucharistic rites. By locating Baptism so closely to the eucharist, the BCP highlights the relationship between the dominical sacraments—they are so closely tied to one another, that nothing else comes between one and the other, because nothing else is necessary. This change in the location of the service within the book itself signals that it is Baptism, now a public act in the presence of the assembly at Sunday worship, which leads directly to the sacrament of the altar.

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*As in previous editions of the BCP, the 1979 Prayer Book locates confirmation among the pastoral rites.*

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In prior English and American editions of the BCP, the ritual climax of the confirmation rite was the prayer for the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, immediately prior to the laying on of hands. This too is changed in the 1979 BCP, where the prayer occurs at Holy Baptism, immediately after the water bath and prior to (or directly following) the signing of the forehead of the newly baptized with the cross and chrism. Again, the locating of the prayer itself at this point and the (optional) use of chrism says something very particular: that it is by baptism through which “full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body, the Church” is accomplished. (Italics mine.) For this reason, the rubric requiring confirmation prior to receiving communion has been eliminated in the 1979 BCP. Baptism with water, in the name of the Trinity, is the only requirement.

As in previous editions of the BCP, the 1979 Prayer Book locates confirmation among the pastoral rites. It is an “occasional” service, used on those occasions when it is suitable. Like marriage and the anointing of the sick, it is suitable as a liturgical response to the lives of those who have need of it, whether members of the parish community or those newly coming into the life and ministry of a local church. It has no particular time of year or time of life associated with its use, and although it may be employed as a rite of passage (for instance, as a ritual conclusion to a program of youth education, or a ministry of newcomer integration into the life of a parish church) it does not require any such understanding or preparation.

Rather, it is “for” anyone who desires, at any stage of their life and faith, to make a solemn reaffirmation of their baptismal promises in the presence of the bishop and the assembled community of faith. This might be a young person, choosing for themselves to take on the vows made for them as an infant; it might be a person coming from another Christian tradition who means to make their spiritual home in the Episcopal Church; it might be someone who has been a lifelong member of the church who experiences a spiritual awakening in mid-life and wishes to acknowledge and solemnize that experience in a public way. Because the confirmation rite in the 1979 Prayer Book is repeatable, it can be used many times in the life of a single individual, as a response to the changing circumstances of that life.

It is worth noting one thing the rite of confirmation in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer never claims for itself, and that is “to make someone an Episcopalian.” The words “Episcopal, Episcopalian” are found neither in the spoken text of the rite, nor the rubrics.

*cont’d pg. 8, as mentioned above...*

## *A (very) brief history...*

*cont'd from pg. 7*

As mentioned above, the rite may be used (and frequently is) as the ritual culmination of a process when a person comes into the Episcopal Church from another tradition, but in such cases it is the ongoing process of formation that “makes them Episcopalian” and the rite itself acknowledges and celebrates that fact, without ever claiming to accomplish it independently of such a process. Briefly, one becomes an Episcopalian by attending an Episcopal church, by receiving communion there, by praying and working and giving for the well-being of that parish, by sharing in the life and ministry and witness of that local congregation.

Because the rite of confirmation does not, in and of itself, create good Episcopalians, the practice of using confirmation as an ersatz “oath of loyalty” to the institutional church is highly problematic. Motivated by acts of schism and breakaway, canonical amendments have been passed at both national and diocesan levels in recent years which seem to imagine that the confirmation rite will somehow magically prepare leaders in the church to properly execute their ministries, and keep them faithful to the Episcopal Church. This is a fearful and frantic attempt to control the church’s institutional life, asking a modest liturgical rite to accomplish far more than could be reasonably expected. The spirit motivating such legislative actions could hardly be mistaken for the Paraclete.

It is certainly always “meet and right” that any leader in the church should possess the proper knowledge and skills in the exercise of their ministries. But this is accomplished by suitable life-long formation in faith, knowledge and practice, and is not instantly conveyed by a laying on of hands on a Sunday afternoon in the cathedral church. The rites of laying on of hands have always expected prior preparation and formation, and looked for the gifts of the Spirit evident in the lives of the persons involved, which the “hands” of the community (symbolized by the bishop) then recognize and bless. Without such preparation of persons and ways of life, there may be nothing to confirm at all.

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## The meaning of Confirmation...

*cont'd from pg. 6*

My image of holy communion as the ‘consummation’ of baptism is suggested by the inextricable relationship between baptism and eucharist. Baptism and eucharist are both encounters with the grace of God in Jesus Christ, but they are more than that; each of them is a participation in the death and rising of the Lord. “Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”<sup>7</sup> And, “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet there is a fundamental difference between baptism and eucharist: baptism is a once-for-all event in a person’s life, while eucharist is a constantly repeated event. Baptism is incorporation into a new sacramental identity and vocation for the sake of the world, from which there is to be no turning back; eucharist is the sacramental living out of this priestly vocation, in which we affirm the truth decisively acknowledged in our Baptism.<sup>9</sup> There is therefore a shape to our practice of the sacraments by which the life of discipleship is symbolically articulated: turning to Christ, and then cleaving to Christ.

This means that the normal way to ‘confirm’ one’s baptism is not through yet another once-for-all ritual, but through the ritual of sharing in com-

munion, week by week: baptism is literally consummated by sharing in holy communion, for eucharist is not only spiritual communion in Christ but physical communion in Christ’s body, the Church.<sup>10</sup>

Confirmation can nevertheless have a pastoral function for those who have not allowed baptism to be the defining reality of their lives. Confirmation offers them a way to solemnly affirm that they are returning to the covenant of their baptism. The remaining question, then, is this: Does returning to the Table actually require confirmation? The answer to that question would seem to be a matter of penitential discipline. But perhaps we have already begun to answer that question by reestablishing the discipline of the Lenten journey of return that comes to a climax in the Easter Vigil with a solemn reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant<sup>11</sup> – an annual reaffirmation rather than an occasional one.

*John W. B. Hill is a member of APLM Council. He also serves as chair of the Primate’s Task Force on Christian Hospitality, and Christian Initiation and Formation in the Anglican Church of Canada.*

<sup>7</sup> Romans 6: 3.

<sup>8</sup> I Corinthians 11: 26.

<sup>9</sup> I Peter 2: 4-10.

<sup>10</sup> As late as the 11th century, the term ‘confirmation’ was sometimes used in reference to the communion of the newly baptized.

<sup>11</sup> BCP 1979, page 292ff (see also the fourth rubric on page 312); BAS, page 330ff (see also the third rubric on page 163).

# General Convention 2012...

*cont'd from pg. 5*

When the committees finally made their recommendation, it was that all the resolutions be rejected. (The deputies' committee voted to approve but the bishops' committee voted narrowly to reject, making the recommendation "reject" under Convention rules.)

Fortunately, our legislative strategy was broad and deep. Making use of all resources already in place, APLM worked to change the outcome of the committees' work. We continued teaching through articles in ISSUES, the influential daily publication of the Consultation, thanks to contributions by Jay Koyle and Jason Haddox. At the Consultation's Speaker's Corner, Jay and I did presentations on our resolutions with great discussions for small groups on different days in the Exhibit Hall. The APLM booth continued distributing the General Convention issue of Open with its fine articles on what we were really proposing in the resolutions. We continued to coordinate strategy with the Consultation Steering Committee and its last Open Meeting, on the day before Convention ended, was largely about briefing everyone on the positive outcome we wanted for our resolutions.

The house of initial action for the resolutions was the House of Deputies. Resolution A041 was called up first, with its committee recommendation of "reject". After a substantial debate, the Deputies did reject the resolution to require basic training in the history, structure, and governance of the Church by those taking office.

Resolutions A042-A044 were called up on the last afternoon of convention, within hours of adjournment. Ruth Meyers was recognized by the President of the House, Bonnie Anderson, to move that they be referred to the Standing Commission on Ministry De-

velopment for further study in the next Triennium. The Deputies, with no opposing debate, overwhelmingly passed the motions. A short time later, the House of Bishops concurred on a motion by Bishop Neil Alexander. This means that the core of APLM's work on baptismal ecclesiology for the last 8 years will be in a continuing conversation in the Standing Commission and reported back to the 2015 General Convention. APLM continues to concretely challenge the Church, through these resolutions, to live into the baptismal ecclesiology of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. APLM learned through the hearings that it has work to do to resource the Church about Confirmation.

There were some other resolutions dealing with liturgy that APLM members were engaged in to a greater or lesser extent. APLM Associate Council Member Ruth Meyers led the effort to authorize same gender blessings. The extraordinary work that she has led in the last Triennium as Chair of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music culminated in passage of the rites by overwhelming votes in the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. As the representative of The Episcopal Church to the Consultation on Common Texts when it developed and adopted the Revised Common Lectionary, I testified as an expert witness before the cognate Prayer Book and Liturgy Committees in opposition to a resolution to allow the ecclesiastical authority to give permission to any parish to use the Lectionary of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer in place of the RCL. That resolution was adopted by Convention despite efforts by Ruth and me.

A huge issue was structure. APLM Associate Council Member Fredrica Harris Thompsett served on the Deputies' Committee on

Structure. Many proposals that had come forward would have undermined baptismal ecclesiology as it is expressed in the participation in governance by all the baptized at all levels of the Church. I was asked to testify at hearings in several venues in support of our inclusive governance structures. One of the recommendations would have abolished the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, the oldest standing commission and, for many decades, the only standing commission in The Episcopal Church.

Late in General Convention, our own APLM Member, The Hon Byron Rushing, was elected as Vice President of the House of Deputies of the General Convention. Congratulations to Byron!

Thanks to all those from APLM who worked so hard for months and years and gave of their time to have a robust presence for us at General Convention. Before adjourning, Convention passed resolution A045, adding its own gratitude to the Baptismal Theology Consultation "convened by the Presiding Bishop and Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission" for our contribution to the whole Church. Going forward toward General Convention in 2015, APLM heard clearly the need to resource the Church on Confirmation, continue to work with an interim body on the resolutions we brought forward, and resource the Church in all kinds of ways to claim more concretely the vision of baptismal community in the Prayer Book.

*Robert Brooks is Canon for International Affairs to the Bishop of El Salvador and a former Director of Government Relations for The Episcopal Church*

# Council of APLM

*We are a network of Anglicans in North America, established in 1946 to promote liturgical renewal in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. We also work ecumenically for the renewal of worship and mission in other churches. We develop and promote church practices joining the mission of the church and the regular gathering of the church community for worship so that liturgy shapes, defines, and empowers mission and mission liturgy.*

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Storrs, CT

Jay Koyle  
Sault Ste Marie, ON

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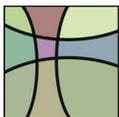
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