

# Comments after Kairos

I admit my reasons for registering for Kairos CoMotion were purely selfish. I saw it as a chance to spend time with my best friend (who I don't see often since I moved a year and a half ago) and to make connections with other folks working on justice issues in the Milwaukee area (my new home). In both respects and more besides, Kairos CoMotion was a success. The personal high points included presentations by Bishop John Spong (thought provoking) and Bishop Judith Craig (inspiring), and worship (creative and meaningful).

Years ago Holly Near's music was a favorite of mine in college. She is just as challenging and winsome as she was in the mid 1970's! From the workshop by Janet Ellinger and Sharon Rader I gained an appreciation for how these two women have sought authenticity in their lives and ministries. I felt vindicated when Bishop Rader's remarks focused on the importance of friends in our search for justice! She reflected on the Ruth and Naomi story and shared how a phone call from a friend influenced her own participation in the quest to make the church more inclusive. And as a preacher, I appreciated the sermon material I have gotten from Bishop Craig's remarks (about what it means to 'take up our cross') and a story from Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer (recommended by Janet Ellinger in her workshop). A heartfelt thanks to those who organized Kairos CoMotion. It both challenged and comforted me. I believe it will have ripple effects in many people's lives for a long time to come!

Marianne

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For me, it had the effect of a revival meeting! There really is a community out there which shares a faith that can be expressed in 21st century terms, with roots still in the biblical Story and church tradition, and a vigorous inclusive ethic. Bishop Spong's forthright preaching, with its hint of southern storytelling in a soft southern accent, was to me very moving. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make this happen!

Robert

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One popular expression these days is "think outside the box". Many Christians have embraced this with regard to quality and church management. Few have applied it to their faith. A few who have include Bishop John Shelby Spong, Bishop Judith Craig, Holly Near, Jack Murtaugh, and Susan Laurie who were among the

featured presenters at the recent Kairos CoMotion event held in Middleton.

Why are we so afraid to think outside of the box when it comes to our belief systems? We were challenged to update our theological and Biblical presuppositions by Bishop Spong. Holly Hear advocates for social justice for all persons. Everywhere persons are marginalized by our society by rigid thinking and outdated belief systems, injustice is perpetrated and we were challenged to a new openness, which would bring those persons "home". In order for most of us to change our ideas and bring a 21st century worldview to them, we have to think outside of the boxes of theological literalism and fundamentalist narrow and rigid thinking. This is especially true when the cosmological basis for those thoughts just does not hold water any more.

Kudos and appreciation to the organizers of Kairos CoMotion for bringing leaders to Wisconsin who boldly stand for openness, creative and independent thinking and who still maintain a solid Christ-centered, Jesus led faith.

Dave

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The catastrophe that many people were expecting to happen at the turn of the millennium occurred on September 11, 2001. On that day the rest of the world crashed in on the U.S. consciousness. In addition to the loss of life and property, our national image was shattered: we are not beloved and envied by the rest of the world, we are vulnerable to attack by forces beyond our borders, and all our quantities of wealth cannot buy us peace. Shock waves reverberated throughout the country, and in our shock our impulse was to strike back. And we did. The theme all fall was, "Everything has changed."

It was in this frame of mind that I heard Bishop Spong's lead-off statement, "I am a Christian, I live in the twenty-first century". It was both a statement of fact and a call to reality. By outlining how several discoveries and inventions over the past 2000 years have altered our understanding of and relationship to God, he challenged us to come to grips with the realities of our time, both in our secular thinking and in our understanding of who God is and how we relate to God. I attended a workshop titled "The Word is Life: Biblical Interpretation" led by Bishop Judith Craig and Hazelyn McComas. Hazelyn stated that the events of September 11 were like the shift of tectonic plates that cause earthquakes in the way that they affected our world. That image spoke to me. The rest of the discussion then focused on how we read our Bible and how it speaks to us in the light of such cataclysmic

change. Bishop Craig suggested that community is basic. We need the community to give us assurance that we are understanding the Bible in a way that is relevant to the here and now, to test our wisdom against the wisdom of the community. We need to understand how God has acted in the past, but then we also need to ask "What new thing is God revealing right now?"

Perhaps what God is revealing to us now as Christians is that we have not been faithful to our Biblical roots. We have ignored the warnings of both secular and religious prophets. We have ignored the Biblical mandate to care for the least and the lost. Perhaps God is calling us now to renew our vision and our commitment to peace and justice. Perhaps we need to enlarge our vision to include concern for all the people of the world, to understand that all of them are children of God regardless of the labels, religious or otherwise, that we attach to them. Perhaps the church, perhaps the United Methodist Church, is being called to be a model of inclusion, compassion, generosity of spirit, and Christ-like love, a place where everyone can find a community of acceptance and caring. This is a new age. How do we participate in it? How will we keep our faith alive and relevant?

Sandra

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I was reminded throughout the event of the centrality of community in our life long faith development. Even though it is a basic concept of Christian theology, the experience of it is often taken for granted, or discounted in our market-driven culture. I valued the gathering of this community. The speakers starkly reminded us several times that our relationships are crucial.

How can we not welcome all to the Church? Exclusion of others from the Body of Christ reveals our sinful inability to live the Gospel we profess. Those who are intentionally and unintentionally excluded by our church communities painfully pay the price for our actions. The absence of those we exclude deprives the rest of us from experiencing the richness of those children of God. My appreciation goes to the planning team and leaders for a vital gathering that modeled openness, acceptance and growth.

Steve

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I'm thankful for the Progressive Christian Movement. I'm grateful to you and all others who planned the Kairos CoMotion event. I thank God for the courageous leaders and presenters who shared their vision of the Kingdom with us. A poem learned 50 years ago at Pine Lake Camp comes to mind:

(S)he drew a circle that kept me out.

Heretic! Rebel! Thing to flout!

But Love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle which included him (sic) in.

I'm thankful God has included me in. I'm thankful I have been a part of a denomination of the Church which has included people in. I'm praying that we will stay the course so that others, yet, may know they are loved into, and in, the Kingdom.

Peace, in Christ, Ken

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Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

While I spoke to some of you at the event, I did not speak to each, thus this note.

A HUGE thank you for your creativity, time, efforts, sweat, prayers, dreams and dedication! Kairos C. was most encouraging and inspiring for me! I hope we can keep the momentum going, and gather others to walk with us.

Perhaps additional well-planned experiences, with invitations to persons in smaller geographical areas would be useful. At any rate, thank you! Be well, do good work, keep in touch (as Garrison would say). Peace, Power, and Joy to each!

Ken

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Thank you for the articles about the conference. I was not able to go, so I am enjoying reading about what happened. There are many of us in solidarity. We are at work here in Ohio.

John

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Dear Ones,

You need to know how much I enjoyed the Kairos week-end.

It was wonderful.

Tears continue to well up in my eyes.

I am not able to rid myself of the lump in my throat.

As Bishop Craig said, "We all have a story." Yes, we do.

I am leading a discussion of "*Neglected Voices*". This week I plan to throw out most of what the Leader's Guide suggests and try to remember enough of what took place over the week-end to show that voices neglected are not just those of Biblical characters such as Dinah, Haman (and why should he be given much space, scoundrel that he was!) Rahab....

I have been given a new spiritual insight.

Thank you and the others on the planning committee for the wonderful work!!

Hope those of you who were sick are soon on the road to recovery!

Blessings,  
Barbara

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The conference was great! It helped me really understand and feel the love of Jesus. It helped me to better understand and love homosexual people, disadvantaged people, and people of other races.

Julie

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Hi.

We found the entire program fantastic. Judy and I discussed the particulars of the event all the way home (Illinois). We were drawn to this conference to hear Bishop Spong, and he was great. The conference was much more than Bishop Spong. The events and programs of this conference touched our souls.

We are looking forward to your next event! Thanks for touching our hearts. We will never forget this experience.

With Love and Compassion,  
Larry & Judy

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Shalom!

Barb and I want to thank you (dreamers and leaders) of this gathering for a helpful meeting. It was a great start to what I hope will be a growing organism!

What are plans for follow-up? I ask because I would like to invite folks in the Metro South District to gather to continue discussion around some of the matters raised in Madison.

Shalom!  
Dave