



crossbeams

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance, Inc.
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Spiritual Justice / Just Spirituality: Political, Practical, Mundane

**2004 GLAD Alliance Event
Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa
July 8 – 11**

***Join us in sharing your voice
and renewing our individual and collective journeys
toward spiritual justice.***

Through prayer, worship and discussion, we will reclaim and celebrate the interdependence of justice work and spirituality. We will understand how justice work is essential to our faith, how the experience of engaging in justice work enriches our faith and how justice work is practiced as a spiritual discipline.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is undergoing revitalization and we face potential restructure at many levels. This revitalization and restructure will occur in the context of unresolved justice issues, many centering on the inclusion – or exclusion – of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people within the church and in society as a whole:

- Physical, emotional and spiritual violence continues against GLBT persons on our streets and airwaves . . . and in our church.
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Disciples are unable to receive ordination and standing in many regions of our church.
- Same-sex marriage continues to be debated in the courts, legislatures and media . . . and in our church.
- Adoptive and biological parental rights of GLBT persons are under judicial and legislative assault.
- Employment and housing discrimination against GLBT persons remains lawful in most jurisdictions.

Along with our church, GLAD Alliance is experiencing revitalization in building God's all-inclusive community. And, at this pivotal time, the voices of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and affirming Disciples – your voice – must continue to be heard.

GLAD Invites Students and Seminarians to Attend the 2004 Event for Free

The GLAD Alliance has set aside funds from the Chuck Carpenter Leadership Development Fund to provide free registration, including food and housing, for students and seminarians to attend the 2004 GLAD Event in Des Moines, Iowa. The Alliance will also provide up to \$200 for travel assistance. Funds are limited, and will not be available after June 19. E-mail glad@gladalliance.org for more information

Justice.

Spirituality.

Historically, the church has kept these two words separated. But at the GLAD retreat we will be bringing them together. Using scripture and our contemporary lived experience, we will explore both of these words and find the intersections that will enrich our lives and make a difference in the world.

The Event will be led by a spiritually-grounded justice leader and a justice-seeking spiritual leader. Come and find practical and proven ways to integrate both justice work and deep spiritual growth into your life.

Event Registration

Registration deadline without a \$25 late fee is June 19. To register by mail, use the form in the brochure included in this issue of Crossbeams, or download the form from our website. Also, you can register on-line on our website via PayPal.

Event Odds and Ends

Schedule: Check-in will begin at 3:00pm on Thursday, July 8 and continue through 7:00pm. The first Event session will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday and the last Event session will conclude by noon on Sunday, July 11.

Event Registration and Meals:

Event registration includes all program activities, including continental breakfast on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, lunch on Friday and Saturday and the banquet on Saturday evening.

On Campus Lodging: Air conditioned rooms with linens in residence halls will be provided. Handicap accessible rooms are available with advanced notification.

Off Campus Lodging: Attendees electing to stay off-campus must arrange their own housing. The hotel nearest the Drake campus is the Holiday Inn Express, 1140 24th Street, 800-465-4329. Rooms have not been blocked for the

Event and there is no Event rate.

Attire: Comfortable casual attire is suggested. Somewhat dressier casual attire is suggested for the Saturday banquet and Sunday worship.

Official Airline: American Airlines, the official airline for the Event, offers 5% to 10% discounts. 30 day advance purchases receive an additional 5% discount. For reservations and ticketing information call 1-800-433-1790 (hearing and speech impaired 1-800-543-1586) and reference the STARfile number S9674AW.

Confirmation: Registrations will be confirmed by email, U.S. mail or telephone, if necessary. Confirmation will include information about the location of check-in, the Thursday evening session, the Saturday banquet and parking locations, and available transportation to and from the airport.

More information: Call David Nickell at 405-990-3154 or dnickell@cox.net.

Event Presenter Rev. Steven Baines

Steven will lead our discussion around the Event theme. As Senior Organizer for Religious Affairs at People For the American Way, he is responsible for the organization's national engagement with, and mobilization of, people of faith.

Steven is a national spokesperson on issues of faith and sexuality and has been featured debating leaders of the Religious Right and the so-called "ex-gay" movement on CNN, CSPAN, Court TV and numerous syndicated talk radio shows. Prior to joining PFAW, he served for over two years as Executive Director for Equal Partners in Faith, a national interfaith organization committed to fighting racism, sexism and homophobia.

Before moving to Washington, DC, Steven served as Founder and Executive Director of AFFIRM Youth, a social service agency serving and protecting sexual minorities in South Carolina. In addition, he has served pastorates in Southern Baptist churches in North and South Carolina.

He graduated from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina with a degree in religious studies and later attended Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. He is now affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and is currently serving as an elder at National City Christian Church.

O & A Ministry Team Encourages O & A Congregations to Send Representatives to the GLAD Event in Des Moines

One of the ways O & A Congregations can be encouraged in their O & A ministry is by joining with members from other congregations at the GLAD Event. This year's Event will be particularly meaningful for our O & A congregations as we engage the political, practical and mundane aspects of spiritual justice. We believe that this year's Event will help us all come away with tangible ideas for being more effective witnesses both individually and corporately in our communities as we live the justice love of Christ.

Event Presenter
Rev. Nancy Brink

Serving as Celebrant for the Event, Nancy will lead us in enriching our covenant with God, as we reclaim our Christian rituals, infusing them with new life within our faith community.

An ordained Disciples minister for 25 years, Nancy is passionate about Christian worship and ritual, and the empowerment of others in their spiritual journeys.

She is currently completing her 16th year as pastor of North Side Christian Church in Omaha – an O&A congregation with its doors open to Covenant Services and the leadership of gay and lesbian members in all aspects of church life. Nancy and her partner, Maria Perez, are plaintiffs in an ACLU and Lambda Legal Defense Fund lawsuit challenging Nebraska's DOMA – the most restrictive state law in the United States prohibiting marriage by individuals of the same gender.

In addition, Nancy has been active in GLBT community organizations in Omaha and has testified before the Nebraska legislature in support of non-discrimination legislation.

Nancy and Maria are parents to Hannah, age 8, and various furry critters. Nancy enjoys reading, gardening, sailing, and spending time with friends.

Discernment News: Kansas Church is *Listening to the Spirit*

From Mark Covey, Discernment Ministry Team Co-Leader

In the fall of 2003, the Board of Elders of Riverside Christian Church in Wichita, Kansas voted to begin the process of discernment. In the following months, two groups of approximately 12 individuals each, consisting of elders, the spouses and partners of elders, and a few other members of the congregation began the journey of “thoughtfully, theologically and prayerfully” listening to the gospel message as it relates to gays and lesbians.

Riverside Christian Church is tucked away in an older residential neighborhood in Wichita and has about 165-170 people in attendance on any given Sunday. Rev. Robert Bull, the senior minister, said that his church is probably representative of the average church in the denomination. “It’s not the most conservative congregation, and it’s not the most liberal.” He estimates that the number of gay and lesbian members is about equal to that found in the general population.

Two elders took responsibility for facilitating the discernment groups, and both groups completed the process just before Christmas of 2003. One of the groups met on Wednesday evenings and the other on Sundays. They used the resource developed by the General Church, *Listening to the Spirit* to guide them through the process of discernment. Rev. Bull did not participate in a group, but was supportive of the process.

Rev. Bull says that “a change has taken place” in the lives of the discernment participants in his congregation. He noted that participants who have gay or lesbian relatives have strengthened those family relationships because of the process. The decision was made in January to invite all members of the congregation to go through the discernment process. Currently, a new group of church members is forming and plans are underway for that group to begin the discernment process this spring.

So We're Now an O & A Congregation

From Sharon Hart, Council Member and O&A Team Leader

The process for becoming an Open & Affirming congregation is as diverse as the number of congregations engaging in the process. Just as each congregation is unique in character and ministry gifts, so the next steps after becoming O & A are unique. Some time ago, the O & A Ministry Team asked Rev. David Downing, retired minister from University Christian Church, San Diego, California, to share with us about their process and their ministry after becoming O & A - how did this congregation reach out to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons in their community? The following is David's statement to us entitled *Reaching into the Community*.

(O&A: Continued on page 7)

**Event Presenter
Jonathan Wilson, Esq.**

During the banquet on Saturday, Jonathan will share his thoughts on the theme in the context of his life experiences. Jonathan is President of the First Friday Breakfast Club, an association of gay men and served for 12 years on the Des Moines School Board, including three terms as Board President. During his last term on the Board, Jonathan came out as a gay man during the Board's consideration of the inclusion of a lesbian and gay curriculum. He was defeated in his next re-election effort by well organized opposition financed by the religious right. Jonathan has served as interim Executive Director of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Chairman of the Council of Urban Boards of Education. Jonathan is a corporate attorney and resides in Des Moines with his partner, Todd Messenger.

Our Vision

Called by God,
GLAD Alliance is a sacred
community.
Led by the Spirit,
we are a prophetic voice
and a living resource,
present with our gifts
to the world.

Rev. Bo Crowe Leads Strategic Action Ministry Team

Rev. Bo Crowe, Senior Minister of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City, has taken leadership of GLAD's Strategic Action Ministry Team.

The team's mission is to call the church and society to be true to the gospel of God's just, inclusive love for all. This mission includes representing the GLAD Alliance in coalitions with which we participate, such as the National Religious Leadership Roundtable (NRLR), an interfaith network of leaders from gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender faith, spiritual, and religious organizations.

At a recent meeting of the NRLR held in Boston March 9 and 10, the GLAD Alliance was represented by Rev. Crowe and the team's council liaison David Nickell. The meeting was moved to Boston from Washington, D.C. to coincide with the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention which was called in response to the State Supreme Judicial Court decision opening marriage to all people beginning May 17, 2004.

Members of the Roundtable participated in a public meeting at Emmanuel Church near Boston's Beacon Hill, called on the Constitutional Convention to take no action that would restrict the Court's decision, and held a candlelight demonstration on the steps of the Massachusetts statehouse. The second day of the meeting was spent at the statehouse talking with legislators and presenting a religious voice for equality.

The public event featured speeches by the Rev. Jimmy Creech, who spoke to GLAD at our banquet in Charlotte, NC; the honorable Byron Rushing, representative to the Massachusetts Legislature and outspoken advocate for civil marriage equality; and the Rev. Steven Baines of People for the American Way, who is one of our leaders for the GLAD Event this summer.

The Strategic Action Team needs additional members. If you are interested in serving on this team, please email Rev. Bo Crowe at bcrowe.pacc@verizon.net or David Nickell at dnicke1@cox.net.

**From the Human Resources and Nominating Ministry Team
Council Nominees**

The Human Resource and Nominating Ministry Support Team, lead by Rev. David Downing, has certainly been working overtime. They have brought forward two excellent nominees for the GLAD Alliance Council. The Alliance will be voting on these nominations at the Event in Des Moines this summer.

Introducing our nominees, Patti Case and Tonja Gerardy:

Patti Case

Rev. Patricia R. Case, long-time Disciples communicator, hails from Indianapolis, where she operates "Dances with Words, LLC."

(Nominees: Continued on page 10)

Letter

Last month an e-mail arrived from a woman who introduced herself as Peggy, Christian Education Director of her church in the Midwest, a 4th generation disciple, and an alumni of Bethany College. Here's what she wrote:

While searching the DOC website for a church in the Columbus, Ohio area for my daughter and I stumbled upon the letter by Rev. Mark C. Johnston. It was exciting to hear of his enthusiasm for your organization's involvement in the General Assembly.

Two things struck me about the letter. One was the absence of any mention of our calling to serve Christ. And the second was his statement, "We can only pray that this is one church that was encouraged not to break silence." The first of the two struck me as totally self-absorbed and self-serving. The second struck me as totally exclusive, in that anyone with a view other than that of your organization should keep silent.

[What] I wonder is how we as Disciples of Christ should portray ourselves as self serving exclusionaries? I wonder if my view were different from yours if you would include me in your communion? I wonder how Alexander Campbell would have responded to praying that others keep silent regarding their faith?

Respectfully

Peggy

And here is my response to Peggy:

Dear Peggy

Thank you for your e-mail. It has caused me to spend much time in thought and prayer, examining my actions and attitudes and pondering my response.

You tell me that two things strike you about my letter. The first is "the absence of any mention of our calling to serve Christ." No, I did not use these words in my letter, but I do pray that in my actions and attitudes my service to Christ always shines through. I trust that my work with the GLAD Alliance is the work God has called me to do, called the members of the alliance to do. As we say in

our Vision Statement, the members of the GLAD Alliance work to be present to the church. We strive to preach the Gospel of Christ in our words and our actions, a Gospel of God's inclusive love for all.

Which, certainly, is why your second concern cuts me deeply. You experienced my words as "totally exclusive, in that anyone with a view other than that of your organization should keep silent." Here is the paragraph I wrote that you are referring to:

One interesting conversation happened when I was approached at the booth by a man seeking information on how to advertise his church so that "homosexuals" will come. I pointed him towards Sharon Hart at the Open & Affirming booth. After speaking with him, she reported to me that his goal had been to attract lesbians and gay men so that his church could "teach them the right way." Sharon told him clearly that his church was not a safe place for gay Christians and that they will not come. He ended the conversation thanking her and saying he had what he needed. We can only pray that this is one church that was encouraged *not* to break silence.

Is this statement exclusionary? Or how do I defend myself? First, because you experienced my words as excluding people with different views from mine, clearly I need to be more careful with my words. However, I stand by them.

Why?

First, I claim to understand exclusion. Lesbians and gay men have been told by the church that we must change, that we cannot serve, that we aren't even Christian simply because we are gay. We have been jailed, fired from our jobs, yelled at on the streets. Our pride celebrations, and even our funerals, have been picketed by church groups. Many of us have experienced estrangement from our families because our mothers and fathers, our sisters and brothers, our sons and daughters have been

(Letter: Continued on page 6)

(Letter: Continued from page 5)

taught by churches that we are not acceptable.

Second, using the veneer of the gospel to deceive lesbians and gay men, to attract them to a church, and then preach to them that they must change, is literally disgraceful. This is not preaching the Gospel of God's grace for all, but is rather preaching that lesbians and gay men must conform to be accepted.

Yes, I pray that these people would be silent. I do not believe that people who teach exclusion are preaching the good news of the God who loves us all as we were created. When these people break silence, they teach my lesbian and gay sisters and brothers that the church hates them, that they must change in order to be loved by God. I cannot begin to count the number of my friends who will not go near a church, who cannot understand my commitment to Christ, because too often they have heard such hateful words and experienced such hateful actions. These friends are lost to the church, though I know that Christ loves them and I have faith that Christ ministers to them in other places.

Yet, even as I pray for their silence, I do not exclude. Why? I struggle constantly with my faith which states that all who believe in Jesus as Christ and accept him as Savior are members of the church. I struggle with the fact that those who exclude are included in the body of Christ. That is, I am constantly humbled by the fact that I do not know the complete gospel of Christ, I do not know God's entire plan; and I know that if I were to exclude those with whom I disagree, I would miss an opportunity to understand the Gospel more completely.

Your Membership

Your membership status is listed on your mailing label. If your status appears incorrect, please e-mail glad@gladalliance.org to correct this. Otherwise, we'd be happy to receive your membership contribution to update your membership status

I do not exclude. How? I do not call for the expulsion of people with whom I disagree from my congregation or my denomination. I chair a Commission on the Ministry, a commission in a region with a policy not to ordain lesbian and gay people, people like me, and yet I vote for the standing and ordination of people who would ask me to leave their congregation. I do this because their congregation needs them. I remind myself that those who disagree with me share their disagreement out of love and concern for me, and I pray that I can hear the Gospel in their words even as I pray for silence when their words are not Gospel.

Peggy, you ask if you would be included in my communion. Yes, you are included. There will be moments when we don't accept each other's words, there will be moments when we disapprove of each other's actions, there will be moments when we don't like each other. But this is the body of Christ. We are all children of God, and we are all members of the body and the family despite our failings. This, I believe, is the powerful Gospel of Christ.

In the Peace of Christ,

Rev. Mark C. Johnston, Ph.D.
Moderator, GLAD Alliance

Our Mission

The mission of GLAD Alliance is to be a safe and faithful place for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Affirming community.

Relying on Holy Spirit, we speak truth to power, advocating for inclusivity, diversity, and justice in all manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Committed to transformation, through education, witness, and strategic action, we offer ourselves as a visible presence in solidarity with those marginalized within the Church.

(O&A: Continued from page 3)

"How do you reach into the gay community for the first time as you seek to be Open & Affirming? Well, some things simply fall into your lap and other things come through planning and involvement.

"For University Christian Church in San Diego it happened both ways! From a casual contact by one of the gay members in the congregation came a request by the Gay Men's Chorus of San Diego to use the church building for their rehearsals and their concerts. The request went to the Trustees who simply saw it as a way to bring in additional financial resources for the congregation. It brought in more than that!

"Members of the chorus were impressed that a church would open its doors to them. Some ventured into the worship services, appreciated them - and joined. They told their experience to others, who likewise came - and joined. Those who came to the concerts were impressed that a church would open their doors to a gay concert. They came to 'try us out' - and joined! The chorus outgrew the building space for their concerts, but

the building remains as their rehearsal space. This all happened three years prior to the congregation becoming Open & Affirming.

"As the congregation began the process of becoming Open & Affirming, they decided that one way to begin to show the community they were serious about being open to the gay population (60% of those persons living within three miles of the church building were from the GLBT community!) was to become involved in the annual PRIDE Parade and Festival. They began by taking carts and handing out free lemonade to those lining up a block away from the church building for the parade. People could not believe that a congregation would hand out free lemonade, offer free visors with "University Christian Church Supports Gay Pride" written across the front, and greet them in such a welcoming way.

"After two years of handing out free lemonade, the congregation widened its efforts and purchased space at the PRIDE Festival which ran for two days. The booth was very attractive and church leadership was there to talk with interested individuals and

to hand out free wild flower seeds, using the theme "Growth Blooms in Diversity." It was an instant hit! Each year there has been a different free handout, the latest one being a letter opener with the words, "A Congregation on the Cutting Edge" written on it.

"After five years of handing out free lemonade and having a booth at the Festival, the congregation also entered a contingency in the PRIDE Parade, in addition to their other continued involvement. They carried a large sign which read 'UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH . . . Reaching out in love . . . to YOU!' Two large cardboard hands (one white and one dark brown) were attached to the ends of the sign. At a given signal those marching in the contingency ran in front of the sign and those carrying the sign wrapped the sign around them in a symbol of embracing all people."

University Christian Church participated in the annual PRIDE event in some way for seven years before deciding they would add a float to their parade involvement.

As David Downing says, "This participation beyond the congregation caused interest to grow, and people began to come to experience worship -- and many joined, causing the congregation to flourish! Reaching out into the community made all the difference in the world in solidifying the process and the decision to become an Open & Affirming congregation!"

The O & A Ministry Team invites other O & A congregations to share their stories of how being an O & A congregation has influenced and expanded your congregation's ministry. Tell us how you are reaching out into your community with the love of Christ for all persons, especially into the GLBT community. You may send your statements to Sharon Hart, O & A Ministry Team chair at shart@gladalliance.org. The Team is in the process of developing a packet of suggestions for "next steps" for new O & A congregations and would like to include your story.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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MINISTRY TEAMS

Discernment

Leaders: Karen Barr and
Mark Covey

Council Liaison: Lisa Haley

Open and Affirming

Leader: Sharon Hart

Council Liaison: Pam Webb

Strategic Action

Leader: James “Bo” Crowe

Council Liaison: David Nickell

Support and Advocacy

Leader: Vacant

Council Liaison: Steve Kindle

MINISTRY SUPPORT TEAMS

Communications

Leader: Steve Kindle

Council Liaison: Dennis
Sanders

Development and Finance

Leader: Randy Palmer

Council Liaison: Mark Johnston

Human Resources and

Nominating

Leader: David Downing

Council Liaison: Nelson
Gomez

On Dealing with Fear: Resistance and Contemplation

From Pamela June Webb,
Council Chaplain

*Jesus said: "Blessed are you
when people hate you, and
when they exclude you, revile
you, and defame you on
account of the Son of Man.
Rejoice in that day and leap for
joy, for surely your reward is
great in heaven; for that is what
their ancestors did to the
prophets." (Luke 6:22-24
NRSV)*

Have you noticed the change in climate? I suspect your answer to that question depends upon your personal perspective. As I write this article in the final days of March, I look out my window and see nothing. The fog is too thick, all I can see is fog. That's sometimes what happens to me in the midst of fear. Look as hard as I can for a way out, all I can see is fear. Still I believe that change is possible. I believe the sun will shine again. I believe if I can just move a muscle, I can break this grip fear has upon me.

Often in the midst of our own fog and fear, we are called to contemplation. We are called to reflect upon our purpose and our hope. We are called to muster up even a speck of faith which can help us move a muscle to break the grip of evil which surrounds us. This passage from Luke is one which promises us that others

have been here before and we too will experience the joy of God's reign upon earth as it is in heaven.

So as I look out my window, I'm thinking of that promised transformation. I'm thinking of the changes to come. Changes in my job status, changes in the life of my family, changes in nature, changes among my close friends and GLAD Alliance.

As I contemplate this hope, I'm inspired to take action. In fact, I'm empowered to resist some things in order to do others. For example, my unpaid sabbatical has given me a chance to learn more about Soulforce and participate in some LGBT political activities I might not have otherwise had an opportunity to do.

There's been a change in my family. My brother and his new spouse are about to have a baby. I'm eager to meet my new nephew. As I write Baby Alex wishes he were already born, yet his Mom's doctor says he needs more time in her tummy so he'll have the lungs of a great preacher. My brother thinks he just hasn't found the garage door opener. I wonder if Alex is contemplating his birth as his Mom is encouraged to resist those contractions?

The weather and all nature is revealing this resistance and contemplation cycle as well. This week I spotted my first daffodil contemplating it's first full blossom, yet resisting the freezing rain and strong winds of March in the Midwest.

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(Chaplain: Continued from page 8)

I'm thrilled by the word I've received that GLAD members have been contemplating and showing up to be among those first in line seeking marriage in states which resist same-sex unions. We are writing letters to the President and the Congress on this and other important issues at stake in our nation at this time. Some are even watching media, especially local newspapers for hate ridden articles. They are striving to respond with letters to the editor which offer clear thinking alternatives to the radical right perspective of the Christian voice.

Such acts of contemplation, deeds of conscience, are revealing that resistance is present and such courage is to be admired. I know of at least six among our membership who have been threatened and harassed for their convictions and their actions. I'm sure there are many more, and I seek your prayers on their behalf.

One couple, well known to GLAD, Rev. Craig Hoffman and Rev. Allen Harris, has given me permission to share an experience they had recently. In addition to being very active in the life of the greater Cleveland, OH, area, both have sought to write letter's to the editor of the *Plain Dealer*, the primary local newspaper. They have been that alternative voice. One late night, they were startled by a phone call. The person on the

other end screamed, "You are both sinners and you are going to hell faster than Adolph Hitler." The voice was so intense they were filled with fear. This forced them into a period of contemplation.

As a result they changed their plans for the coming day. Their intent was to be among those citizens who were resisting the state mandated decision regarding same sex marriage. They had planned to go to the county courthouse to join other gay and lesbian couples in a direct action of resistance. They had planned to pay \$40, non-refundable, and apply for a marriage license. Their contemplation of the fearful experience, helped them decide to attend the rally in support of others, but not to participate as a couple seeking a license.

I know Craig and Allen are not alone. For many of us have experienced similar kinds of threats, harassment, and fear. I've no doubt that a number of our members have been emotionally, spiritually and physically abused. That's why it's so important to have one another and to support each other with cards, prayers, telephone calls and personal visits. That's part of GLAD's mission.

Recently GLAD has begun to contemplate various ways of breaking the silence and speaking the truth we have discovered through our faith as Disciples of Christ and our support of one another. More and more we are learning that resistance is an important part of our life. Not only are we called to resist the evils of

spiritual and civil abuse, but we are also called to resist hateful words and actions from those who have sought to silence our voices and keep us in our closet.

GLAD Alliance has been a haven for many over the two decades we have been in existence. We have sought quietly and prayerfully to help those who are hurting, those who want to know more, those who want to understand why. We have tried to be helpful to those who struggle to comprehend God's Word, who seek inclusive uplifting worship by personal example and shared experiences. We have spent a lot of time in contemplation.

This summer GLAD members will have an opportunity to learn more about resistance and how our contemplation of God's Word calls us into action through the gift of the Spirit. We will learn how contemplation leads to resistance and how our acts of resistance call us back again into contemplation.

I invite you to join us as we experience a new day in the history of GLAD. Join with old friends and meet our newest members. Think of this as a coming out party for GLAD Alliance. Come and learn how important it is to practice the spiritual cycles of resistance and contemplation, just spirituality and spiritual justice, in political, practical and mundane ways. You'll be GLAD you did.

Financial Statements for the Year Ending December 31, 2003		General Fund Cash Expenditures by Responsibility Center	
General Fund Cash Resources	Amount		Amount
Membership Contributions	\$ 10,375	Council	
Non-Membership Contributions		General Assembly	\$ 12,835
Contributions from O&A Ministries	824	Event	1,900
Sharon and Tom Hart Challenge		Contributions to Others	0
Contributions	9,821	Other	3,401
Over and Above	5,485	Discernment Ministry Team	0
Memorials, Bequests, Gifts in Honor of Another	1,525	Open & Affirming Ministry Team	2,592
Other Resources		Support and Advocacy Ministry Team	0
Event Registrations (includes supporting contributions)	3,155	Strategic Action Ministry Team	0
Event Offering	748	Development and Finance Ministry Support Team	676
Banquet Tickets	5,107	Human Resources and Nominating Ministry Support Team	0
Miscellaneous (includes sales of materials)	3,398	Communications Ministry Support Team	3,970
Total Cash Resources	\$ 40,438	Total Cash Expenditures	\$ 25,374
		General Fund Summary	
		Balance January 1, 2003	\$ 9,377
		Cash Resources	40,438
		Cash Expenditures	(25,374)
		Balance December 31, 2003	\$ 24,441

Notes

“Non-Membership Contributions” are contributions received from members and non-members but not designated by the contributor for the purpose of creating membership.

Total reported in-kind contributions were \$6,716. All of these contributions were for travel-related purposes.

Restricted funds experienced minimal financial activity during the year. Year-end balances were as follows:

Allen Harris Endowment Fund	\$ 2,362	
GLAD Alliance Endowment Fund	\$ 2,728	
Chuck Carpenter Leadership Development Fund		\$ 1,193
Reserve for Hiring Staff	\$ 700	

(Nominees: Continued from page 4)

Prior to starting her communication business in March 2002, she served more than a decade as an award-winning editor for *The Disciple*, the international magazine of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

A 1994 graduate of Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Patti was ordained in the same year. She is a member of Central

Christian Church in Indianapolis, which is currently engaged in a discernment process on the relationship of the church with its GLBT members.

"I am honored to have my name put forward as a council candidate," she said in accepting the nomination.

"Nothing less than the gospel of Christ challenges Disciples to live up to our calling of hospitality toward all God's children.

"As a communicator, I bring experience that I hope will help GLAD continue improve its efforts to reach within and beyond Disciples circles with the liberating good news that God's unconditional love and justice are freely offered to each and all."

Tonja Gerardy

As a lifetime member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Tonja Gerardy grew up

(Continued on page 13)

General Fund Budget for the Year Ending December 31, 2004		Cash Expenditures by Responsibility Center		Amount
Approved by the Council on February 7, 2004		Council		
Cash Resources	Amount	Event		\$ 16,250
Membership Contributions	\$ 12,500	Contributions to Others		4,050
Non-Membership Contributions		Other		5,025
Contributions from O&A Ministries	6,800	Discernment Ministry Team		3,425
Over and Above	6,600	Open & Affirming Ministry Team		6,400
Ask A Friend	5,000	Support and Advocacy Ministry Team		950
Memorials, Bequests, Gifts in Honor of Another	1,500	Strategic Action Ministry Team		2,000
Other Resources		Development and Finance Ministry Support Team		4,875
Event Registrations (includes supporting contributions)	16,250	Human Resources and Nominating Ministry Support Team		425
Event Offering	750	Communications Ministry Support Team		9,500
Grants	2,000	Total Cash Expenditures		\$ 52,900
Miscellaneous (includes sales of materials)	1,500			
Total Cash Resources	\$ 52,900			
Notes:				
"Non-Membership Contributions" are contributions received from members and non-members but not designated for the purpose of creating membership.				
A budget of anticipated in-kind contributions and uses has not been prepared.				

Call for Nominations

It is the tradition of GLAD to recognize members who have contributed significantly to the work of the Alliance. Do you know anyone who merits one of the following awards? Let us know at glad@gladalliance.org.

The Carol Blakely

Recognition is giving to those who name publicly the reality that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons are already a part of the church and to those who advance the presence of the Alliance within the general manifestation of the Christian Church.

The Rev. O.D. Johnson

Recognition is given to those who contribute to the growth of an alliance regional chapter and to those who advance the visibility of the Alliance within the regional manifestations of the Christian Church.

The Peevey/Harris

Recognition is given to those who provide leadership in moving a congregation to become Open & Affirming and to those who contribute to the visibility of the Alliance within the congregational manifestations of the Christian Church.

The Rev. Michael Schloff

Recognition is given to individuals or groups who demonstrate the powerful Christian commitment to lesbian, bisexual, gay and affirming Christians and to all persons within or without the church/

Movie Review

Mark Johnston

“A man had two sons...” So began the gospel reading, the familiar story of The Prodigal Son, the day after I saw the film *Latter Days*.

Yes, the plot of this movie is easily described: L.A. circuit boy meets Mormon missionary. You can see where it’s going – Aaron, Mormon missionary, and Christian, L.A. circuit party boy: boy meets boy, boy gets boy, boy loses boy. Yes, a predictable fairy tale gay love story with the requisite pretty boys and erotic yet tastefully done sex scene. But although Aaron, in one of the most powerful scenes in the movie, tells Christian, that “there’s nothing about you that isn’t skin deep,” this movie proves him wrong.

Christian, the prodigal son, who has abandoned everything about life that isn’t about play and pleasure. Aaron, the elder brother, who has always done the right thing, always forgone whatever his church has forbidden.

In the biblical parable, it’s the father that tries to reconcile these two. However, in this story, the parents are all rejecting homophobes. We meet Aaron’s parents. His mother cannot even begin to fathom

that another man might love her son, she cannot begin to see her son’s pain. His father presides at his excommunication from the Mormon church. We hear of Christian’s father. Not about to have a sissy boy for a son, Christian tells the tale of his father taking him on a hunting trip. But the trip goes awry, and later discovered nearly frozen to death, Christian tells of being held in the arms of his unnamed rescuer, tells of being warmed in those arms, of feeling safe – he doesn’t say, but I dare add, feeling loved by a man for the first time – and Christian reports powerfully that at that moment, at the age of 13, he knew, “if this is what it feels like to be gay, bring it on.”

No, there is no loving father apparent in this parable to reconcile these two. It is the power of love itself, pulsing underneath the skin, which pulls these two together. In this parable, both sons have somehow learned how to love despite the homophobia of their past.

But first, to reveal that love, the veneer, that thick skin with which they have both covered themselves, which protects them from the love in their souls, must be torn off. Aaron fears what Christian offers. For him it means losing everything he has ever known: his family, his church, his anchors and guideposts in life. Christian too is cut deeply by Aaron. “Am I shallow?” he asks his friends.

They can’t even answer the question, the answer being so obvious. He too has a life to leave behind, and learns to hurt deeply even as he learns to love truly for the first time.

The movie ends with a meal, a party, as does the parable. This meal is not hosted by a loving father, but by another lost soul who has found meaning in what both Christian and Aaron have brought to her life. As the woman hosting the meal says to the gathered crowd “you are always welcome at my table,” I know I am witnessing a eucharistic feast.

And as I listen to the sermon on this Sunday, after the reading of The Prodigal Son, I realize why the movie has impressed me so deeply. It’s because I am Aaron. And Christian. And both are loved deeply by God. And if I am not both, I am not everything God created me to be.

And I imagine a table where I am welcome, both as elder and as younger brother, as Aaron and as Christian. And I say, bring it on.

(Nominees: Continued from page 10)

with both parents and numerous extended family members serving in the ordained ministry within the church. She heard her own call to ministry as a teenager and entered seminary immediately following college. As an openly lesbian seminary student, Tonja was the point of contact for those current and prospective students, faculty and staff who were struggling with their identity in a career path that did not embrace them. She says "there were a lot of them!" Tonja struggled right along with them and was never sure she was making the right decision to follow her call.

Tonja was ordained by the Indiana region in 1997, a region that has in place a policy of not ordaining openly lesbian or gay persons and to remove the standing of anyone they discover to be lesbian or gay. Tonja believes that she benefited from what amounts to a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy in practice. However, she also found over the next several years that protecting her standing from being removed became an overbearing shadow that affected every aspect of her life, both personal and

professional. She is not currently serving in a paid ministry position, and doesn't know, at this point, if she will again in the future. However, it is very important to her that if she were to serve again, it would only be as an openly lesbian woman. As Tonja puts it, "as a whole person!"

Tonja gives further expression of her thoughts and feelings in these words: "It saddens me that I feel as though I cannot serve this church that I love and that I grew up in. I would like to serve on the GLAD Alliance Council because I want to help spread the word that GLBT persons are in the church. We love the church. We want to serve the church. But, we are prevented from being ourselves in the church. The 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy really amounts to telling a LIE about who you are, a LIE about who you love, and a LIE about our values. I am no longer motivated by fear to continue the lies! I am motivated by my love of the church, a love of justice for all persons, and a love for my GLBT sisters and brothers, to tell the truth."

Notice of Annual Meeting

GLAD Alliance will hold its annual business meeting on Saturday, July 10, 2004 at 1:30pm in Parents Hall North, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. The business to be transacted is anticipated to include the election of two members to the Council. In addition, a financial report and reports of the Moderator and various ministry teams will be received.

GLAD Alliance Membership Covenant

Name(s)

Address

City State Zip

E-Mail

Phone

(____) _____

Annual Membership Covenants

- \$35 Individual
- \$60 Couple
- \$15 Student/Low Income

I am interested in being part of a Ministry Team

Please contact me regarding participation in the:

- Discernment Ministry Team
- Open & Affirming Ministry Team
- Strategic Action Ministry Team
- Support and Advocacy Ministry Team
- Communications Ministry Support Team
- Development and Finance Ministry Support Team
- Human Resources and Nominating Ministry Support Team

Please send this form along with your check made payable to GLAD Alliance, Inc. to:

GLAD Alliance
 PO Box 44400
 Indianapolis IN 46244



**Spiritual Justice / Just Spirituality:
Political, Practical, Mundane
2004 GLAD Alliance Event
Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa
July 8 – 11**

**GLAD Alliance Inc
PO Box 44400
Indianapolis IN 46244-0400**

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED