Life at the Crossroads

One definition of crossroads is "a point at which a crucial decision must be made that will have far-reaching consequences." The example printed is: "we stand again at a historic crossroads." For me this is one possible way of describing our current moment in history. We are at several crossroads of life right now that include the COVID-19 pandemic and the response to the killing of George Floyd. The repercussions of these two events beg for our attention and critical response. Both events have occurred at a moment in the life of our country in which there are deep divisions. These divisions have come close to paralyzing us as a people. The impact of the political divisions at the center of our democracy in our Capitol has formed a great traffic jam at the crossroads. As people of faith what are we to do?

While approaching an intersection near downtown Baton Rouge recently a large outdoor sign caught my attention. A bespectacled man in flowing robes is front and center of the sign, and below are the words—and I’m paraphrasing—“Be the change you want to see in the world.” The quotation or some version of it is attributed to Mahatma Gandhi who used the witness of nonviolence in a campaign among his people for India’s independence from British Rule in the middle of the last century. His witness also inspired movements for civil rights and freedom around
Of course, not all of us are called to witness in the streets. We’re called to “be the change” in different ways. There are many ways we can witness to our faith and calling as brothers and sisters of Christ and want to make God’s transforming love known in the world. We are called to witness to our neighbors, to our friends and in other ways. However, it seems to me a caution needs to be kept in mind as we figure how God is calling us to serve. Let me share a brief vignette. In the play by Neil Simon, later made into a movie, a group of young recruits go through boot camp during the Second World War in Biloxi Mississippi. A bunkmate of his, Arnold Epstein, says to Jerome (Matthew Broderick) in *Biloxi Blues*: “You’re a witness. You’re always standing around watching what's happening, scribbling in your book what other people do. You have to get in the middle of it. You have to take sides. Make a contribution to the fight. Any fight. The one you believe in.”

Each one of us is called to make a contribution. In the days since the passing of the late U.S. Representative John Lewis many of us have learned so much to admire about this amazing human and his commitment to the betterment of the world. One of the stories about Representative Lewis had to do with the defense of his involvement as a social and political activist as well as being a person of deep and profound faith. It’s an answer in a way to those who voice concern about people of faith being involved in the political arena. It could have been someone else, but I believe the Representative said something to the effect that lots of people are concerned about finding their way to heaven and walking on the streets paved with gold. Then he stated that we really need to be concerned about what’s happening on the streets of Montgomery, Alabama. As we are on the streets where we are and come to a crossroads, may God be with us as we decide which way to go.

Rev. Dan Krutz

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**New Consulting Conference Minister for UCC – South Central Conference**

**Rev. Dr. Campbell Lovett**

The United Church of Christ – South Central Conference has contracted Rev. Dr. Campbell Lovett as Consulting Conference Minister effective April 1, 2020. Dr. Campbell is working remotely quarter-time for SCC from April 1 – Sept 30. After which, the Board may contract with Campbell for a full-time Interim Conference Minister starting October 1, 2020, in which he will relocate to the SCC area.

Dr. Lovett, a third-generation pastor, recently completed almost eight years as the Conference Minister of the Michigan Conference, United Church of Christ. Before beginning his Michigan ministry in 2012, Campbell served as an Interim Minister, Pastor, Co-Pastor, and Senior Minister at both historic and new churches in New England and North Carolina.

Dr. Lovett and his spouse, Eileen, a quilter and creator of liturgical stoles, currently reside in New Hampshire, and are the parents of two grown sons, Samuel, a university chaplain in Worcester, Massachusetts; and Nathan, a lawyer in Washington, DC.

We welcome Dr. Lovett as a new Board Member (Judicatory Leader) of the LIC!
WCC Webinar Series – Ecological Justice & Economy of Life

A four-step webinar series promoted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) titled “Churches on the Road to an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice” will feature concrete examples of churches and faith communities engaged in efforts for transforming their local context.

The activities are inspired by the WCC’s “Roadmap for Congregations, Communities and Churches for an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice,” a resource rooted to the congregational level of churches’ engagement in ecological and economic justice. Launched in 2019, the roadmap addresses the question of how churches can ‘walk the talk’ on economic and ecological justice in their everyday activities and operations.

The series actually began on July 28th, but continues through August, bringing together diverse experts and practitioners as well as encouraging interactive discussion in the following areas:

4 August: “Confessing for just and sustainable consumption”

11 August: “For life, not profit – Churches as alternative economic actors and spaces”

18 August: “Powered by faith – Churches promoting renewable energy and climate protection”

Live streaming: www.facebook.com/worldcouncilofchurches

The webinar inputs and discussions are expected to lead to the development of user-friendly tool kits. The webinar series is a joint undertaking between the WCC’s economic and ecological justice project, WCC’s Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - Food for life and the Ecumenical Water Network.

Download the “Roadmap for Congregations, Communities and Churches for an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice”

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Fall Board Meeting – changed to Zoom meeting
On September 22nd

Working Theme is:
“Reimagining the Louisiana Interchurch Conference”

Save the date!

Schedule is tentative at this point. **ALL Board Members are encouraged to call/Zoom in.** Call in information will be sent out later. Guests may listen in during the Consultant Session/s. We are considering starting the first Business Session at **10:00 am that Tuesday;** followed by introductory work with our Consultant. We will break for lunch at noon. Then we are looking at continuing with a series of Zoom calls over the next couple of months where we will grow our future plans for the Conference with constant input/feedback from various Board Members.

Dr. Craig Gilliam will be joining us as our Consultant. Dr. Gilliam will be helping to guide the Board Members and attendees in collaborating to review LIC’s current ministry and imagine the future direction/s of LIC’s mission and ministry. This is a step along the way of a transition to a new Executive Director, as Fr. Dan Krutz is scheduled to retire at the conclusion of the Annual Assembly in 2022. The results of our work during this Zoom Board Meeting (and it’s follow up conferences) will be presented for consideration at the 2021 Annual Assembly. Your input is wanted/needed!

Save the date – September 22nd!

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**Recommended - from Ecumenical Trends Magazine**

News from Ecumenical Trends: The July/August 2020 issue of *Ecumenical Trends* is now available for subscribers online, and the print run will be mailed as soon as possible. This issue features two substantial articles exploring the dynamics of divided societies - a study of reconciliation processes in South Africa by Fr. Ambrose Mong, and an interview with Dr. Geraldine Smyth, OP, concerning polarization and sectarianism in Northern Ireland and the United States.

*(The interview is available to the general public on the Friars of the Atonement website, and we encourage readers to share it widely.)*

The issue also includes a book review and an obituary for Fr. Charles Angell, SA, Friar of the Atonement and former Editor of *Ecumenical Trends*, whose passing in April we continue to mourn.

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**Offering thanks to our recent contributors – we couldn't make it without you all!**

The majority of the LIC operating income is contributed through the leadership of our member Judicatories, whom we deeply appreciate and depend upon. Additionally, we depend upon partners to supplement the needs. Our thanks to the below contributors:

*Contributions received from July 1, 2020 through July 28, 2020:*

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Friends of the LIC donations: Carol S. Broussard.

Donations to help with Consultant Fee for LIC: United Methodist Church; Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge; Roman Catholic Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux; Roman Catholic Diocese of Shreveport; Episcopal Diocese of W. LA; and ELCA North TX/North LA Synod.

Contributions to Sabbatical/Continuing Education fund for Executive Director: Rev. William Jeff Day.

Thank you all!

Please pray for this ecumenical ministry. If you would like to help financially, please mail contributions to: Louisiana Interchurch Conference, 527 N. Blvd., 4th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, or contribute online via PayPal at http://www.lainterchurch.org/contribute/index.htm.

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**Board Meeting Dates to Calendar**

**Fall Board meeting dates:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date and Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Sept. 22, ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL MEETING</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Sept. 20-21, Houma, LA</td>
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<td>2022</td>
<td>Sept. 19-20, Alexandria, LA</td>
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**Annual Assembly meeting dates:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date and Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>March 1-2, Lake Charles, LA – 51st Annual Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>March 14-15, Baton Rouge, LA – 52nd Annual Assembly</td>
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“To live the faith we hold in common”

President: The Most Rev. Douglas Deshotel; President Elect: The Rev. Dr. Nadine Burton;
Executive Director: Fr. Dan Krutz