

More Light

A Quarterly Publication of
MORE LIGHT PRESBYTERIANS

Celebrating 30 years of contributions to the ongoing
reformation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
1974-2004

Update

Volume 24, Number 4
Fall 2004

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
The Adee Report	2
Call for Articles	2
More Light Gatherings	3
Louisville Seminary MLP	3
"The Rec" and Triangle MLP	3
Special Marriage Section	4-6
Eulogies	7
Spirituality Corner	7
Join, Renew, and Help	8

For up to the minute news
visit us at
www.mlp.org

Deadline for the Winter issue is January 12

Don't be caught unaware
**Could This Be Your
Last Update?**

Check your mailing label on
the last page. The first line will
tell you when your MLP
membership expires. If it says,
"Membership expired, please
renew" you need to send in
your membership NOW to
insure that you will continue to
receive the *More Light Update*.

Victory over Exclusion and Vigil for Justice

The language may sound triumphalist, but the strategic plan devised in September by the board of directors of More Light Presbyterians is intended to ensure a triumph of the Spirit of inclusion. The purpose is to instill new vigor in a dialogue that Presbyterians have been calling for since 1976, but with little rigor or discipline. The commitment is to do so in a way that will "promote the peace, unity, and purity of the church by encouraging and training MLP supporters in constructive dialogue, witness, and sharing our faith stories."

"For decades, the church has called for prayer, discernment, and dialogue on LGBT issues," noted MLP co-moderator Donna Riley. "Yet too often these calls for action have been met with inaction. Today, More Light Presbyterians has rolled out an action plan designed precisely to meet these calls. We're not going to wait for our sisters and brothers in this denomination to come talk to us—instead, we're coming to talk to them."

"The victory 2006 campaign seeks victory for the entire church,"

added MLP co-moderator, the Rev. Erin Swenson. "The PCUSA's institu-

tionalized discrimination of LGBT people has caused decades of unnecessary suffering and cost our denomination some of its finest leaders. It's time to put an end to the anti-gay provision in the Book of Order once and for all, and

declare victory over the affliction of G6.0106b."

The plan includes recruiting and training a national network of presbytery organizers and deputy field organizers who will work with grass-root supporters. New and strengthened More Light chapters as well as regional conferences held in 2005 will provide support, resources, and networking. MLP Field Organizer Michael Adee calls it a "a great opportunity for strengthening the denominar commitment to equality."

Earlier, in August, a special MLP project team consisting of Martha Juillerat and the Revs. Kim Smith King and Barbara Battin announced a "Vigil for Justice" to pray for our denomination in preparation for the 2006 G.A. The team promises to provide resources to be used "for prayer, silent witness, spiritual renewal and solidarity." For more, visit www.mlp.org/vigil for justice.

Many agree that this is a *kairos* moment for the church, the Biblical word for a time of spiritual crisis and opportunity, when all the

Authoritative Interpretations that would limit the freedom of presbyteries and congregations to call and ordain ministers, elders, and deacons without confining such ordination to married heterosexuals and celibates, "the



MLP Co-moderator Donna Riley

requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness."

That confluence of opinion combines powerfully with the final report to the 2006 General Assembly of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, which has acquired almost messianic expectations of helping the church survive diversity on this and other controversial subjects. At the least, the Task Force models what the church could be across party lines. A truly inclusive victory will not defeat our opposition; rather, it will defeat attempts to limit the grace and Spirit of God.

**"The victory 2006 campaign seeks
victory for the entire Church."**

-The Rev. Erin Swenson

Progressive Partner groups (i.e., MLP, That All May Freely Serve, Shower of Stoles Project, Covenant Network, Witherspoon Society, Voices of Sophia, and others) agree on a common timing and goal of removing both G-6.0106b and

Becoming the Change We Seek

From the Underground Railroad to an Aboveground Movement

More Light Presbyterian Churches join a remarkable "Aboveground Railroad" of congregations willing to offer safe haven to us, while working to remove the anti-gay ordination law.

"Become the change you seek in the world," Mahatma Gandhi challenged. Last month, while working with Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, I was again inspired by these words as displayed in the new National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. A monument to freedom with a teaching mission, the center tells the stories of freedom seekers and the Underground Railroad. It connects the dots of all injustice, including a section on the freedom-seeking of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. I discovered a new collection of the writings of Bayard Rustin, *Time On Two Crosses*, in the LGBT section of its bookstore.

For me, the most horrific display was that of the slave pen, and yet it is important to face the inhumanity of slavery that it represents to energize our work for the dignity of every person. Exhibits and films tell the story of the Underground Railroad, those who sought freedom from slavery and the women and men who made the trek to freedom possible, some of them Presbyterian clergy and lay people near the Ohio River. The Freedom Center also offers an experience entitled "The Struggle Continues," illustrating contemporary injustices, its final section being a personal invitation to "Reflect, Respond, Resolve."

I could not help but reflect upon the parallels between the Underground Railroad and the More Light Presbyterian movement. While I would never equate the injustices that we face as LGBT persons and the evil and tyranny of slavery, but insight and inspiration may be gained for our movement from the Underground Railroad.

As did the Underground Railroad, MLP creates sanctuaries: welcoming, safe places for persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and our families. Those who assist today's freedom-seekers along this path are heterosexual allies and advocates.

Just the opposite of being "underground," More Light Presbyterian Churches join a remarkable "Aboveground Railroad" of congregations willing to offer safe haven to us, while working to remove



Michael Adee with Co-moderators Erin Swenson and Donna Riley

the anti-gay ordination law. From Texas to Illinois, Florida to Alaska, these More Light Churches faithfully strive to "become the change" they seek in the world.

I found this dynamic of becoming the change that is sought as I worshiped with one of our newest "Aboveground" More Light churches, First Presbyterian Church of St. Louis. The Rev. Kelly Allen, pastor, and David Stephens, music director and church administrator, provide

creative, loving, and thoughtful leadership side by side with a committed and energized session. I witnessed the same energy of freedom-seeking in the Common Room of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago with a diverse group of 49 seminary students for their fall practicum, working with Yungchun Han and Deborah Mullen in the creation and teaching of "Faithful and Creative Ministries with and for LGBTQ People of God." Imagine how different our church and world would be now if seminaries of a generation ago had possessed such vision and commitment?

Now is our time. It is up to us. Each of us has a part to play in this Aboveground Railroad and justice movement through More Light Presbyterians. Every day I see evidence of our becoming the change we seek in the world and in the church, thanks be to God and to you.

Michael Adee, Ph.D., MLP Field Organizer

NEWS FLASH!

As we go to press, the Lazarus Project of Los Angeles has announced the 2005 recipient of the prestigious Lazarus Award: MLP Co-moderator and MLU designer, the Rev. Dr. Erin Swenson! The dinner ceremony will be February 26. For reservations, phone 323/874-6646. Congratulations Erin!

MLU Needs Articles

The More Light Update seeks brief news stories on More Light congregations, chapters, and activities. News stories begin with a sentence highlighting what the story is about, such as "Woman bites dog," then offers details of who, when, where, what, why. Please be economical with language, 100-300 words for news stories; commentaries up to 400 words. Include writer identification and contact information. E-mail to MoreLightEditor@aol.com or mail to Chris Glaser, 991 Berne St. SE, Atlanta, GA 30316. Questions? Phone Chris at 404/622-4222. We are also seeking photos and graphics, which may be mailed to Chris at the above address or e-mailed to our designer, the Rev. Erin Swenson at erin@erinswen.com. Please identify the persons and event depicted. Deadlines for quarterly issues: Winter, January 12; Spring, April 12; Summer, July 12; Fall, October 12. Thank you!

More Light Shines Across America

Ten More Light house parties brought one hundred people together and raised thousands of dollars for MLP on the weekend of October 9-10, our way of observing National Coming Out Day October 11. Ranging in form from a couple's 12th anniversary party in California to a pajama party in Chicago, the parties took place in eight states, including Oklahoma, Montana, and Georgia. The house parties were

planned as the first of what is hoped will become an annual event.

Also in October, University Presbyterian Church of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, held a More Light Weekend, as did the Middle Tennessee MLP Chapter in Nashville, hosting a one-day retreat entitled, "Becoming a Welcoming Church for All of God's Children." And the More Light Chapter in

Northern New Mexico held its annual retreat at Ghost Ranch.

Three sessions have recently designated their congregations as More Light Churches: First Presbyterian of St. Louis, Missouri (Rev. Kelly Allen, pastor; David Stephens, Church Administrator and Director of Music); Covenant Presbyterian Church of Napa, California (Rev. Deanna Reed, Pastor); and the Community House Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Rev. Wayne Peck, pastor).

MLP Seminary Group in Louisville Pride Parade

On June 18, 2004, the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS) More Light chapter entered a float in the Kentuckiana Gay Pride Parade. This parade was well attended by those in the greater Louisville metropolitan area.

More Light @ LPTS, as this chapter is called, decorated a truck, made banners, and rode through downtown Louisville in solidarity with the parade theme, "We Are Family." Along the parade route, several LPTS alums came up to the float and thanked the group for their presence. Still others identified with More Light Presbyterians expressed gratitude. Yet alums and those familiar with More

Light were not the only ones interested in this float. The group felt that it was important to have a visible presence at Pride because it afforded chapter members opportunities to discuss how the church can be positively integrated into the lives of LGBT persons in supporting their faith as well as advocating for social justice.

Overall, More Light @ LPTS thought it was a wonderful event and believed its participation was a huge success. Its members are currently evaluating what happened this year so that they can have an even larger float and presence in the 2005 parade. If you would like more information on this or

other More Light @ LPTS activities, please e-mail lptsmorelight@yahoo.com.

Lavender Kelley, student at LPTS and Student Body Clerk

"So, why should we march in a gay pride parade? It would be pretty easy for straight folks to write this off as a sort of gays-only social event. Hey, great, have a good time, you don't need me there, right? But I think they do need us straight folks there, especially straight folks representing the church. By being there, we send a message—not to the general community, but to the gay community. A message that says 'I'm here, I'll stand with you, I'll walk with you, I welcome you into my life and the life of the church.' For me, being there also sends a message to some other important people: my children. A message that says it's not always enough to be supportive in principle. Sometimes, you have to stand up and speak up."

Anne Crook Lutes, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Spotlight on a More Light Congregation

"The Rec" and Triangle MLP

John Thompson and Pastor Mark Davidson

As reported in the summer issue, the Church of the Reconciliation and the Triangle More Light Presbyterian Chapter were given MLP's Inclusive Church Award.

"The Rec," as members affectionately call it, declared itself a More Light congregation in 1993 after the entire congregation was invited to participate in small group discussions in members' homes, panel discussions, church school classes, and "second hour" conversations following worship. Even members it lost said they felt they had been heard. Since 1993, the church has sustained numerical growth, many new members drawn by its witness. In 2002 the church called Katie Ricks, a partnered lesbian, to serve as "Associate in Ministry," a position created by the church's pastor nominating committee, session, and congregation in consultation with the presbytery. She has proven a gift to the church, a highly valued friend and colleague.

Putting together educational conferences on inclusion in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina linked the church to other congregations and individuals who wanted to be supportive, so in August 1999 the Triangle More Light Chapter was formed with the help of

Jim Foster, Michael Adey, and a strong core of Rec members. Other congregations who wouldn't "come out" nonetheless proved very supportive, including providing facilities for gatherings. The chapter was commissioned on October 23, 1999 in a "high steeple" church during a conference entitled, "Sexuality in Christian Community: Caring for All God's Children." Since then it has put training sessions on during the presbytery's annual training events, and staffs an exhibit booth which includes a Shower of Stoles display at each presbytery meeting. It hosted the 2002 MLP national conference with the help of the Presbyterian Campus Ministry at North Carolina University, and initiated a nationwide MLP membership drive.

A local conference that allows people from different churches to meet and network that is also publicized in the LGBT community is key to organizing an MLP chapter. It helped that we had a large financial gift to begin. More Light churches do a fine job being inclusive of LGBT people, but we need to develop our skills reaching out to those who are ambivalent about LGBT issues. Many of us only got to the point of being welcoming because others gave us the freedom to be where we were at every point in the process.



The Presbyterian position, while reserving marriage for heterosexuals only, is to urge civil governments to consider equitable legal arrangements such as civil unions for same gender couples.

MLP Help for the Marriage Debate

Parallel to reactionary bans legislated when interracial marriage began occurring, states have begun passing laws and adding amendments to their constitutions banning gay marriage, usually in such a way as to remove or curtail other legal rights, including civil unions, domestic partnerships, inheritance, powers of attorney, and hospital visitation. At the federal level, the disingenuously named Defense of Marriage Act was passed in 1996, but an attempt this year to pass an amendment to the U.S. Constitution

failed for the time being. In our denomination, individual pastors have been brought up on charges of performing same gender marriages, and congregations for allowing use of church property for such ceremonies. The Presbyterian position, while reserving marriage for heterosexuals only, is to urge governments to consider equitable legal arrangements such as civil unions for same gender couples. Pages four through six provide background and resources for both the civil and ecclesiastical debates.



A Brief History of Christian Marriage

For more than half of church history, marriage, procreation, and the biological family were relatively unimportant to Christians. The proclamation of the Gospel, the inbreaking kingdom of heaven, and the imminent return of Jesus Christ predicated a sexuality that was not concerned with developing family ties, marriage, or the birthing and rearing of children. The tenor was like that of the ancient Hebrews preparing to leave Egypt directly, not even taking time to leaven their bread. There wasn't time to marry or

to have children. Celibacy and virginity were the higher if not highest spiritual values when it came to sexuality, practiced individually, in monastic community, and even within marriage itself.

If they did marry, the early Christians adopted the ostensibly monogamous marriage pattern of Rome, an economic or civil arrangement rather than an ecclesiastical affair, usually for the privileged classes, and one in which the man took possession of the

woman. Though some of these may have been blessed informally by a parish priest, marriage ceremonies were not performed officially within church walls until the thirteenth century. Viewed as "a compromise with the material world," according to one church historian, it was not declared a sacrament until 1215. The rise of Protestantism in the sixteenth century influenced the consigning of marriage to the governments of the emerging nation-states of Europe. Protestants rejected marriage as a sacrament before God, and wanted the state to provide its necessary ordering.

Gay Marriage Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America

Jonathan Rauch

207 pp, \$22, Times Books (Henry Holt & Co.) (2004)
ISBN # 0-8050-7633-6

Atlantic Monthly and *National Journal* correspondent Rauch presents a convincing cultural argument for the benefits of same-gender marriage for couples and society, pointing out that "marriage-lite" arrangements actually undermine the institution of marriage by providing heterosexuals with alternative arrangements.

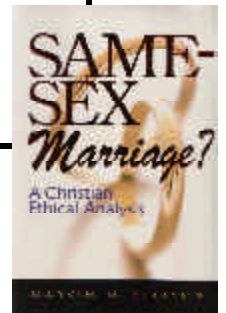


Same-Sex Marriage? A Christian Ethical Analysis

Marvin M. Ellison

198 pp, \$24, Pilgrim Press, www.pilgrimpress.com (2004)
ISBN# 0-8298-1560-0

Presbyterian minister Ellison explains the full range of options and opinions on same-sex marriage found in the LGBT community as well as within the church, including theological, legal, and social arguments of respective positions.

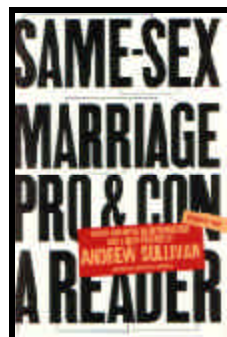


Same-Sex Marriage Pro & Con: A Reader

Andrew Sullivan, editor

380 pp, \$14, Vintage Books, www.vintagebooks.com, (Revised 2004)
ISBN#1-4000-7866-0

Essays from women and men on all sides of the issue, civil and religious. Particularly cogent essay by Boswell defender Ralph Hexter on



RECOMMENDED
READING



Eden, Marriage, and Jesus

The most ancient of two creation stories in Genesis, found in chapter two, reveals that God's purpose in "marriage" was so that the first human creature not be alone. The term is placed in quotation marks because, as an institution or a word, it had not been socially constructed, though one could argue from the text, as Jesus did, that God intended them to be one flesh. They were vegetarians and stewards of the garden. They were naked and not ashamed, indicating that shame about our bodies and our sexuality came into the world not through God's initiative but our own. From this story, Protestantism has emphasized companionship as the sacred purpose of marriage.

The chronologically later creation story found in Genesis 1 depicts God repeatedly declaring everything created "good," a basis on which to assert that created diversity is good. God created humankind in the image of God, male and female, blessing them and telling them to "Be fruitful and multiply." They were stewards of all living things and vegetarians. From this story, Roman Catholicism has emphasized procreation as the sacred purpose of marriage.

Both Christian traditions acknowledge the importance of both marital purposes; it's a matter of emphasis.

Interestingly, neither tradition calls us to be vegetarian, nor do the most literalist of readers of the Bible, some of whom nonetheless read into the stories' silence on homosexuality a prohibition. The Garden of Eden story is also silent on urban dwellers and factory workers, but they are no less created in the image of God!

Jesus uses both of these creation stories to speak against divorce, a teaching conveniently set aside by a heterosexual majority in the church. Yet in this same context (Matthew 19:3-12) he defends eunuchs, much as his predecessor Isaiah did (Isaiah 56:1-8), a category of people who would have been unwelcome in the spiritual community, largely because they could not procreate. This suggests that mutuality and companionship are enough to validate marriage in God's eyes; procreation is an added blessing. Furthermore, in another context, Jesus redefined family: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And pointing to his disciples, [Jesus] said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother'" Matthew 12:48b-50 (NRSV).

Scapegoating Same-Gender Marriage

One of the great spiritual dangers is scapegoating. When things go wrong, we look for someone to blame—someone *other* than ourselves, of course. Those who see homosexuality as responsible for the heterosexual divorce rate or destabilization of the family are scapegoating a community trying to remain part of their families as well as form new families. In this view, to keep marriage holy, to ensure God's blessing, same-gender couples must be excluded from the marital estate, lest it be tainted with impurity. Yet the sins of divorce, adultery, abandonment, incest, and abuse that haunt marriage and family these days cannot honestly be projected onto gay and lesbian couples, and these acts are what defile and profane the sacred nature of marriage, not additional couples willing to embrace its spiritual discipline. Heterosexuals must confess their own sins, not project them onto homosexuals.

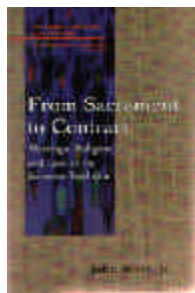
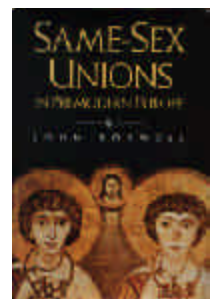
When things go wrong, we look for someone to blame—someone other than ourselves, of course.

Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe

John Boswell

412 pp, Villard Books, (1994) ISBN#0-679-43228-0

Late Yale medievalist scholar Boswell explains how, historically, the church was a thousand years late in celebrating marriage, while providing rituals for same gender relationships. Later critiques of his analysis actually take their cues from Boswell's own cautious evaluation of these rites.



From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition

John Witte, Jr.

315 pp, Westminster John Knox Press (1997) ISBN#0-664-25543-4

Emory professor of law and ethics Witte describes understandings of marriage in the Roman Catholic (sacrament), Lutheran (social estate), Calvinist (covenant), Anglican (commonwealth), and Enlightenment (contract) traditions.

Presbyterian Policy on Same-Gender Marriage

The Book of Order does not address the issue of same-gender marriage.

"Marriage," however, is described three different ways in our Directory for Worship: 1) marriage is "a civil contract between a man and a woman;" 2) Christian marriage is "a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship"; and 3) the Christian marriage service is defined as a service in which "a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith" (W-4.9001).

Historically the Presbyterian Church has held the position that marriage is a secular contract: "to the Reformers, marriage was basically a contract made subject to the secular government; it belongs to the realm of God's creation, not to the order of redemption of the Church" (Minutes, UPCUSA, 1967, page 176). If that's the case, our church desperately needs to re-examine and re-word #1 (above) in light of the "new legal reality" created by certain secular jurisdictions, such as Massachusetts and three countries other than the U.S.!



G.A.'s Permanent Judicial Commission has interpreted the church's constitution in reference to love and marriage for our LGBT community by indicating that a "same-sex union that is liturgically distinct from a marriage ceremony is permissible under church law." This decision (Benton v. The Presbytery of Hudson River) noted that "the Directory for Worship affirms the value of worship services in the practice of pastoral care and gives great latitude to ministers and sessions in addressing the pastoral care of members. A same-sex ceremony celebrates a loving, caring and committed relationship," says this PJC decision. "Therefore, it would be appropriate for this worship occasion to be in the form and spirit of W-6.3010 and 6.0311" ("Resources of Worship for Pastoral Care").

For those keeping score, our denomination has declared 1) marriage should be an issue left up to secular authorities, 2) marriage is between a man and a woman and 3) same-gender unions are fine, as long as they "don't look like a marriage." But the plot thickens!

At the very same time, the Presbyterian Church actively affirms "the need for the church to stand for just treatment of homosexual persons in our society in regard to civil liberties, equal rights, and protection under the law from social and economic discrimination, which is due to all citizens" (Minutes, PCUS, 1977, Part 1, page 265). And we "warn ourselves" that "to affirm standards of humane treatment and justice within the agencies and institutions of the church which are less compassionate than those of the civil order is a contradiction to the gospel" (Minutes, PCUSA, 1985, page 53).

This contradiction is made personal by Rev. Janie Spahr's participation in her first legal same-gender marriage in Ontario, Canada, last February 28. Alongside Unitarian minister Rev. John Mayer of Canada, she blessed the 20-year relationship of That All May Freely Serve leaders, Douglas Potter and Gregory Partridge. What appears to violate church policy upholds a more compassionate and just secular law, exactly what church policy also requires.

Bear Ride, MLP issues analyst

Same Sex Marriage Ceremonies and Freedom of Conscience

A recent church judicial decision, Stephen Van Kuiken v. Presbytery of Cincinnati (April, 2004), is significant because it affirms freedom of conscience and offers us a way to live together as a denomination in spite of our differences of opinion.

The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Synod of the Covenant decided that Van Kuiken was not guilty of the offense of performing same sex marriage ceremonies, saying that prior General Assembly PJC decisions and Authoritative Interpretations on this subject "failed to define the performance of a same-sex marriage by a minister as an offense subject to disciplinary trial...At issue is the existing tension in the Book of Order between the spirit and letter of the law. The spirit of a wide gracious welcome of all people, encouraged by the Book of Order, is in tension with the specified limitations on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Presbyterians, preventing their full and complete participation in the life of the church."

A majority of the commissioners on the Synod PJC agreed that the Book of Order "affirms freedom of conscience." G-6.0108 provides that church officers "shall adhere to the essentials of the

Reformed faith and polity.... So far as may be possible without serious departure from these standards, without infringing on the rights and views of others, and without obstructing the constitutional governance of the church, freedom of conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture is to be maintained.... The decision as to whether a person has departed from the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned, but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the governing body in which he or she serves."

Six of the ten commissioners said that it is the responsibility of the presbytery to decide whether an officer holds views which are inconsistent with the "essentials" "as the particular governing body sees them."

Four commissioners went further and declared that Van Kuiken had the right to follow his conscience by performing same sex marriage ceremonies because his actions have not been determined by the presbytery to be 1) a departure from the "essentials," or 2) that the rights and views of others have been infringed, or 3) that the constitutional governance of

the church has been obstructed. They concluded that an analysis and determination by the presbytery "is especially significant in a situation which sets a literal reading of certain passages in the Bible against portions of the Book of Order regarding love and inclusion, and where there is significant lack of unanimity on the provision among members of the church."

Unfortunately, this case will not be heard and decided by the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission because Stephen Van Kuiken has left the Presbyterian Church. Nevertheless, the Synod PJC decision provides a sensible and constitutional solution to the controversy which has been fracturing our denomination by affirming the provision in the Book of Order which gives the presbyteries the power to determine "whether a person has departed from the essentials of the Reformed faith and polity."

As Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary, has reminded us of a Reformed principle: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Peter Oddleifson, judicial cases analyst for the More Light Update



Remembering Rosemarie Wallace

Rosemarie Wallace, a lifelong educator, Presbyterian leader, and advocate for LGBT justice in church and society died January 31 in the loving company of her partner, Tabb Forster, and several friends. A dispeller of stereotypes, Wallace served as a school principal in public education, as moderator of Baltimore Presbytery, and as stated clerk of the Synod of the Southwest. Rosemarie received the More Light Presbyterian David Sindt Award in June 2003 for her outstanding leadership and service within the More Light and broader LGBT movement.

Rosemarie was involved early on in the More Light movement and served for nearly three decades within MLP and at every level of the Presbyterian Church (USA).



When her first partner of several decades, Virginia, died in their home in Baltimore, she had no inkling of what was yet to come. Attending a PLGC conference at the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, she met the person who would call her to a new life in Arizona. Rosemarie and Tabb, faithful members and leaders of Celebration of Life Presbyterian Church in Mesa, a More Light Church, were part of the team that created the MLP chapter in Grand Canyon Presbytery. A memorial service honoring her life was held February 28, 2004 at University Presbyterian Church in Tempe, Arizona.

Char Sindt Dies; Mother of Founder David Sindt

When, in 1974, the Rev. David Bailey Sindt founded what became Presbyterians for Lesbian & Gay Concerns and subsequently More Light Presbyterians, his gentle and compassionate parents, Gus and Char Sindt, quickly became surrogate parents to hundreds of younger Presbyterians who happened to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Charlotte Edith Bailey Sindt was an active, lifelong Presbyterian, daughter and granddaughter of Presbyterian ministers. Like her son David, she was a longtime member of various gardening and flower organizations, including the American and Minnesota iris societies, regularly winning awards at the Minnesota State Fair and other floral arranging competitions. She and



Gus invited PLGC for a picnic in their home and yard when G.A. met in Minneapolis in 1986. Later that year, David died of AIDS.

Char was known for her handwritten notes of encouragement and gratitude to leaders and members of PLGC. She contributed a chapter on David to *Called Out* (Chi Rho Press, 1995). After the 1999 death of her husband of 62 years, she suffered Alzheimer's and died September 6. A memorial service was held at North Presbyterian Church, her congregation most of her adult life. Donations in her honor may be made to her church, or

MLP, or the Alzheimer's Association. As a way of honoring her family's commitment to MLP, surviving daughter Claire Ann Weber has offered an original David B. Sindt painting (pictured) to be auctioned through the *More Light Update*, proceeds to go to MLP. Please send your bids, beginning at \$100, to MoreLightEditor@aol.com.

TO BENEFIT MLP

bid on this David Sindt original painting



Bids begin at \$100 and may be sent to MoreLightEditor@aol.com by January 30

Spirituality Corner

Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise

I have begun serving as a spiritual director for several folks via phone, the internet, and in person, all at their initiation. One, a United Methodist minister pressured out of his ministry three years ago, has recently felt called to serve the Metropolitan Community Church. He has given me permission to write of him, and of his yearning, a year ago, to once again be "lost in wonder, love and praise." It's the final phrase from Charles Wesley's hymn, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." He—as we often are—was so caught up in the demoralizing way in which church and society treat us that he was hungry for his old enthusiasm for life, for God, for the feelings that prompted and sustained his ministry.

We must find ways to let go of "the gay agenda," whatever that is for us. I know the phrase is a bugaboo created by the religious right, with no specific content, to scare off potential supporters. But we *do* have an agenda—for justice, for inclusiveness, for service to the

church and commitment to a spouse.

I wrote in *Uncommon Calling* that the greatest gift anyone may offer a movement is stamina. We need to find ways to remain steadfast, and cultivating our spiritual life is a way that Jesus himself chose when, kept busy by a whole city hungry for his healing touch, he escaped before dawn to pray, to commune with God, his Father and Mother.

The most profound insight offered during a Henri Nouwen seminar I led for Central Presbyterian Church here in Atlanta was that of a woman who suddenly declared, "I just realized how busy I am even in my prayer life!" A woman devoted to social justice, she had filled her prayers with causes and concerns, rather than simply resting in God's arms as Jesus did. To do what Jesus did, and even "greater things," we must do no less.

Chris Glaser, Editor of the More Light Update



Chris Glaser was honored in October with the 2004 Yale Divinity School Alumni Award for Distinguished Lay Ministry.

More Light Presbyterians

4747 County Road 101
PMB 246
Minnetonka, MN 55345-2634

*For all ministers, elders, deacons,
members, friends, and governing bodies
of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

Visit us at:
www.mlp.org

National Field Organizer:
Michael Adee
MichaelAdee@earthlink.net
369 Montezuma Ave.
PMB#447
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2626
Phone: 505/820-7082
Fax: 505/820-2540

More Light Update
*A Quarterly Publication of
More Light Presbyterians*
Volume 24, Number 4
Fall, 2004

Editor: Chris Glaser
MoreLightEditor@aol.com

Designer: Erin Swenson
erin@erinswen.com

For e-mail updates, contact:
Donna M. Riley
dmriley@princeton.alumni.edu

JOIN US IN MINISTRY...

Individual and corporate membership in More Light Presbyterians is open to any member, congregation, or governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that supports our mission to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the life, ministry, and witness of the Presbyterian Church.

We invite you to join or renew your membership at this time, or make a contribution, using the enclosed envelope. Returning the form will be understood as your affirmation of MLP's mission. Individual membership is \$50 per year, or whatever a member can afford.

If you are not already participating in a local or regional MLP chapter or congregation and wish more information on how to connect with MLP or organize in your area, please contact our National Field Organizer through his contact information on the left.

The MLP Board would like to receive your input. Our board is structured by issue-focused committees: Membership, Development, Strategy, and Communications.



We welcome the service of non-board members on these committees. Use the e-mail addresses below or the National Field Organizer's mailing address on the masthead to offer your ideas or express your interest in serving.

Membership (and Resources subcommittee) Chair:
Bruce Hahne (hahne@io.com)

Communications Chair: Marco Grimaldo
(mgrimaldo@earthlink.net)

Development Chair: Rob Cummings
(robcum@wononline.net)

Strategy Co-Chairs: Bear Ride (bears@usc.edu) and
Mike Smith (mikedsmith@earthlink.net).

In addition, there are two administrative committees: the Nominating Committee to identify future board members, and the Personnel Committee related to staff, either of which may be contacted through our central mailing address in Minnesota. Please join us in our prayers for an inclusive church!