



31 God and creation was accomplished; the challenge was the horizontal  
32 reconciliation of humanity. This is our theme for this Convention and I hope  
33 it describes our work, *be ye reconciled*. Even if you cannot accept their  
34 understanding of the eschatological significance of the death and  
35 resurrection of Jesus, we need not reject their understanding of the critical  
36 need for reconciliation amongst people. The two realities, reconciliation  
37 with God and with one another, are not mutually exclusive but in fact are  
38 complementary of each other. You cannot have one without the other. The  
39 rarely used offertory sentence taken from our Lord's words in St. Matthew's  
40 Gospel remind us of this imperative: *If you offer your gift at the altar and*  
41 *there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift*  
42 *before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother, then come and*  
43 *offer your gift.*

44 The context of the Committee of Southern Churchmen was that of the  
45 post-civil rights movement south. Our context is not dissimilar, and the  
46 temptations then and now seem related, as we attempt to be true to the  
47 Biblical revelation while we haltingly and imperfectly stand for human  
48 dignity in the midst of a religious and societal season of indignity. Call me  
49 naive if you wish, but I believe the solutions to our problems are not simply  
50 technical but of necessity must include a change of heart as well. The  
51 Gospel of Jesus Christ speaks to our situation in Louisiana. Our Diocesan  
52 ministry includes both technical and adaptive attempts at bettering and  
53 inviting a transformation of lives. How can we as Christians seek to enable  
54 the adaptive change, the change of hearts and minds so needed in our state?  
55 I believe in the transformation of life as revealed in Scripture. Yet, I must  
56 say that we cannot simply do the same things over and over again and expect  
57 differing results. No secret has been made of our discernment regarding a

58 Truth and Reconciliation Process, building upon the good work of the  
59 Church in post apartheid South Africa. Thank you Bishop Jo and Dr.  
60 Timeya Seoka for traveling so far to give us a bit of encouragement and  
61 insight into the possibilities for us. They persevered through mountains of  
62 paper work to get here and the Bishop has paid his own way since I could  
63 not. Their presence here is a gift to us. Bishop, there is great resistance in  
64 the religious, business, and government communities to this idea of Truth  
65 and Reconciliation. People are frightened by this idea; it seems safer to do  
66 nothing or continue our current efforts and hope for the best. I am not  
67 concerned about reactivity towards me personally. I am concerned that we  
68 not undertake a work that will make things worse rather than better. A Truth  
69 and Reconciliation ministry is not about us. As a somewhat old-fashioned  
70 Anglo-Catholic, at least by U.S. standards, I still believe in confession,  
71 which implies naming the sin, amending life, and allowing God to heal.

72 The ministries of the Diocese are described for you in the brochure  
73 enclosed in your packet. Some tools of those ministries are here and on  
74 display for you to visit. Little of this would be possible without the  
75 assistance of Episcopal Relief and Development. If our efforts meet with  
76 even moderate success, perhaps these efforts can be translated into  
77 something for our entire state and even the nation. I am convinced that in  
78 most cases when you speak of New Orleans, with the notable exception of  
79 elevation, you can easily substitute other municipal names such as Baton  
80 Rouge, Jena, Louisiana or Newark, New Jersey. If a history of this time in  
81 our life is ever written, perhaps we will be remembered for having tried our  
82 best and having accomplished something significant.

83 I can relate to the Jewish slaves of Egypt when Pharaoh required more  
84 bricks from them while giving less straw with which to make the bricks. I

85 echo their lament for I perceive that more is asked of us in a time of  
86 declining resources. We have been the recipient of great generosity and that  
87 generosity continues albeit at a steadily declining rate. Next year will likely  
88 see the last of the support from Episcopal Relief and Development. I pray  
89 that somehow we can find a sustainability for our ministries and evolve  
90 ODR into Episcopal Community Services. This reality influences not only  
91 the work of our Office of Disaster Response but will likely have a severe  
92 impact upon our Diocesan budget in 2009. You will note that a quarter  
93 million dollars given to the Diocese for undesignated purposes is utilized in  
94 our Diocesan budget in 2008. Such funding will likely not be available next  
95 year. We will have to address this issue during this calendar year. The  
96 options are these: increase revenue or decrease spending. The lament of  
97 ancient Israel is not only corporate but also personal.

98         My abilities – spiritual, physical and mental – seem hardly adequate to  
99 the ministry of *episcope* in Louisiana. One of the challenges of *episcope* in  
100 any circumstance is that a Bishop can accomplish only a bit of what is  
101 expected and needed. In our circumstance, that bit seems to me a small bit  
102 indeed. I recognize the perception that I am often indecisive, sometimes  
103 inaccessible, forgetful, stretched thin, fatigued and even disinterested. In  
104 those situations where perception and reality meet, I apologize. No one is  
105 more aware of my shortcomings, however obvious these may be, than I. My  
106 apology is not intended to be a gloss on this situation nor an easy way out. I  
107 do not mention this lightly nor do I offer an apology as an example of cheap  
108 grace. I would like to use the word “repentance” rather than apology but I  
109 do not know how to do more. Where I have failed and will fail your needs  
110 and expectations, I apologize. It is not my desire to do anything but a  
111 responsible job as Bishop. I want to be a good steward of your trust, your

112 energies, your gifts, and your hope. I am grateful to Bishop Michael Smith  
113 for his presence and ministry amongst us. Bishop Smith takes time from his  
114 family to be with us for one week per month. Yours is a valued ministry,  
115 Bishop. As I pray and consider the paradox of my situation, as I make my  
116 lament, I do realize that God’s grace does not fail us. Perhaps in my failures  
117 and disappointments there is the opportunity for the manifestation of even  
118 greater grace.

119 I continue to pray for miracles, not simply for myself, but for our  
120 ministries. I hope you are aware of our successes in Case Management and  
121 my efforts to continue a vigorous service of Case Management. The next  
122 lines in my address until yesterday read, “Unless Congress quickly  
123 intervenes, most Case Management will end this month. Our Senators have  
124 introduced a bill that would enable such continuation but it is bogged own in  
125 power politics.” Now I have a hope that until yesterday, I would not have  
126 imagined. It seems that Barbara Z. Perez, with the help of Bishop John  
127 Chane of Washington and Congresswoman Norton of the District of  
128 Columbia, have found a way for Case Management to proceed until  
129 Congress acts. It seems that Episcopal Relief and Development will help us.  
130 I am thankful to many brothers and sisters in Christ for their good efforts  
131 and I am thankful to Barbara and the good efforts of Krivit & Krivit on  
132 behalf of the poor. Case Management both gives the fish to the hungry and  
133 teaches the hungry to fish. It is a program of helping people stand on their  
134 own. God is good. The Congressional bog frustrates me because it is not  
135 one political party or another that pays the price for this – the price is paid  
136 by those who struggle to stand on their own and rebuild their lives.  
137 Religious and not-for-profit groups have not enriched themselves with Case  
138 Management work; in fact, we have raised and given away more money than

139 we were given by the government. Even so, Case Management may become  
140 a for profit exercise. I do not understand the expansion of what writer  
141 Naomi Kline calls “disaster capitalism” in what is supposed to be a season of  
142 faith-based initiative. There is a moral issue that as a Christian I must  
143 address. As Christians, we do not see humans as a means to an end,  
144 especially if that end is profit. This is particularly offensive when we see the  
145 poor or the traumatized as a means to an end. As Christians, we see humans  
146 as an end in ourselves. As John Henry Newman wrote, and I must  
147 paraphrase, *it is the cross that places due value upon everything*. The cross  
148 of Jesus Christ, the hope of Christ crucified and resurrected, gives due value  
149 to all. Who am I to say that you are a subspecies of human when Jesus died  
150 for you? Who am I to call another of lesser value when they too are  
151 redeemed by Jesus?

152 I am particularly concerned about our ministry to young people. Dana  
153 Land and I are persistent in our search for funding for new ministry with  
154 youth, namely for hiring a Diocesan Youth ministry person. The  
155 opportunities here are many. A bit more about this later. I still hope for that  
156 miracle gift that will enable us to build at least phase one, whatever that  
157 might be, of a Youth Campus at the Solomon Episcopal Conference Center.  
158 I see this youth campus as a home for the spiritual formation not only of our  
159 children but for others as well. A campus that is handicapped friendly, that  
160 is accessible to inner city children is part of my dream. A recent  
161 conversation with my long time friend and respected colleague, the Rev.  
162 Henry Hudson, Rector of Trinity Church, New Orleans, opened my eyes to  
163 another reality. It is the ministry of summer camping programs and youth  
164 centers that gives identity to generations of young people. Camp Hardtner

165 did exactly that for generations of Louisiana young people. Please join me in  
166 lifting this up in prayer.

167 My perspective on the situation in the Anglican Communion and the  
168 Episcopal Church is unique. I have previously noted that when one lives so  
169 low on the scale of hierarchy of needs, issues take on a different perspective.  
170 Even so, I do not think the issues that perplex the Church and the  
171 Communion are unimportant. Please be clear, I intend to remain an active  
172 and participating member of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church  
173 and I intend to remain a constituent member of the Anglican Communion.  
174 In so doing, I do not think I am compromised in any shape, form, or fashion.

175 As regards Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, I find  
176 in him a Christian who demonstrates to me the example of Jesus. He is  
177 much maligned, often misunderstood, and often savagely attacked for things  
178 he did not say. My friend, Richard Kew, has noted that Rowan Williams  
179 will be remembered as one of the great Archbishops of this time, not unlike  
180 Michael Ramsey. I perceive the Archbishop's leadership to be deeply  
181 spiritual, intellectually rigorous and in the example of Jesus, sacrificial. For  
182 whatever it is worth, I trust him, I respect him, and I stand with him.

183 A recent conversation with Fr. Jerry Kramer was a revelation for me.  
184 Fr. Jerry asked if I thought the Holy Spirit was a work in our ministries. It  
185 seemed an obvious question but as I have pondered this in light of our  
186 ecclesiastical struggles, I have realized it is a deep and thought provoking  
187 question. Are lives transformed? Are people brought closer to God? Are  
188 we who minister being sanctified in our sacrifices? Are people finding God  
189 and being found by God in this Church? Are we feeding the poor, housing  
190 the homeless, caring for the sick, and bringing hope to the hopeless? Is our  
191 work about the Kingdom of God? In every case, I answer without

192 hesitation, and resoundingly YES. I think God is at work here and now.  
193 Whatever tragedies have befallen us, God has not abandoned us. The  
194 evidence is clear.

195 My thinking about moral issues remains unchanged. I shall continue  
196 to honor those who disagree with me. I had one of those anonymous calls  
197 this week that threatened a departure if the Diocese and I did not take a  
198 strong stand. I have been clear about my belief and practice.

199 I think the Communion must evolve; we cannot remain where we are  
200 and remain a symbol of hope for the world. I think the usefulness of the idea  
201 of a loose confederation of national Churches is hurtful in a flat world.  
202 Theologically, I do not accept the idea that a national church can necessarily  
203 be compared to the universal and catholic church of the Creeds. I do not  
204 think the idea of the Episcopal Church as an autonomous Church in a loose  
205 confederation is the way we should envision our future in the context of a  
206 world gone global. The context of our ministry has changed and we must  
207 adapt whilst preserving that which is revealed as unchanging. The proposed  
208 Anglican Covenant is a good way to proceed. I do not necessarily agree  
209 with all the content of even the second draft of the Covenant, I wish it were a  
210 bit more obviously catholic, but I am willing to work with it. The process  
211 towards Covenant is important. I am excited about this process and find  
212 great hope in engaging this work. My excitement and my hope is informed  
213 by the writings of Rabbi Jonathon Sacks of Great Britain.

214 In his latest book, The Home We Build Together, Rabbi Sacks notes:  
215 *The parties to a Covenant bind themselves to one another in an open-ended*  
216 *bond of mutuality and loyalty. They agree to share a fate. One of the most*  
217 *famous lines of the Bible epitomizes this sentiment: “though I walk through*  
218 *the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.”*

219 *Unlike contracts, which are about interests, covenants are about identity.*  
220 *They turn a plurality of “I”s into a collective “We.”* [The Home We Build  
221 Together, page 109] I am struck with the idea of a shared fate and a  
222 collective we. It goes without saying that we have seen the joy of a shared  
223 fate in our circumstance. The Episcopal Church and the Anglican  
224 Communion have stood with us in our time of need. Our fate has become  
225 the fate of all. This reality was obvious when I saw the Archbishop of  
226 Canterbury standing outside All Soul’s Church. The collective “we” is that  
227 for which Jesus prayed, “That they may be one.” In a Covenant process, all  
228 give for the collective “we.” Rabbi Sacks writes; *In a Covenant, what*  
229 *matters is that both give . . . Covenants are moral commitments and they are*  
230 *open-ended. They are sustained not by letter of law or by self-interest, but*  
231 *by loyalty, fidelity and faithfulness.* [The Home We Build Together, page  
232 110] I am willing to give in this Covenant process for the sake of the  
233 faithful to Jesus, catholic witness of the Anglican Communion. I do so in  
234 the example of Jesus and in obedience to witness of Holy Scripture. I call  
235 upon all to manifest a generosity that goes beyond self-interest. In  
236 particular, I call upon my fellow Bishops and those who may have authority  
237 over me, namely the Primates and Archbishops of this Communion, to  
238 consider what they might give to this Covenant process. We have plenty of  
239 brothers and sisters, on the right and on the left, saying what they are not  
240 going to do. Refusals are loudly proclaimed as demonstrations of strength. I  
241 do not understand such perversity. The greater question, the question from  
242 maturity, is different. What are we willing to give? I plan to be present for  
243 and participate in the Lambeth Conference this year. Louise and I, along  
244 with the Smiths and the Seokas, may be the only ones who show up, but we  
245 plan to be there. This is not the season for a tender, personal conscience

246 amongst our leaders. My conscience needs be examined in light of the vows  
247 – all of the vows - I made at ordination. My discomfort and disagreement  
248 with the actions of another does not erase those promises. The imperative of  
249 reconciliation takes us beyond winning. I need say that again, the  
250 imperative of reconciliation takes us beyond winning the disagreement. I  
251 hope that a way can be fashioned that will honor seemingly mutually  
252 exclusive realities whilst honoring the catholic and universal nature of Jesus’  
253 Church. It may be as simple as Bishop Smith’s insight that in the NFL we  
254 have two conferences in one league. I know of your concerns about the  
255 possibility of evangelism, your worries about property and your concerns  
256 about me. Some consider how they may go it alone. This may sound like an  
257 attractive idea, but it is not a temptation to which we should submit. This is  
258 God’s Church and we cannot wait for the right conditions to be faithful to  
259 the Gospel. Those conditions will never be present. I assure you that when  
260 the trumpet sounds, when the earth and sea give up their dead, and the  
261 Kingdom of God is finally and fully consummated in this world, the Lord  
262 Jesus calls us in truth to reconciliation and unity. Let us agree to a shared  
263 fate. This is not a hollow invitation, let us agree to a shared fate. I close  
264 these reflections with a quote from Rabbi Sacks; *there are two ways of*  
265 *getting other people to do what we want. We can force them; this is the*  
266 *answer of power. Or we can pay them, that is the answer of the market. But*  
267 *neither involves treating other people with dignity and respect. Neither*  
268 *satisfies Kant’s criterion of a moral relationship: treat other people as*  
269 *ends, not means. . . Covenant is the third possibility. We create co-*  
270 *operation not by getting you to do what I want, but by joining together in a*  
271 *moral association that turns You and I into “We.” I help you, you help me*  
272 *because there are things we care about together. Covenant is a binding*

273 *commitment, entered into by two or more parties, to work and care for one*  
274 *another while respecting the freedom, integrity and difference of each other.*  
275 *. . . What difference does it make? For one thing, it gets us to think about the*  
276 *common good, the good of all-of-us together. [The Home We Build*  
277 *Together, page 151] The good of all of us together goes beyond self-*  
278 *interest.*

279       My staff, the staff of the Office of Disaster Response, and the staff of  
280 Jericho Road have joined with me in a shared fate. They have joined me in a  
281 move beyond safety, comfort, and self-interest to a ministry of sacrifice and  
282 risk. To mention a few would mean to leave out others and I do not want to  
283 do that. Fr. Chad Jones and all who have worked on Convention, have done  
284 a wonderful job. So, I ask that they all stand and let us give them a visible  
285 and audible symbol of our gratitude.

286       I do not know what the future holds for us. We live in a time of  
287 transition; the change of pace is rapid. That rapid pace is not going to  
288 change. Hard decisions and great opportunities stand before us. How we  
289 shall make those decisions and respond to those opportunities remains a  
290 matter of discernment. How my gifts and abilities and even my inabilities,  
291 are best utilized in shaping our future is an open question. Even so, the  
292 decisions shall be made and, I pray, the opportunities seized. I am excited  
293 about the fate that we share together, for a long time yet to come. The fate  
294 we share together is a challenge to our systemic understanding of self and  
295 community in Louisiana. Having said that, I have an announcement to  
296 make.

297       I am pleased to tell you that a family in our Diocese has made a  
298 commitment, a gift, of \$50,000.00 - that brings us very close to hiring a  
299 youth minister for the Diocese. So close, in fact, that I shall ask the

300 Executive Board for permission to proceed! I believe . . . God is good. I  
301 extend to you the challenge of additional gifts to make this ministry entirely  
302 funded in 2008. We need raise an additional \$25,000.00 to make fund this  
303 position and the ministry it implies. Rejoice with me in the reality of prayers  
304 answered. A likely continuation of Case Management and a coordinator of  
305 youth work for our Diocese; this has been a week of great Thanksgiving for  
306 me.

307 I close with a quote from St. Paul to the Church Philippi; *not that I*  
308 *have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it*  
309 *my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not*  
310 *consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies*  
311 *behind and straining forward to that which lies ahead, I press on toward*  
312 *the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of*  
313 *us who are mature, be thus minded . . .*

314 [Philippians 4: 12 – 15a]

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