

Globalizing the Culture Wars

U.S. CONSERVATIVES, AFRICAN CHURCHES, & HOMOPHOBIA



A publication of Political Research Associates

by Kapya Kaoma

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Political Research Associates is a progressive think tank devoted to supporting movements that are building a more just and inclusive democratic society. We expose movements, institutions, and ideologies that undermine human rights. PRA seeks to advance progressive thinking and action by providing research-based information, analysis, and referrals.

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Cover Photo: Episcopal priest Martyn Minns (l) embraces the Anglican Primate of Nigeria Peter Akinola who has just officiated at Minns' investiture in May 2007 as Missionary Bishop of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA). CANA is a breakaway group of Episcopalians that rejects gay bishops and same-sex unions.

Photograph by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

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Political Research Associates
1310 Broadway, Suite 201
Somerville, MA 02144

Foreword

The African continent has long borne the brunt of proxy wars—both hot and cold—of northern powers. As Kopya Kaoma shows in this stunning new exposé, over the past decade Africa has become a key theater in yet another foreign conflict—the U.S. culture wars.

In *Globalizing the Culture Wars*, Kaoma combines his own investigative research with existing journalistic and scholarly findings to reframe the context of the human rights struggles of sexual minorities in the United States and Africa. We cannot, he insists, understand—never mind win—either struggle without understanding their interrelation. Kaoma argues that the cultivation of African clerics as proxies by the U.S. Right in its domestic culture wars has linked these struggles in ways both startling and disturbing.

In recent years, Anglican bishops and other Protestant leaders on the continent have become increasingly conspicuous in the struggle over the ordination of gay clergy, particularly in the United States. It's clear, to any who bothers to look closely at the situation, that these clerics are proxies in a distinctly U.S. conflict. As *Globalizing the Culture Wars* reveals, it is U.S. conservatives—including those associated with the neoconservative Institute on Religion and Democracy—who have organized African Protestant leaders to protest against any movement towards LGBT equality in U.S. mainline churches. Their relative silence on similar developments in England speaks volumes. U.S. conservatives also provide money to their African allies, and their African allies have offered homes for disgruntled mainline American clergy in their churches. The most famous, but not only, example is that of Martin Minns, who appears on this report's cover with Nigerian Anglican Primate Peter Akinola, and was made a Bishop under the authority of the Anglican Church of Nigeria.

The audacity of the proxy strategy is astonishing. In one instance discussed by Kaoma, U.S. conserva-

tives rewrote a statement by Rev. Jerry Kulah of Liberia to serve as "Africa's" statement to the 2008 United Methodist General Convention. When they were through, it said that embracing social justice causes weakens the church and softens the ground for "the massive silent invasion of Islam upon global community"—even though encroaching Islam is not a particular preoccupation of conservative African clerics. Rather, the alteration of Kulah's statement reflects U.S. conservatives' own preoccupation with so-called radical Islam and the war on terror, and reflects a decidedly non-African world view.

In the United States, these proxy campaigns have slowed—and in some cases seemingly blocked—progress towards gender equality in churches. The United Methodist and Presbyterian churches have failed to lift their bans on the ordination of LGBT clergy. After long years of struggle, the Lutheran and Episcopal churches lifted their own bans just this year, with The Episcopal Church doing so under direct threat of schism in its global Anglican Communion. This aspect of the story is known to LGBT activists and their allies within Protestant denominations, but non-Protestant and secular progressives are generally much less aware of the details and significance of these struggles—both in America and on the African continent. What's been missing, even for most U.S. activists "in the know," has been the effect of the Right's proxy wars on Africa itself. Kaoma's report finally brings this larger, truly global, picture into focus. Rarely has such a bold set of attacks been so poorly understood by their targets.

While momentum and time have seemed to favor the movement for LGBT equality in the United States, *Globalizing the Culture Wars* challenges American human rights activists to confront the difficult reality that our African brothers and sisters are being made to suffer for our hard fought freedoms. Indeed, as a result of the U.S. Right's Africa campaigns, Kaoma warns, sexual minorities on that con-

continent have become a kind of collateral damage in our domestic culture wars.

Just as the United States and other northern societies routinely dump our outlawed or expired chemicals, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and cultural detritus on African and other Third World countries, we now export a political discourse and public policies our own society has discarded as outdated and dangerous. Pending federal legislation in Uganda would impose the death penalty for certain kinds of homosexual activity and also criminalize human rights advocacy by or for sexual minorities. Language in that bill echoes the false and malicious charges of a sinister western “gay agenda” made in Uganda by U.S. anti-gay activist and Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively. Rick Warren, whose influence in Uganda extends to a close personal relationship with First Lady and member of Parliament, Janet Kataha Museveni, positions himself as a moderate on gay issues in the U.S. but declared in Africa in 2008 that, “Homosexuality is not a natural way of life and thus not a human right.” That same year he christened Uganda a “Purpose Driven Country.” Africa’s anti-gay campaigns are to a substantial degree made in the U.S.A.

Human rights activists in the United States—particularly those of us engaged in the movement for LGBT equality—must contend with the implications of Kaoma’s findings. As he insists, it’s not possible to understand the U.S. context independently of the African one, and vice-versa. So too, any effective response to religious homophobia and the persecution of LGBT people will require transnational vision and action. The success of the Right’s campaigns has depended, in part, on parochialism within U.S. social justice movements. Fortunately, the author provides U.S. human rights activists with a list of recommended actions that includes a challenge to western activists to reconceptualize our role and become allies who support African leadership in the struggle for gender liberation there.

Only an African cleric trained in conservative seminaries, committed to gender equality and broader social justice, and familiar with the complex world of the U.S. Christian Right could have produced this study. Kaoma’s access to African clerics of varying political views and his sensitivity to the nuances of various African and American religious and political groups has lent him a unique and illuminating perspective. The report is both a defense and an exem-

plar of the Christian social witness tradition currently under assault by religious conservatives.

Although written primarily for a U.S. audience, *Globalizing the Culture Wars* is certain to cause a stir in English-speaking Africa, where conservative U.S. evangelicals have for too long escaped the close scrutiny of African social justice activists and movements. As Kaoma highlights, the U.S. Right—once isolated in Africa for its role in propping up colonial regimes—has successfully reinvented itself as the mainstream of U.S. evangelicalism and the ally of Africa against supposed liberal neocolonialism in the guise of “gay rights.” Today these same colonial apologists oppose an active role for the state in alleviating poverty and in providing universal and affordable health care in America. Few African religious and civic leaders appear to be aware of these contradictions. Kaoma’s report makes an important contribution towards changing all that.

Tarso Luís Ramos
Executive Director
Political Research Associates
Somerville, Massachusetts
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I view this report as a catalyst in exposing the working of the U.S. political Right in Africa and the United States as well as a call to action by all those concerned with the human rights of LGBT persons across the world. This report is part of the larger discourse needed to address the social and political influence of the Right both in Africa and around the world.

Kapya Kaoma

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Introduction

This is a study of “renewal movements” in three denominations—The Episcopal Church (TEC), the United Methodist Church USA (UMC), and the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)—and their Christian conservative allies. Renewal movements are theologically and socially conservative groupings in mainline U.S. Protestant churches. The report examines the way these movements are partnering with African religious leaders as part of a strategy to destabilize and halt the progressive social witness of U.S. mainline churches while promoting homophobia in both Africa and the United States. “Social witness” is a term describing how churches respond to God’s call to work for peace and justice. There has been little systematic, on-the-ground research about the connections in Africa until Political Research Associates commissioned this report.

We picked these three denominations for three reasons:

1. They have had a long history of social witness in the United States;
2. They have been involved in mission work in Africa; and
3. They have tremendous political influence in the United States; hence they are under pressure from conservative forces to abandon their social witness, most recently in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues.

“African” unless otherwise stated refers to the people of Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya. We concentrated on these three countries because:

1. They have large numbers of members in each of the three denominations;
2. Their religious leaders have been in the forefront of severing relationships with mainline denominations or threatening to do so if the denominations refused to drop their social witness;

3. Theologically, they are conservative leaning, holding views similar to those of U.S. conservatives; and
4. They were colonized by the British and use English as their official language, so research could be conducted in English.

We conducted a thorough review of the literature in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and on the Internet about the recent histories of mainline and evangelical Protestant churches on two continents, church schisms, renewal movements, churches’ histories of social witness in Africa, religious homophobia, and other relevant topics. A selected bibliography is included in this report.

We conducted telephone and in-person interviews with 55 church leaders on all sides of the issues, in both the United States and Africa (a list follows the text of this report), including with officials at the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), mainline U.S. church leaders, scholars, and reporters. We also attended and interviewed participants at the November 2008 New Wineskins Convocation V, a gathering of the renewal movement in the PCUSA.

Preliminary investigations were followed by a trip to Africa in February and March 2009. We spent time in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya, where local research assistants contributed to our efforts. To the extent possible, we documented our interviews and other research on video.

While in Africa, we attended the Seminar on Exposing the Homosexual Agenda in Kampala, Uganda, popularly known as the “Antigay Conference,” which was promoted by the U.S. Christian Right and was the first of its kind in Africa. During the conference, we interviewed several participants, including Stephen Langa, executive director of the Family Life Network in Uganda. This research provided us with greater insights into the working of the Christian Right in Africa. ■

Executive Summary

U.S. conservatives have successfully recruited a significant number of prominent African religious leaders to a campaign seeking to restrict the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The flagship issue of this campaign is the ordination of LGBT clergy by mainline Protestant denominations—particularly the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches—in the United States. **Involvement of African clerics in this U.S. “culture war” has had the effect of slowing, if not stopping altogether, the recognition by these churches of the full equality of LGBT people.**

The campaign’s consequences in the home countries of the African clergy—including Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria which are investigated in this report—are even more threatening to the human rights of sexual minorities than the setbacks engineered in the United States. **As a direct result of this campaign, homophobia is on the rise in Africa—from increased incidents of violence to antigay legislation that carries the death penalty.**

In the struggle for full social equality for LGBT people, churches are an especially significant battleground. Arguments against LGBT equality are generally articulated in moral terms, and the prospect that churches—traditional arbiters of social morality—might support LGBT equality and ordain gay clergy and bishops is of particular concern to religious conservatives in the United States.

U.S. conservatives mobilized African clergy in their domestic culture wars at a time when the demographic center of Christianity is shifting from the global North to the global South, increasing Africa’s influence on Christianity worldwide. **American conservatives who are in the minority within mainline churches depend on African religious leaders to legitimize their positions.** The intensity of the resulting debates promotes the very real threat of schism in global church bodies, particularly within the Anglican Communion of which The Episcopal Church, USA, is a part.

U.S. RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES

The conflict over ordination of gay clergy highlights a role reversal of sorts for liberal and conservative U.S. church and related organizations active on the African continent. For decades in Africa, U.S. mainline Protestant churches joined struggles—opposed by the U.S. Right—to topple racist colonial regimes in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa, and to empower oppressed people of all sorts.

But one of the main organizations promoting homophobia in both Africa and the United States over the last decade is the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), a well-funded neoconservative think tank that opposed the African liberation struggles. **In Africa, IRD and other U.S. conservatives present mainline denominations’ commitments to human rights as imperialistic attempts to manipulate Africans into accepting homosexuality—which they characterize as a purely western phenomenon.** For IRD, this campaign is part of a long-term, deliberate, and successful strategy to weaken and split U.S. mainline denominations, block their powerful progressive social witness promoting social and economic justice, and promote political and social conservatism in the United States. Using African leaders as a wedge in U.S. conflicts is only its latest and perhaps most effective tactic.

IRD supports renewal movements, theologically conservative groupings in mainline U.S. Protestant churches that promote antigay and other socially conservative positions. These renewal movements, IRD, and conservative U.S. evangelicals have built relationships with African religious leaders of all denominations to oppose progress on LGBT issues—sometimes through deception but always through substantial financial incentives to African religious leaders. **Through their extensive communications networks in Africa, social welfare projects, Bible schools, and educational materials, U.S. religious conservatives warn of the dangers of homosexuals**

and present themselves as the true representatives of U.S. evangelicalism, so helping to marginalize mainline churches.

Traditionally, evangelical African churches have been biblically and doctrinally orthodox but progressive on such social issues as national liberation and poverty, making them natural partners of the politically liberal western churches. However, their religious orthodoxy provides the U.S. Right with an opportunity. Africans resonate with the denunciation of homosexuality as a postcolonial plot; their homophobia is as much an expression of resistance to the West as a statement about human sexuality.

Conservative U.S. evangelicals play a strong role in promoting homophobia in Africa by spreading their views and underwriting the widespread conservative educational, social service, and financial infrastructure. Right-wing groups have enticed African religious leaders to reject funding from mainline denominations—which require documentation of how the money is spent—and instead to accept funds from conservatives. This money usually goes to individual bishops without accountability or oversight for how it is used.

With this groundwork, U.S. conservatives mobilize African church leaders to exert a conservative influence on policy matters within U.S. mainline denominations. To name a few examples documented in the report:

- As early as 1999, members of The Episcopal Church USA’s renewal movement affiliated with IRD went to Africa to ask African bishops to support suspending the American church from the worldwide Anglican Communion for being too gay friendly and socially liberal.
- IRD and UMC renewal groups organized African delegates to support those seeking to prevent the United Methodist Church from lifting its ban on the ordination of LGBT clergy during its global General Conference in 2008.
- U.S. conservatives rewrote a major statement from a Liberian Methodist cleric to align it with their U.S. goals **in one of many examples of the U.S. Right ghostwriting African religious leaders’ statements about the United States.**

COLLATERAL DAMAGE IN AFRICA

News coverage of the marriage equality and ordination conflicts in the United States not only glosses over U.S. religious conservatives’ cross-continental organizing but also **underreports the growing persecution of LGBT people in African countries whose churches are players in the U.S. church conflicts.**

As they have cultivated African political and religious leaders, conservatives ranging from megachurch minister Rick Warren to Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively have used their broad access to push for antigay politics in Africa. Christian Right activists use rhetoric about “family values” to foment homophobia in Africa with disastrous consequences, such as the currently pending national antigay legislation in Uganda that would persecute and even issue the death penalty to homosexuals. Ironically, “family,” like “evangelical,” means something different in Africa than in the United States. In Africa, “family” expresses the idea that to be human is to be embedded in community—a concept called *ubuntu*. As for “evangelical,” in Africa the word conveys the notion of Protestant Christianity as a whole, which overlooks the substantive distinctions made by U.S. religious groups.

While homophobia in Africa is fomented largely for U.S. domestic purposes, by depicting advances in the United States as evidence of a worldwide neo-colonial homosexual threat, U.S. conservatives have engendered an insidious, inverse relationship between LGBT rights in the United States and in Africa. **Scott Lively and other evangelicals portray victories for equality in the United States as evidence of the encroaching gay conspiracy, exciting bigotry and violence among their African audiences.** In this respect, Africans have become a kind of “collateral damage” of the U.S. culture wars. The globalization of the U.S. culture wars requires that human rights advocates reconsider their responsibility and role in respect to Africa, as well as the actions required to overcome the opponents of LGBT equality at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are informed by the findings of this report, as well as by our conversations with human rights activists in both Africa and the United States.

1. Confront IRD and U.S. renewal movements.

Progressives should expose these groups' full agenda both in the United States and in Africa, thereby facilitating more effective human rights organizing on both continents. African Christians and political leaders will be able to make better-informed decisions about the alliances they make in the United States. The right-wing ecumenism of IRD-sponsored renewal movements cries out for more robust ecumenical work among U.S. church-based human rights activists and their allies.

2. Expose and confront U.S. religious conservatives who foment homophobia in Africa.

In Africa, U.S. religious conservatives successfully present themselves as representative of their country's evangelicalism. They misrepresent the views of mainline denominations, and they use homophobia to mobilize African Christians for their own ends. Progressives should confront major figures in these campaigns, including Rick Warren and Scott Lively, and call upon them to stop their promotion of homophobia.

3. Support African activists and scholars to lead the struggle for LGBT rights and the study of sexuality in Africa.

Work on LGBT issues in Africa should be led by Africans themselves. Because so many Africans see homosexuality as a western aberration, U.S. activists' organizing work on the ground there only fuels bigotry and attacks on African LGBT people. Similarly, western scholars and journalists should promote research by Africans into sexuality.

4. Build relationships with upcoming African church leadership.

Conservatives have cultivated religious leaders in Africa by funding seminaries and conferences. Progressives should seek out, support, educate, and network young church leaders committed to human rights, rather than focusing on dialogue with entrenched leadership.

5. Work across denominations and around hierarchies. Bishop-to-bishop contact is not sufficient to create authentic African-U.S. connections. Instead, organizing should be more horizontal, so that the true positions of mainline churches are clear to African church leaders and congregants.

6. Expose the covert financing of African conservatives by various American sources.

Additional research is needed to show Africans that what has been marketed to them as an anticolonial struggle is actually something else: a campaign by western conservatives who are providing funding to African churches in order to use them as a proxy force in their U.S. culture war.

7. Disseminate reliable information and continue the research.

The destructive campaigns of IRD and other U.S. conservatives against LGBT people and mainline denominations are not widely known. A robust and sustained research and communications effort is needed. The scope of such research should also be broadened beyond the English-speaking countries of Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda.

Globalizing the Culture Wars

U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, & Homophobia

PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL WITNESS, RENEWAL MOVEMENTS, AND AFRICAN CHURCHES

Since the early 1960s, mainline Protestant churches have worked to empower oppressed people of all sorts, including the poor, communities of color, women and LGBT people. However, the issues of marriage equality and the ordination of LGBT clergy have embroiled many local congregations and even international church bodies in controversy, weaken-

ing the socially progressive role of mainline denominations in public life. Today, some African churches have become involved in this U.S. fight. In fact, Africa's influence on U.S. mainline churches' social witness has steadily increased, ever since African delegates voted that homosexuality was incompatible with scripture at a worldwide gathering of Anglican bishops in 1998.

U.S. conservatives have taken advantage of the international nature of mainline denominations, building relationships with African religious leaders to oppose the mainline groups' progressive social witness and to destabilize entire denominations, especially The Episcopal Church (TEC), the United Methodist Church USA (UMC), and the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), along with their sister churches in the English-speaking countries of Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya. U.S. political conservatives and religious renewal groups—conservative groups in mainline churches—have united with African religious and political leaders to promote homophobia in both Africa and the United States.

U.S. political conservatives and religious renewal groups—conservative groups in mainline churches—have united with African religious and political leaders to promote homophobia in both Africa and the United States.

We want to emphasize that the effect of the conservative think tank the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD) and renewal movements on the social witness of mainline churches cannot be underestimated. In 1981 a Lutheran minister and later neo-conservative Catholic priest, Richard John Neuhaus, and others founded IRD to counter the political influence of socially progressive groups like National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches. In the United States, IRD and its allies have organized around wedge issues from anticommunism to LGBT rights, distracting mainline church leadership from their social justice work and working to discredit them in the eyes of their members and the public.

According to *The Antigay Agenda: Orthodox Vision and the Christian Right*, by Didi Herman, since the 1980s, the Right Wing has used the issues of homosexuality and abortion to unite conservative groups. Herman defines the Christian Right as a White movement that “is conservative politically, as well as theologically. Aside from its antigay stance, the [Christian Right] is said to espouse a procapitalist, promilitary, and broadly antiwelfarist politics.”¹

In Africa, however, the Christian Right means something different. It operates under the banner of “evangelicalism,” which Africans understand to mean biblical and doctrinal orthodoxy, but without the “antiwelfarist” connotations it has in the United States. U.S. Christian conservatives working in Africa are generally known as American Evangelicals, and many Africans do not distinguish, for example, between the Christian Right, evangelicals, the neo-conservative IRD, U.S. mainline renewal movements, Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively, and right-wing megachurch leader Rick Warren. All these groups are considered representative of U.S. Evangelicals. The identification of the political Right with evangelical Christianity has enabled IRD to



American evangelical minister Rick Warren confers with Rwandan President Paul Kagame before speaking at a mass rally in July 2005.

Africans' postcolonial pride to motivate them to fight U.S. mainline churches.

Renewal groups have taken advantage of global shifts in Christian demographics and theology. Christianity is growing rapidly in the global South, and this growth is recalibrating the relations between global North and global South Christians. In the near future, not only will there be more Christians in the South than in the North, but the Southerners are likely to be more committed.⁵ The 1998 Lambeth Conference (a worldwide gathering of Anglican and Episcopal bishops that

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attract the attention of theologically conservative African religious leaders, with whom it has contacts on many levels.

The activities and influence of IRD and its allies on both African and U.S. Christianity are not widely understood in the United States. Traditionally, U.S. churches were involved in Africa through missionary agencies. Conservative missionaries focused on evangelism, while progressives became involved in social justice issues such as fighting colonialism and alleviating poverty. Today, religious conservatives in the United States misrepresent progressives as "evil" people who promote homosexuality.² They exploit to maximum effect the African view that the imposition upon them of so-called western morality is imperialist.³

Ironically, it is the mainline churches that have repeatedly demonstrated their opposition to neocolonialism of all sorts, for example, with their commitment to advancing the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals, which call for ending poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child and maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, environmental stewardship, and global partnership. Despite the mainline churches' positions, American conservatives have slyly presented their commitments as imperialistic attempts to bribe Africans into accepting homosexuality—which they characterize as a purely western phenomenon.⁴ Thus, they appeal to

takes place every ten years) is recognized as the turning point for churches in their understanding of human sexuality in the world.

African bishops who ordinarily shied away from discussing sexuality were forced to confront the issue.⁶ In addition to rejecting the ordination of gays and lesbians, the conference brought Africa to the forefront of LGBT opposition. Since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, southern religious leaders are generally demanding greater influence and power in the affairs of the church—threatening the northern-dominated status quo.

African evangelicals' values differ in many respects from those of the U.S. Religious Right. They embrace theologies such as Latin America's Liberation Theology and South Africa's Black Theology, and their voting patterns on issues of social justice are progressive by U.S. standards. They see political and economic liberation as essential parts of the Christian gospel. Thus, African evangelicals often align with left-wing political movements.⁷

Nevertheless, U.S. social conservatives have succeeded in dominating African Christianity. They have

Many Africans do not distinguish, for example, between the Christian Right, evangelicals, the neoconservative IRD, U.S. mainline renewal movements, Holocaust revisionist Scott Lively, and right-wing megachurch leader Rick Warren.

simply outorganized mainline churches, for example, by providing scholarships—which insure that African clergy receive conservative theological training—as well as loans and other services. They sponsor orphanages, Bible schools, universities, and social welfare projects. By providing education and small-business opportunities, U.S. conservatives have convinced Africans that they are the perfect partners.

Perhaps most importantly, they have established a strong media infrastructure across Africa. According to the *Review of African Economy*, the Christian Broadcasting network (CBN) and Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) “broadcast regularly through-out sub-Saharan Africa.”⁸ U.S. conservatives also fund radio broadcasts. In *Prayer, Profit and Power: US Religious Right and Foreign Policy*, political economist Jeffrey Marishane argues that it is the Right’s access to technology and financial resources that has enabled it to organize so effectively. “This is particularly so outside the U.S.,” he says,

U.S. social conservatives have succeeded in dominating African Christianity.

Where [the Right’s] relatively large material resources, ready access to high-tech mass media equipment and techniques as well as logistical/financial backup from their mother bodies enable them to easily overwhelm any local opposition to preaching their brand of Christianity.⁹

All this gives conservatives ongoing opportunities to misrepresent mainline churches’ views to unsuspecting Africans. They saturate the continent with distorted images of mainline U.S. denominations, branding them as imperialistic and opposed to African interests, when in fact mainline churches have long supported national liberation, social justice, and a preferential option for the poor. The Right tells African Christians that these churches have rejected the doctrines of the trinity, the deity, and the humanity of Christ, as well as the authority of scripture.¹⁰ This misrepresentation has led many African Christians to consider mainline churches threats to their Christian faith and to view conservatives as their allies. For example, the Rev. Rosemary Mbongo, an Anglican leader from Kenya, said, “Africans, Asians, and Latin American evangelical Christians have the voice today; they owe it to American conservatives.”¹¹

FAMILY VALUES AND HOMOSEXUALITY: THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

The U.S. Christian Right accuses mainline churches of threatening family values—although when Americans and Africans refer to “family values,” they are talking about two different sets of social norms. Across Africa, people understand family as fundamental to identity. The African understanding of “family” is summed up in the concept of *ubuntu*, the idea that people are truly human only when they affirm the humanity of others. Or as John Mbiti, a leading African theologian, explains it, “the French philosopher Rene Descartes’ concept of ‘I think therefore I am’ is meaningless in Africa.” Instead, says Mbiti, “an individual can only say, ‘I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.’”¹² According to the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *ubuntu* includes all people regardless of their race, sociopolitical status, or sexual orientation. The African theological outlook, he says, affirms the interconnectedness and sacred worth of all beings.

When it comes to homosexuality, though, many African religious leaders view progressive social witness on LGBT equality as a “western agenda.”¹³ In many respects, their denunciation of homosexuality is an attack on the West rather than a statement about human sexuality. In fact, some African Christian leaders bemoan the lack of theological reflection on the question of sexuality. One senior clergy member complained that the subject of homosexuality has not been adequately discussed in Kenya: “Whether it is an orientation or a life style, we need to study it before making up our mind. The question has not been addressed.”¹⁴

The claim that homosexuality is un-African arises from the politics of postcolonial identity, which rejects anything “western.” For instance, despite Robert Mugabe’s dictatorial rule, many African leaders still view him as a hero—because he stood up against western colonialism. They view the western world and its churches as attempting to impose western culture—including sexual mores—on Africa, and as one Anglican bishop argued, “African Christianity wants to guard itself from the charge that it is a front for western imperialism in decadent decline.”¹⁵ Rejecting “western” homosexuality gives African Christians legitimacy within the African context as well as a point of contact with U.S. conserva-

tives, who view African outbursts against western progressives as directed against mainline churches.

It is worth noting that despite the political and religious rhetoric that frames homosexuality as a distinctly western phenomenon, scholars have found evidence that places it on the continent “from time immemorial, notably in one explicit Bushman painting and in oral traditions about customary cures and punishments.”¹⁶ Some African leaders reject these findings since the scholars doing the research are from the West.

Along with opposing mainline churches’ support for LGBT equality, IRD has opposed their support of liberation struggles in Africa and works closely with renewal movements to mobilize African religious leaders to fight progressive social witness. With dissent coming from within its own denominations as well as from Africa, U.S. mainline leadership faces the dilemma of how to be relevant to its own, secular northern context yet also remain connected to global Christianity.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

U.S. conservatives’ dominance in Africa is extending to social services—although they are opposed to supporting the U.S. poor in their own backyard. Renewal movement scholar Miranda K. Hassett explains that U.S. conservatives have little true interest in the marginalized in Africa. Yet, they are running orphanages, schools and universities there, as well as providing loans and other social services¹⁷ under the auspices of evangelical charities such as World Vision, Uganda Partners, Africa Partners, Five Talents (an IRD sponsored initiative), Bread for Life, and Solar Light for Africa.¹⁸ Julie Hearn shows that conservative religious groups are not identified as the sponsors of these projects, because they usually operate under the umbrella of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs),¹⁹ which provides them with access to grant monies from overseas agencies. Since church-related organizations are not required to report their funding both in the United States and in Africa, it is difficult to quantify the exact amounts going to Africa.



Scott Lively, an American Christian Right activist and author of *The Pink Swastika*, led an antigay conference in Uganda in March 2009.

Conservative funding to Africa is a new development. Historically, churches in Africa depended on financial aid from western mainline churches for most of their operations. The mainline churches supported the fight against apartheid in South Africa and now participate in building hospitals, schools, and other major capital projects. In the 1980s, IRD and other renewal movements attacked such U.S. churches as Marxist sympathizers.²⁰ Despite such attacks, U.S. mainline churches enjoyed warm relations until recently when conservatives used these churches’ social witness on

LGBT issues to encourage African churches to reject their aid. It is one of renewal movements’ key tactics to use a variety of wedge issues, such as the accusations that the mainline churches support homosexuality or terrorism, to separate African churches from their international partnerships and to realign them with conservative replacements.

Some African churches have done so, switching to funding from conservative organizations and individuals. This has increased the influence of the conservatives and their leverage in U.S. and global fights over LGBT rights. Regarding The Episcopal Church, one Kenyan professor told PRA,

The claim that homosexuality is un-African arises from the politics of postcolonial identity, which rejects anything “western.”

American conservatives have been in my office several times requesting that we cut ties with TEC and other progressive funders in exchange for their funds. They have succeeded in getting small colleges into their camp, but we have refused.²¹

A retired bishop in Uganda explained, “Americans send money to the archbishop’s office, who later distributes [it] to dioceses.” The Rev. Aaron Mwesigye, the provincial secretary in the Ugandan Archbishop Henry Orombi’s office, confirmed this, saying that U.S. conservatives had been “contributing towards the remuneration and salaries of the provin-

cial staff since 1998.” He added that “American conservatives provide money to Africans not as donors but as development partners in mission.”²²

The rejection of funds has been used to attract additional conservative funding from the United States. Canon Alison Barfoot, an American who is the personal assistant to Orombi, claimed to the *Washington Times* in 2005 that the Church of Uganda’s Kampala headquarters lacked working phones due to diminished funding. “Conservative American churches haven’t pitched in enough,” she said. Similarly, the Rev. Rosemary Mbongo, the provincial mission coordinator of the Anglican Church of Kenya, which severed its relationship with TEC in 2004, told us that the rejection of Episcopal Church funding had diminished her church’s budget. In 2006 she expressed her hope that breakaway U.S. Episcopal congregations under the authority of the Kenyan church “would tithe to help the Kenyan

province”—which some have done.²³ By crying poor, these churches have been able to increase their funding, now through conservative sources.

Whereas many U.S. conservatives celebrate the rejection of TEC funding by some African churches as indicative of Africa’s moral and spiritual superiority, the Africans are simply responding to the pressure exerted upon them by those very conservatives. And many Africans view this rejection negatively. The majority of African clergy, and African Christians in general, were not consulted, and the evidence suggests most of them oppose the move.²⁴ They argue that Christian charity should be separate from theology,

and that their position on sexuality has nothing to do with their acceptance of funding from mainline churches or anywhere else. One conservative bishop told PRA that the situation is like that of building a church in an African village. When the call goes out for help, he said, everybody can contribute. “I do not separate the gifts. Even sinners can contribute,” he went on. Referring to the tradition whereby Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni gives an SUV to each new bishop (which critics view as a form of buying the church’s silence) he said, “We hear that President

Museveni has given a new car. Did [the Church of Uganda] ask the president how clean is his money?”²⁵ Ironically, even Faith McDonnell, the director of IRD’s religious liberty project and of the Church Alliance for a New Sudan, thought that in the face of Africa’s extreme poverty, rejecting mainline money was wrong.²⁶

Conservative funders tend to be secretive. At the headquarters of the Anglican Church of Uganda, Barfoot administers the U.S. funds and reports back to funders. African accountants, PRA learned, have no access to U.S.-related financial information or books.²⁷ Conservative donations and mission trips are vetted through the United States; the Woodbridge, Virginia, office of dissident Episcopal Bishop John Guernsey approves all Uganda funding.²⁸

The organizers of the Global Anglican Future Conference, or GAFCON, the gathering of conservatives held a month before the 2008 Lambeth conference, sent archbishops from Rwanda and Kenya to lobby the Anglican Church in Central Africa to cut ties with TEC, boycott the Lambeth Conference, and attend GAFCON instead. Most Central African bishops chose Lambeth over GAFCON, and the Ugandan bishops who did go to GAFCON did not know who paid for their presence there. All they knew, they told PRA, was that “unnamed friends” of Ugandan Archbishop Orombi funded them.²⁹

Despite their advice to Africans that they reject funding from mainline churches, U.S. conservatives know no denominational boundaries in their aid. For example, although the Providence Christian Reformed Church in Holland, Michigan is not an Episcopal congregation, it gave \$115,000 to the Anglican Church in Uganda and has continued to support the Ugandan diocese of Mityana. Similarly, non-Episcopal congregations in Mississippi support Anglican projects in Kenya, and the Rev. Rick Warren, minister of the Saddleback Church in California, has established partnerships with Anglican churches in Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda. This conservative ecumenism makes it easier for U.S. conservatives to have a more visible, united presence under the banner of U.S. Evangelicalism.

Funding from conservatives is highly personal—only bishops with U.S. connections receive it—and unrestricted, unlike that of mainline churches, which demand strict accountability from African churches for all the money they receive.³⁰ Therefore, some African religious leaders, including Anglican bishops

It is one of renewal movements’ key tactics to use a variety of wedge issues, such as the accusations that the mainline churches support homosexuality or terrorism, to separate African churches from their international partnerships and to realign them with conservative replacements.

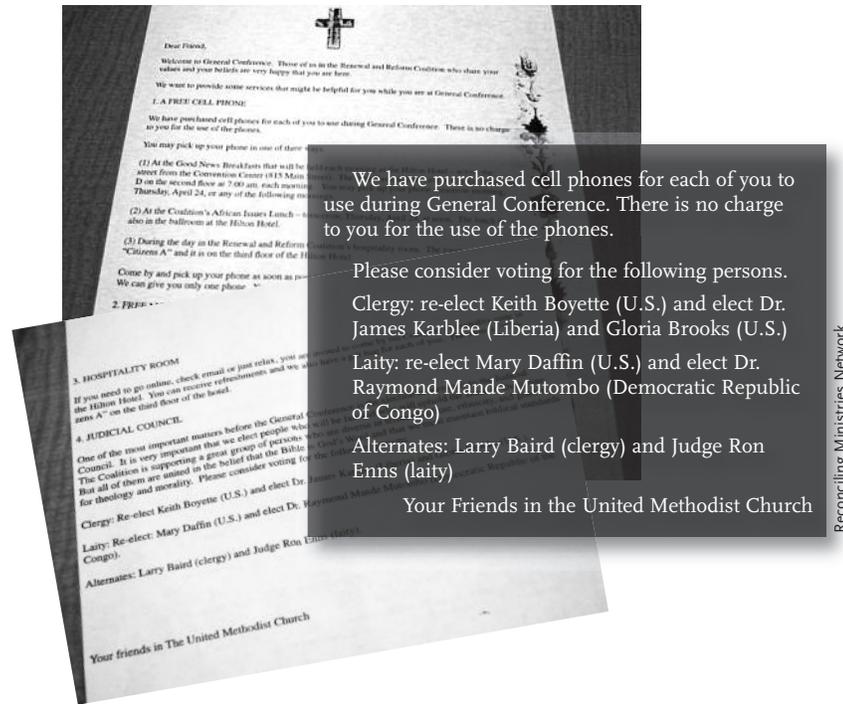
and the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, prefer it and view American conservatives as more generous than their progressive counterparts.

Unfortunately, there is reason to believe that the lack of accountability is contributing to corruption. While money is flowing into Africa from American conservative NGOs, evangelical churches and break-away mainline churches, it is not clear how most of it is being used. Some religious leaders appear to be personally benefiting. Ugandan newspapers implicated now-retired Bishop Samuel Balagadde Sekadde in March 2009 in the misuse of church funds; the independent *Uganda Monitor* observed that the bishop's estates and private home led it to believe that "the good bishop was either living beyond his means or helping himself to church property."³¹ According to some, he is not the only bishop involved in such activity. In fact, many believe that "personal gain" is the reason for African church leaders' outspokenness on sexuality issues.

MONEY AND SCHISM

Funding and lobbying by conservatives has disrupted African church processes. For example, leaders of Anglican churches in Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria declared that they had severed their relationships with The Episcopal Church—before their respective synods had deliberated and voted on the issue.³² They were informed about these decisions only after the fact. Some breaks with U.S. mainline churches have been reversed or ignored on this basis, as in Kenya, where some church leaders have continued to deal with TEC. Similarly, when the now former primate of Central Africa, Dr. Bernard Malango, declared that his church would separate from TEC, almost all his bishops ignored his call. Whether or not church leaders go along with these hostile declarations seems to depend upon the political cultures of the countries involved. In countries like Uganda and Nigeria, where political leadership is dictatorial and civil society is weak, the declarations have been implemented. In contrast, in Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Ghana, and other more democratic countries, the declarations were opposed or simply taken as the leader's personal opinion.

Dissident U.S. Episcopalian leaders Bill Atwood, John Guernsey, and Martyn Minns were consecrated as bishops under the leadership of African archbishops without proper consultation with their respective synods. A senior clergy member complained,



Highlights from a conservative coalition's leaflet distributed with free cell phones to African and Filipino delegates at the United Methodist General Conference 2008.

"I don't know how they were ordained and why they were ordained. The matter was not discussed at the provincial synod or even at the diocesan level."³³ One respected professor said, "By consecrating those bishops, the Anglican Church of Kenya violated its own constitution"³⁴ Another argued, "If it was about rescue of American clergy, they should have asked for an African priest to be consecrated bishop and sent to America," and speculated that the reason the African bishops ordained the Americans had to do with the money the prelates received from U.S. conservatives.³⁵ In other words, he accused the U.S. conservatives of having bought their bishoprics from African prelates. By consecrating the American bishops, the African bishops gained not only money but also legitimacy in the effort to undermine the leadership of mainline churches.

It is clear that not all African clergy recognize the dissident bishops' authority, and some retain a posi

Funding from conservatives is highly personal—only bishops with U.S. connections receive it—and unrestricted... Therefore, some African religious leaders...view American conservatives as more generous than their progressive counterparts.



Photo Courtesy of Kapya Kaoma

The Family Life Network is one of the U.S.-backed evangelical organizations exerting influence in African dioceses. The group hosted the Uganda Anti-Gay Conference in March 2009.

American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (USAID/ASHA). The school is heavily influenced by the U.S. Christian Right. It self-identifies as “conservative,” a term that is not usually used by other African Christians, who call themselves “evangelicals,” and discriminates against students and faculty on the basis of religion and sexual orientation.³⁹ American conservatives work at every level of the university. The school’s vice chancellor is the Rev. Stephen Noll, former dean of the conservative-leaning Trinity School of Ministry in Abridge, Pennsylvania, who has been associated with IRD and the American Anglican Council, the conser-

ervative view of U.S. mainline churches. In Kenya, one urban congregation asked Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi not to interfere with its relationship with TEC congregations, and a number of Anglican bishops there continue to accept funding from TEC.³⁶ Similarly, the Presbyterian Church in Kenya accepts funding from the PCUSA. Nevertheless, to move moderate Christians to their side, U.S. conservatives claim that African churches are unanimously opposed to U.S. mainline churches.³⁷

Some African churches receive U.S. federal funding.

In addition to funding from independent charities, churches, and conservative networks in the U.S., some African churches receive U.S. federal funding. Churches in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya receive funding from PEPFAR (the President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief), which they use to advocate for abstinence-only HIV/AIDS education programs. According to Mbongo, “We can only accept use of condoms in marriage and for reasons of family planning. Our policy is clear: abstinence only before marriage and faithfulness within marriage.”³⁸ This brand of health education is misleading and dangerous; it does not help to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The Uganda Christian University (UCU), which is owned by the Anglican Church of Uganda, receives U.S. government funding from the USAID program,

that seeks to discredit The Episcopal Church.

The U.S.-based organization Uganda Partners, founded by Noll and run by Diane Stanton, spouse of Dallas Episcopal Bishop the Rev. James Stanton, receives USAID/ASHA funding, which it directs to UCU. The Kellogg Foundation, the Parker Foundation, other private foundations, and conservative congregations also contribute to Uganda Partners.⁴⁰ Diane Stanton estimates that her organization provides more than a quarter of the university’s total budget; from 2006 through 2007 it contributed more than \$3 million.⁴¹ Kenneth W. Starr, the independent counsel charged with investigating scandals during the Clinton administration and currently the dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law, is another powerful ally of UCU. He visited Uganda in 2009 and signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Justice Department of Uganda and Pepperdine University School of Law. Uganda Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki signed on behalf of the country. The document committed Pepperdine to “work collaboratively with the Ugandan judiciary to develop academic and legal reform measures.” Mr. Starr has also represented St. James Newport Beach, one of the breakaway congregations in its battle for property in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.⁴²

HOMOSEXUALITY AND IMPERIALISM

A 2006 survey from the well-respected Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that a large majority of people in the global South hold conservative views on sexuality. For example, 98 percent of Nigerians and 99 percent of Kenyans disapprove of homosexuality.⁴³ Multiple factions on the Right including the neo-conservative IRD have exploited this condemnation of homosexuality to characterize its mainline counterparts as neocolonialists who are working to destabilize and corrupt African morals. IRD has convinced African church leaders that western Christians are imposing their values on the continent. As a result, many view U.S. mainline churches as promoting a liberal agenda that supports abortion rights, condom use, and LGBT equality.

Africans often see homosexuality as a western import. One conservative African church leader explained to PRA,

From a cultural perspective, Africans do not condone homosexuality. It is not a practice that takes place, whether privately or in the open. As far as The Episcopal Church is concerned, it condones homosexuality both openly and privately. So the gay practice to be made public and official and national is the reason that prompted African churches to distance themselves from The Episcopal Church.⁴⁴

Similarly, the former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, David Githii, has insisted that homosexuality was not previously found in Africa. Canon Joshua Foluso Taiwo of Nigeria argues that

[Homosexuality] has never been part of our [society] that man will be sleeping with man; nothing like lesbianism in our dictionary. All these came from the West. I can tell you this. I have spent more than five decades on earth....We did not hear of homosexuality until late in the twentieth century when I first heard about it from the army. Many people who went into peace operations in [Europe] brought it.⁴⁵

Paul Wasswa Ssembiro, a leader in the Church of Uganda, argued for a somewhat different theory of origin:

The issues of homosexuality seem to have penetrated [African culture] with the coming of Arabs, particularly in Uganda in the 1800s.... The first history we dig up into homosexuality is based back then. Looking at my own culture, the Baganda culture, the formation of the family, the values and the proverbs, the values by which we were brought up, homosexuality is largely foreign.⁴⁶

A report on the BBC quoted Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo asserting to African church leaders in Nigeria and Uganda that homosexuality "is clearly un-Biblical, unnatural and definitely un-African." Similarly, a Zimbabwean quoted on the BBC Network Africa said, "It's not natural, it is not moral; and it's not African."⁴⁷

Some conservative religious leaders in Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria will admit that homosexuality is an African reality. One told PRA that although homosexuality has been present in Africa, it was always a private matter.⁴⁸ The retired Anglican Bishop Wilson Mutebi pointed to Kabaka Mwanga, the king of the Buganda in the 1880s, explaining that homosexuality was even practiced in the palace. "People who are saying that homosexuality is foreign are telling lies," he said. "They have not done enough research.... Such a statement is naïve."⁴⁹ Martin Ssempe, an antigay activist in Uganda said of Mwanga,

All historical accounts agree that Mwanga was a deviant homosexual who used his demigod status to appease his voracious appetite for sodomy by engaging in these unmentionable acts with his pages at the court.⁵⁰

Those who wish to place homosexuality exclusively in the West have difficulties supporting their arguments. The Reverend Aaron Mwesigye of

Multiple factions on the Right have exploited this condemnation of homosexuality to characterize its mainline counterparts as neocolonialists who are working to destabilize and corrupt African morals.

Uganda argued that homosexuality is not natural, because it is a human instinct and not God's creation. Among African values and taboos, he said,

Homosexuality was not part of it. Even some people who practiced it in the past were corrupting the culture of the Africans. They were kind of importing it from outside. It is not an African homemade [phenomenon].... It is a foreign practice.⁵¹

However, Archdeacon Obioma Onwuzurumba of the Anglican Church of Nigeria explained to PRA that homosexuality was present in his Igbo culture, although it was considered an abomination. "Even before Christianity got to my own locality, we had not ordinarily viewed homosexuality as very normal," he said. "Usually if anybody was found in that act, there were sanctions. One of them involved making sacrifices to gods. That was the thinking."⁵²

According to historian Marc Epprecht, homosexuality has been in Africa from time immemorial, and it is actually homophobia that is un-African. "Dogmatic revulsion against same-sex behaviors, acts, relationships, and thoughts was introduced into the region by European colonialists and preachers," who characterized such acts as signs of backwardness, he says. "Africans were encouraged through these discourses to equate homophobic constructions of sexuality with civilization and progress."⁵³ There is no doubt that Africans viewed heterosexual marriage as the norm, but people with other lifestyles were not attacked or outlawed.

Sexual minorities in Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria are often accused of being paid by rich Americans to promote the "homosexual agenda." One religious leader, explaining why he believes the fight against homosexuality needs government help, said,

We need active vigilant parents, active community leaders, active pastors.... Homosexuals are here funded by Europeans.... You know, big money.... Little people like me do not have guns around to sniff them out; police can sniff them out.⁵⁴

The belief that western LGBT activists recruit young people into homosexuality is common across Africa. Sylvia Tamale, a professor at Makerere University in Uganda and an LGBT activist, said, "The public seemed to think that there was a network of homosexual organizations out there with an explicit agenda to recruit young African men and women into their 'decadent, perverted habits,'" and that they believe "that money was going to pour in from gay and lesbian organizations in Western Europe and North America."⁵⁵ Indeed, Stephen Langa, the director of the Uganda-based Family Life Network, declared at the antigay conference that, "Young people are given a lot of money by gay activists in Uganda to recruit their colleagues into lesbianism."⁵⁶ Archbishop Orombi made a similar point. Homosexuals, he said, "are very rich and are taking advantage of the abject poverty in Africa to lure people into their club."⁵⁷ In fact, as a result of discrimination, most African LGBT activists are extremely poor.

LGBT activists are not the only ones accused of receiving western funding; progressive African bishops are also accused of being bought by mainline U.S. churches. Ironically, conservatives, who actually do receive funding from western groups, deny being bought. The Rev. Aaron Mwesigye justified conservative funding, saying, "While liberals are out to buy Africans, the conservatives are saying, no, we have to maintain our own people....The conservatives are in partnership with those who profess Christ crucified,...who are in disagreement with homosexuality. Conservatives are in fellowship."⁵⁸

COLLATERAL DAMAGE: ANTIGAY LOBBYING AND LEGISLATION IN AFRICA

Leaders of the U.S. Christian Right have cultivated African politicians and used the resulting broad access to push for antigay laws. They have created an insidious, inverse relationship between LGBT rights in the United States and in Africa, by depicting advances in the United States as evidence of a growing homosexual threat that must be stopped. Thus, LGBT Africans suffer a kind of "collateral damage" from the U.S. culture wars, as every victory in the U.S. increases their suffering from bigotry and violence.

African political and religious leaders often seem to be promoting homophobia for cynical political rea-

Homosexuality has been in African from time immemorial, and it is actually homophobia that is un-African.

sons. Since the late 1990s, the Anglican archbishops of Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria, and presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Sam Nujoma of Namibia have all used homosexuality to distract people from the issues facing their countries and churches by claiming that homosexuals are responsible for moral decay in Africa.⁵⁹ They have linked homosexuality with child molestation, ritual child murder, corruption, opposition parties (in Uganda), pornography, and other social ills.⁶⁰ Yet these same leaders are silent about human rights abuses and undemocratic tendencies in their countries.

The *Yvonne Oyoo and Juliet Mukasa v. the Attorney General* case in Uganda brought the issue of homosexuality into the spotlight. LGBT activists Oyoo and Mukasa sued the government of Uganda in 2005 for violating their rights after the police raided their homes, assaulted them, and confiscated documents. When the Uganda High Court ruled in their favor in 2008 and told the government to pay damages, many church people were disappointed. Since then, Christian leaders have lobbied the parliament to institute penalties, including capital punishment, for homosexuality. On October 14, 2009 Ugandan parliament member David Bahati presented The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009 to parliament, with the support of religious leaders. If passed, it will cause the unprecedented persecution of LGBT people. Activists could receive up to five years imprisonment, and anyone who fails to report an LGBT person to the authorities could receive up to a six months sentence. Homosexuals could receive life imprisonment or death. Canon Taiwo, for one, did not see anything wrong with killing gays and lesbians, saying,

If they are doing it, they are doing it privately. They dare not come to the open. They will be shot. I can assure that they will be stoned to death. We don't do it in Africa. It is only in the West that they are doing rubbish.⁶¹

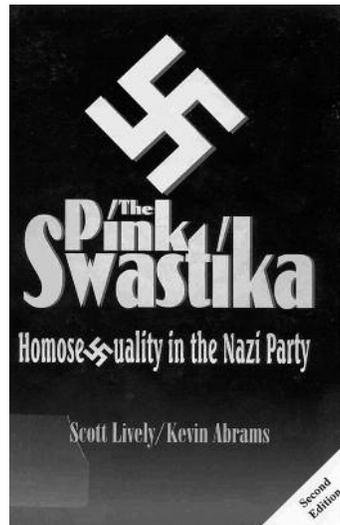
U.S. religious conservatives of all stripes have gone to Africa to lobby political leaders there to criminalize homosexuality. In March 2009 the U.S. anti-gay religious activists Scott Lively and Don Schmierer, together with African Stephen Langa, led a viciously homophobic "Seminar on Exposing the Homosexual Agenda" in Kampala, Uganda.⁶² The two Americans are viewed as bigoted hatemongers in the United States—Lively's book *The Pink Swastika*, which he promoted at the seminar, claims that gays were responsible for the Nazi Holocaust.

Nevertheless, they later were able to meet with Ugandan parliament members and other politicians, and received access to state media to promote their views.⁶³ Other U.S. conservatives, including Evangelist Benny Hinn, Pastor Creflo Dollar, and Pastor Rick Warren have had audiences with African political leaders.

Warren has been particularly influential. While cultivating an image of being a moderate in the United States, he and 48 other American conservatives met with Rwandan cabinet ministers, governors, clergy, and entrepreneurs in July 2005. One dinner was attended by a third of the Rwandan parliament.⁶⁴ In March

and April 2008, he met with political leaders in Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya, the very countries where African bishops had been invited to boycott the 2008 Anglican Communion Lambeth Conference. During this visit, he declared that "Homosexuality is not a natural way of life and thus not a human right....The Church of England is wrong on [homosexuality] and I support the Church of Uganda... on the boycott [of Lambeth]."⁶⁵

In fact, according to Daniel Burke of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Warren... has built ties to conservative Anglican leaders, including prominent archbishops in Africa, over the last several years."⁶⁶ He has worked on projects with the Episcopal primates in Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya



Cover shot of Lively's book, which claims that many leaders of the Nazi German regime, including Adolf Hitler, were homosexual and that the pink triangle is a gay conspiracy.

LGBT Africans suffer a kind of "collateral damage" from the U.S. culture wars, as every victory in the U.S. increases their suffering from bigotry and violence.

who oversee the U.S. churches that left The Episcopal Church over the issue of the ordination of gay clergy. Anglican churches in Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria study his best-selling book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*. In a January 2008 e-mail message to thirty Anglican leaders, days after California's Supreme Court ruled against Episcopal churches that had left the denomination, Warren wrote of the secessionists,

We stand in solidarity with them, and with all orthodox, evangelical Anglicans. I offer the campus of Saddleback Church to any Anglican congregation who needs a place to meet, or if you want to plant a new congregation in south Orange County.⁶⁷

U.S. religious conservatives of all stripes have gone to Africa to lobby political leaders there to criminalize homosexuality.

In June 2009, Warren spoke at the launch of a new, dissident Anglican church, St. Vincent's Episcopal Cathedral Church in Bedford, Texas. Although not an Anglican himself, he has been a major player in the strategy of promoting homophobia in Africa to split the denomination.

Warren's recent attempts to portray himself as a moderate by stating "I'm not homophobic guy!" and securing a place at the inauguration of President Barack Obama may mean that conservatives feel freer to be open about their homophobia in Africa than in the United States.⁶⁸ Yet their antigay statements are taken as gospel, not opinion, by many Africans, a situation which has probably increased calls to criminalize homosexuality and the persecution of sexual minorities.

AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Despite Africa's history of having Christian theologies imposed upon it from the West, African religious leaders have now reversed the situation, becoming involved in some mainline U.S. churches, especially in relation to the worldwide controversy in TEC over LGBT ordination. However, the doctrines they aim to impose originate not in Africa but with their conservative patrons in the United States. For example, in November 2005, delegates of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, New York, voted to dissolve All Saints Church in Irondequoit, New York after it refused to pay its \$16,000 assessment fee for

2005, due to the diocese position on LGBT clergy. The Anglican Network, a renewal movement in TEC, contended that All Saints was part of a different denomination, the Anglican Church of Uganda. A network statement said,

The global reality is that All Saints Church is now a congregation of the eight-million-member Church of Uganda, and finds it a more biblically faithful and supportive environment than the 2.3-million-member Episcopal Church.⁶⁹

Conservative-leaning African clergy see their involvement in U.S. mainline churches as helping a persecuted minority. Canon Mbongo insisted to PRA that the Church of Uganda's consecration of dissident U.S. TEC bishops was a rescue mission. "They came to us for protection from liberals. We provided that protection," she said.⁷⁰

CHANGING AFRICAN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Aside from Archbishop Orombi, who holds office until 2014, most of the prominent African religious leaders who have advocated the severing of relationships with mainline denominations are in the process of retiring. For example, Archbishop Akinola will retire in 2010, while Archbishop Nzimbi and Moderator David Githii have already retired. Retired African clergy have become celebrities in U.S. conservative circles, and some may relocate to the United States.

These retirements may open access to previously confidential information, including that associated with corruption charges; however, it is too early to gauge the positions of the new church leaders. They may have already succumbed to the influence of U.S. conservatives and may become their willing partners in the destabilization of mainline denominations and the promotion of antigay bias. Should conservative U.S. funding, with its lax accountability requirements, continue to flow into Africa, there is reason to believe that these trends will continue.

TAKEOVER: THE CONSERVATIVES' ULTIMATE GOAL

IRD's ultimate goal is to take control of mainline denominations. In its own words:

Conservatives have won surprising victories on key theological and sexuality issues at recent church conventions. Now is the time to translate those victories into real influence for conservatives within the permanent governing structures of these churches, so they can help renew the wider culture of our nation.⁷¹

In a 2007 article for *The Public Eye* magazine, John Dorhauer maintained that the Christian Right's attacks were weakening the progressive stance of mainline U.S. churches by constantly and effectively misrepresenting their positions. IRD and its allies use inaccurate and emotionally laden terms to present these issues to unsuspecting audiences, he said, and two studies of the United Methodist Church—*United Methodism at Risk: A Wake-Up Call*, by Leon Howell, and *Public Pulpits*, by Steven M. Tipton—confirm.⁷² UMC renewal groups such as Good News, in partnership with IRD, have used controversial social and political issues such as homosexuality, abortion, the Iraq war, welfare, the political independence of African countries, and environmental protection, as well as biblical interpretation and other doctrinal matters to discredit mainstream UMC leaders and to derail the church's social witness.

Jim Naughton, who has investigated conservative funding to renewal movements in TEC, explains that conservative renewal groups are generally small. Yet, he says, "Their relationships with wealthy American donors and powerful African bishops have made them key players in the fight for the future of the Anglican Communion."⁷³

Furthermore, according to Tipton, much of the organized conservative dissent within U.S. mainline churches has been engineered from the outside. For example, the founders of IRD were political activists and, in some cases, Roman Catholics with few mainline Protestant church credentials until they sought the help of evangelicals. Tipton quotes Richard Penn Kemble, the architect of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and one of the founders of IRD, as saying that they recruited a number of evangelicals so that they could be "cast as coming from the mainstream culture, rather than mere 'political agitators.'" ⁷⁴

Andrew J. Weaver and Nicole Seibert, respected scholars of renewal, say in a 2004 article that IRD aims to take control of mainline denominations. IRD

and renewal movements use "CIA-style propaganda methods to sow dissent and distrust, all in pursuit of a radical political agenda."⁷⁵ The group's funding sources reveal its roots. Since its inception, IRD has received almost \$2 million from the conservative Scaife Foundation; \$1.5 million from the Bradley Foundation, which was founded by a family tied to the John Birch Society; and more than \$500,000 from the reclusive Howard F. Ahmanson Jr. Ahmanson was a major funder of the campaign to pass the antigay Proposition 8 in California. Because of this kind of funding, scholars and journalists have concluded that the organization has a political rather than a religious agenda. In short, say Weaver and Seibert, IRD works to carry out the goals of its funders, "most of whom are embedded in the secular political right and are opposed to the churches' historic social witness."⁷⁶

RENEWAL MOVEMENT TACTICS

Since 1996, IRD has brought various renewal movements under the umbrella of the Association for Church Renewal (ACR) to "synchronize strategies across denominational lines and to counteract the influence of liberal ecumenical groups, such as the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches." In line with its destabilizing agenda, say Weaver and Seibert, the ACR's goal was to "restructure the permanent governing structure" of "theologically flawed" mainline churches to "discredit and diminish the Religious Left's influence."⁷⁷ Through the ACR, IRD has successfully coordinated more than thirty renewal campaigns, synchronizing their attacks on mainline churches using wedge issues such as homosexuality, women's rights, and, recently, Islamophobia. Rev. David Runnion-Bareford, the president of the Association for Church Renewal, protested President Obama's invitation of openly gay Bishop Robinson whom he called "a schismatic figure" who "symbolizes the moral deviance of denominational leaders who have embraced the agenda of sexual license to the detriment and decline of their churches." Speaking for Africa, he continued,

IRD's ultimate goal is to take control of mainline denominations.

*Renewal movements
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Bishop Robinson has become a symbol of western decadence and moral deviance to African church leaders and to some degree South American and Asian church leaders who represent constituencies far larger than the Christian church in the U.S. Putting Robinson forward with the blessing of your presidency communicates that your intention is to embrace the virulent practice of western hedonism. African leaders in particular will see this as a direct insult to their efforts to confront the horrendous health issues that face their people and the oppression of Islamics and others who accuse Christianity of reflecting the immorality of western culture.⁷⁸

Runnion-Bareford's letter reflects the very issues that are fundamental to IRD and renewal movements. Although it does not represent African opinion, the letter is loaded with IRD and U.S. conservatives' accusations against mainline churches. This is another example in which U.S. conservatives use Africa to advance their political agenda.

One of the tactics of IRD and the renewal movement, says Tipton, is to

... Fight to control governing bodies of mainline churches...by intensifying...efforts to elect conservative delegates to their legislative assemblies and executive boards. It has pursued judicial trials and suits in denominations against violators of church statutes; against gay ministers and gay marriages.⁷⁹

In fact, says Kevin Jones, a reporter who covered the 2002 Confessing the Faith Conference of conservative Episcopalians, United Methodists, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ, renewal movements boast about throwing a wrench into the works of mainline church procedures. One participant said they were able to write "a single letter that will send the progressives into a fit and make the denominational bureaucracy have ten committee meetings."⁸⁰ Similarly, IRD sponsors resolutions at mainline general assemblies knowing they won't

pass—but that debate over them will dominate the meetings.

Conversely, another renewal strategy involves joining mainline churches' committees and eventually rising to high office. According to Jones, renewal activists hope that their participation will tone down the committees' social witness agenda. "Don't be undercover," said one United Methodist at the Confessing the Faith conference.

Tell them you are an evangelical or a conservative, because it will change the tenor of the conversation of the committee and its agenda. Wait a decade or more, and then, when you have enough power on enough boards, enough votes to call in and enough people who've built relationships with board members, strike on a key strategic issue like the presidency of a seminary.⁸¹

Jones adds that conference participants called seminaries "the wellspring;" controlling Sunday schools and seminaries were major goals.

In addition, says Lewis C. Daly in *A Moment to Decide: The Crisis in Mainstream Presbyterianism*, conservatives employ "strategic moderation." They enlist the support of progressives on issues with which no one can really disagree, such as alleviating poverty and human rights abuses. For example, at the November 2008 New Wineskins Convocation V, a meeting of PCUSA renewal churches, PRA observed that special attention was paid to freedom of worship and human rights abuses in various Islamic countries, and social justice work was emphasized. Similarly, IRD sponsors the Alliance for a New Sudan and the Liberty Initiative in North Korea (LINK). However, IRD and its affiliates spend more money on attacking mainline churches than on their religious liberty programs. Weaver and Seibert point out that between 1999 and 2002, IRD spent only \$20,640 on Sudan, while it spent \$3,586,783 on mainline church activities. Presumably due to challenges from its critics, IRD has increased its funding of religious liberty programs since then, spending \$78,560 in 2005 and \$101,817 in 2006. However, this is in contrast to \$326,254 in 2005, \$427,836 in 2006, and \$1,162,772 in 2007 that it spent on United Methodist Church activities alone.⁸² Its spending shows clearly where its priorities really lie.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Right-wing organizing around social justice issues confuses progressives, veiling the renewal movements' ultimate agenda of denominational realignment, such as took place in TEC after the attempt at the 1998 Lambeth Conference to address human sexuality, the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson in 2004, and the subsequent blessing of same-sex couples. To put pressure on the Anglican Communion from within, Episcopal renewal movement churches sought to fall under the guidance of African or Latin American bishops. It is revealing, though, that according to Hassett, individuals associated with IRD hosted a secret meeting as early as November 1999, in Kampala, Uganda. During the meeting, the Rev. Geoff Chapman, rector of a large parish in the diocese of Pittsburgh that is associated with IRD-affiliated American Anglican Council (AAC) said:

We ask for a new jurisdiction on American soil, under the temporary oversight of an overseas province. We believe that such a jurisdiction would provide the best hope for supporting those who are being persecuted for biblical faith and values.... Such a jurisdiction would provide visible restraint and warning to those who oppose the Gospel.⁸³

With the Lambeth Conference and the consecration of Bishop Robinson, conservatives saw the opportunity for which they'd been waiting, and they jumped on it.

Today, conservative U.S. churches operate under The Episcopal Church of Rwanda (Anglican Mission in America), the Church of Kenya (American Anglican Council or AAC), the Church of Uganda (the Anglican Network), and the Church of Nigeria (Convocation of Anglicans in North America). In a pastoral letter to Episcopalians in West Tennessee, Bishop Don. E. Johnson wrote in 2004 about his reasons for leaving the AAC. He had realized, he said, that the AAC aimed to sabotage The Episcopal Church by becoming a "replacement" jurisdiction.⁸⁴

The problem of schism is not limited to The Episcopal Church. In *A Moment to Decide: The Crisis in Mainstream Presbyterianism*, Lewis C. Daly outlines the sources of funding for renewal movements, including IRD, and shows that IRD has consistently opposed Presbyterian social witness on issues ranging from civil rights in the United States to the fight against apartheid in South Africa. The opposition

movements have clearly had a negative effect on the church's social witness, but Daly concludes that their even larger and more ambitious aim is to take control of the PCUSA.

In fact, at the 2008 New Wineskins conference, Dean Weaver, the group's co-moderator, suggested replacing the PCUSA should it grant ordination to LGBT persons—even though the PCUSA has always opposed the ordination of LGBT people in its official teaching. Even as the PCUSA has tried to respond to renewal movement concerns on LGBT issues through groups like Presbyterian Welcome, the movement has continued to discredit its leadership. (Currently only a small number of New Wineskins churches have aligned with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) under the temporary jurisdiction of New Wineskins; the majority prefer to remain in the PCUSA).⁸⁵

In the UMC, IRD used its relationships with African Christians to destabilize the U.S. mainline church. IRD and the renewal UMC Confessing Movement fund conservative UMC leaders to conduct trainings across Africa. IRD officials often meet with African religious leaders when they visit the United States, and the groups maintain contact between visits through mailings.

At the 2008 UMC General Conference, IRD-affiliated UMAction and the Confessing Movement hosted African delegates, whom they provided with training materials translated from English into Portuguese and French. The materials falsely accused the UMC mainline leadership of rejecting the authority of the Bible and ignoring the alleged threat of Islam, the persecution of Christian minorities in Africa, and the importance of evangelism. They also accused the leadership of indifference to the plight of the poor in Africa and of underpaying African bishops, while funding non-UMC organizations such as a center for the elderly and a project to detect breast cancer. (The financial contribution of IRD to UMC projects in Africa is minimal. For instance, it provided only \$2,189 to United Methodist Bishop Jose Quipungo of Angola to support his seminary.)⁸⁶ IRD and the UMC renewal groups also gave the African delegates free cellphones, which critics maintained were used to instruct them on how to vote.⁸⁷

IRD and the UMC renewal groups also gave the African delegates free cell-phones, which critics maintained were used to instruct them on how to vote.

Without the Africans, UMC policy would have gone in a different direction. In his article “Africa Power,” Mark Tooley, the president of IRD, boasts of Africa’s influence at the UMC General Conference, noting that participants voted to retain “the church’s official stance holding homosexual practice as incompatible with Christian teaching.” When thanked for voting to retain the clause, one African bishop responded, “That’s why I brought [the delegates] here.” Tooley concludes,

The presence of 192 African delegates, who were outspoken in their defense of the church’s current position on homosexuality, was crucial. And had the African presence not increased by 84 delegates since 2004, the liberals would have prevailed in deleting the “incompatible” clause.⁸⁸

IRD GHOSTWRITES FOR AFRICAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Included in IRD training materials that the African delegates to the UMC General Conference received was a version of an October 2007 address by the Rev. Jerry Kulah, the district superintendent of Monrovia, Liberia, titled, “The Renewal and Reform Coalition Movements in the United Methodist Church.” IRD asked the African delegates to endorse Kulah’s statement as an African position, and it was posted on IRD website as “A Message from the Church in Africa, Declaration to the 2008 General Conference.” However, IRD altered the version on its website to make Kulah’s statement conform to its positions. In his original statement, Kulah had complained that:

Euro-Western Churches seem to be deserting the biblical path of Church planting, disciple-making, of prayer, and evangelistic and missional endeavors to an inward focus. This inward focus of some Churches has almost changed the biblical mandate from the “Great Commission” to the “Great Omission.”⁸⁹

Here’s IRD version:

We in Africa are deeply concerned that elements of Euro-Western Methodism seem to be deserting the traditional path of Church

planting, disciple-making, of prayer, evangelistic and missional endeavors with the aim of winning souls for Christ to an inward focus. This inward focus of some of the Church has almost changed its call from the “Great Commission” to the “Great Omission.” Its inward focus has further altered its agenda from issues addressing more than two billion people of the world who have never had the opportunity to hear of the saving grace of Christ and hence make a decision to accept or reject him to sociopolitical issues which have the propensity to destroy the very purpose of the Church’s existence. [Italics indicate significant changes.]⁹⁰

IRD also put Islamophobic statements into Kulah’s mouth. He originally wrote,

The current unrestricted embrace of liberalism within the United Methodist Church is endangering the chances of our children to ever consider Christianity a possibility. It further creates a breeding ground for the rapid spread of other faiths amongst [Africa’s] future posterity.⁹¹

IRD changed this statement to read:

Cognizant of the massive silent invasion of Islam upon global community with its excessively and liberal use of Arab-oil funds to propagate its faith, we are afraid that the current unrestricted embrace of liberalism within the United Methodist Church is endangering the chances of our children of not considering Christianity as a possibility. It creates a breeding ground for the rapid expansion of Islam among our future posterity. [Italics indicate significant changes.]⁹²

The assertion that homosexuality puts African Christian witness at a competitive disadvantage with Islam in terms of converting new Christians has been a particular preoccupation of the neoconservative IRD. In November 2008, Jim Tonkovich, then IRD president, announced that his group was “beginning a project to research how the actions of The Episcopal Church promoting homosexuality is negatively impacting Christians in Africa who live within

and alongside Muslim cultures.”⁹³ Nevertheless, there is no evidence in Uganda, Kenya, or Nigeria for such a hypothesis, which is discounted even by African religious conservatives. Micheal Kimindu of Kenya said that this argument is clearly intended to “elicit support from U.S. conservatives concerned about radical Islam.”⁹⁴

The alteration of Kulah’s statement is but one instance of rewriting by U.S. conservatives of the declarations of their African counterparts, apparently to insert their own ideological and political agendas. In another instance, Pat Ashworth of the *Church Times* demonstrated by analyzing computer records that the U.S. conservative and Episcopal dissident the Rev. Martyn Minns apparently wrote Archbishop Akinola’s letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury entitled, “A Most Agonizing Journey towards Lambeth 2008.” According to Ashworth,

Close examination of the document, tracing the authorship, editing history, and timing of changes, reveals about 600 insertions made by Bishop Minns, including whole new sections amounting to two-thirds of the final text.⁹⁵

Jim Naughton, the author of *Following the Money*, concluded that “what has long been portrayed as the authentic voice of African Anglicanism is, manifestly, not African, and perhaps never has been.”⁹⁶

LOOKING BACK; LOOKING FORWARD

Renewal movements and conservatives aligned with the Christian Right are determined to change the political influence of mainline churches in America. The strategy of these groups is to take over leadership of churches or to mire them in such constant and wrenching internal debates as to neutralize them as progressive forces. Although these battles have been fought within U.S. boundaries, Africa has become embroiled into the U.S. culture wars.

Africa has become a critical locale due to the demographic shift of the center of global Christianity to the global South, where Christianity is fast growing. This growth has shifted the balance of power between African and Western churches. African churches in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria are doctrinally evangelical; this is an element that makes them

key partners to U.S. conservatives. However, they are nonetheless progressive on many economic and social issues. Although they have historically partnered with U.S. mainline churches on economic and social causes, African religious leaders have been persuaded to switch their allegiance to U.S. conservatives over shared opposition to Bishop Gene Robinson’s consecration. U.S. conservatives have exploited this change and have mobilized African religious leaders to work on their behalf as a mouthpiece for generating homophobia in Africa which is used in turn to split American churches.

The neoconservative IRD has been on the forefront of attacking mainline progressive churches in the United States. Working in conjunction with U.S. renewal movements operating in Protestant churches, its main goal is destabilization and ultimate takeover of the leadership of these churches. As Right-leaning groups have used opposition to homosexuality to attract Africa’s support to their political agenda, they are simultaneously promoting homophobia in Africa. Since socially conservative evangelicals from the United States present themselves as experts on the “gay agenda” in the United States, both political and religious leaders alike seek their wisdom on how to confront it in Africa. Africa itself is of secondary importance to renewal movements whose goal it is to change the direction of mainline churches in American politics. Their culture warrior partners are also eager to increase their own global influence.

According to a Vatican announcement on October 20, 2009, conservative Anglicans opposed to women priests, LGBT clergy, and the blessing of same-sex marriages can now join the Roman Catholic Church without giving up their Anglican liturgy and identity, including allowing married priests to remain married. Although the effect of this position on the Anglican Communion is still to be seen, it is important to note that African Evangelical Anglicans are generally opposed to the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason, they are not likely to join the Roman Catholic Church. Its effect will nevertheless be felt in the U.S. where American conservatives associated with the neoconservative

The assertion that homosexuality puts African Christian witness at a competitive disadvantage with Islam in terms of converting new Christians has been a particular preoccupation of the neoconservative IRD.

IRD will use this to campaign against the unity of The Episcopal Church.

On the other hand, U.S. conservatives have sought African religious leaders' support in various ways. What happened at the 2008 United Methodist Church (UMC) General Conference is an excellent example. U.S. conservatives depended mainly on African delegates to maintain the ban on ordination of LGBT clergy. Likewise, U.S. conservatives have depended on African religious figures to legitimize their breakaway Episcopal churches by consecrating U.S. Episcopal priests as African bishops. In this regard, while Africans receive material and ideological help from American conservatives, American conservatives who are in the minority within mainline churches depend on African religious leaders to legitimize their positions.

Despite these trends, there is hope. In 2009 two U.S. mainline churches passed resolutions to embrace LGBT persons in their church structures. In July, The Episcopal Church General Convention voted overwhelmingly to lift the moratorium that would allow homosexual clergy to be consecrated as bishops. In August, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also voted to ordain gay and lesbian clergy living in "committed relationships." These developments suggest that progressive activists in mainline churches are now responding to conservatives and putting them on the defensive. Other denominations may soon follow suit. Nonetheless, LGBT equality is just the frontline issue of the moment. Even if progressives win this battle, IRD and renewal movements' campaigns of destabilization will continue, since they are likely to find another wedge issue in their attempts to reduce mainline churches' social witness. Would Islam, which is growing in Sub-Saharan Africa, be the next issue to unite U.S. conservatives and African Christian leadership?

One hopes that the victories in TEC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church would translate into global victories on the LGBT issues, but this has not been the case. These historic resolutions have come with a downside. LGBT persons in Africa have become a kind of invisible collateral damage in the U.S. culture wars. U.S. conservatives have supported the criminalization of homosexuality in the name of religion. LGBT visibility and gains in freedom in the United States have meant suffering for lesbians and gays in Africa where homosexuality is punishable by death or lengthy imprisonment. Public, vicious forms of homophobic violence are now common.

Although homosexual acts are currently illegal in more than two-thirds of African nations based on colonial law, U.S. conservatives have placed homosexuality into neo-colonial discourse by terming it a "Western gay agenda." U.S. conservative evangelicals like Rick Warren and Scott Lively have deliberately influenced this debate at many levels. As a 2009 anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda illustrates, U.S. Christian Right arguments are now being used, almost word for word, to criminalize homosexuality. Aside from the bill advocating for the arrest and imprisonment of LGBT persons, the proposed legislation would extend criminalization to individuals or organizations that defend LGBT equality issues, which according to Pastor Warren are not human rights.

U.S. human rights activists both inside and outside the churches have a particular responsibility to stop the exporting of homophobia from the U.S. to Africa and to support the African-led struggle for human rights and full equality. Americans fomenting homophobia abroad must be exposed and challenged. The U.S. government has a major role to play in standing up for the basic rights of disempowered people across the globe. The Obama administration should advocate for the rights of LGBT persons both here and in Africa as condition for aid to African countries like Uganda and Nigeria, which have sanctioned the persecution of LGBT persons. Much work lies ahead for churches, activists, and governments until LGBT persons secure their human rights, their *ubuntu*.

Recommendations

Discussing the threat posed by the renewal movement to the unity and social witness of the mainline PCUSA, Lewis Daly warns that unless the conservatives are confronted with “progressive counter-movements,” they will succeed in taking over mainline U.S. churches. The danger is real. Even if conservatives fall short of their goal of takeover, the decades-long campaigns of destabilization have weakened once powerful forces for social justice in the United States and abroad. With a clear understanding of the dynamics among renewal movements, mainline denominations, and African churches, human rights advocates in the churches can develop effective, strategic responses to the threat. It is not too late.

According to *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, by Terence Ranger, African evangelicals’ voting patterns are similar to those of U.S. progressives. Ranger concludes that African evangelicals are likely to align with left-wing political movements. However, the success of U.S. conservatives in depicting mainline churches as decadent has led Africans into siding with conservatives. For this reason, there is need to define U.S. conservatives to Africans in order to alert Africans to the major differences that exist between them.

Another consideration is cultural competency. Africans prefer African metaphors to western ones. For instance, rather than calling Jesus “Lord,” most Africans want to understand Jesus as an ancestor. Even the conservative Bishop Wilson Mutebi agrees that theology should be contextual.

The politics and values of U.S. conservatives and African evangelicals are quite different. Conservatives supported apartheid and opposed African liberation struggles; their involvement exacerbated the civil war in Angola.⁹⁷ They encourage the exploitation of African natural resources and deny the dangers of global warming. They oppose international debt cancellation. Yet most African

churches are conservative because of excellent organizing by the U.S. religious conservatives, including the Christian Right, IRD, and conservative evangelicals.

The progressive nature of African theology can aid progressives’ call for a more inclusive church. Progressives should take advantage of this especially when discussing LGBT issues.

1. Confront IRD and U.S. renewal movements. IRD and U.S. renewal movements have committed themselves to a long-term strategy—including providing financial incentives to African church leaders—of destabilizing mainline churches. U.S. mainline denominations and activists must come to terms with the fact that conservatives have successfully characterized them as opposing true Christian values. They must respond proactively by exposing the U.S. Right’s real agenda to African Christians and political leaders, and showing Africans who their real allies are. As Africans start holding U.S. Christian conservatives accountable, they are likely to begin questioning their assertions about mainline church leadership and theology. The right-wing ecumenism of IRD-sponsored renewal movements cries out for more robust ecumenical work among U.S. church-based human rights activists and their allies.

2. Expose and isolate U.S. religious conservatives who foment homophobia in Africa. It is important to note that U.S. conservatives have mischaracterized American progressives to the African audiences. As already observed, U.S. conservatives have infrastructures that increase their visibility in Africa. Such infrastructures are aided by

Unless the conservatives are confronted with “progressive counter-movements,” they will succeed in taking over mainline U.S. churches.

constant visits to Africa which conservatives of all sorts undertake. Since most of these conservatives ride on the wagon of evangelicalism, they use their status to promote their political agendas on LGBT issues. From Warren to Lively, these conservatives deceive Africans leaders into believing that homosexuality is not a human rights issue.

Unfortunately, such statements have not been publicized in the United States. As such, conservatives have not only misrepresented mainline church social witness in Africa but have also promoted homophobia without being held responsible. With criminalization of homosexuality looming in Uganda and other African states, there is need to start exposing U.S. religious leaders such as Warren to an American audience.

3. Support African activists and scholars to lead the struggle for LGBT rights and the study of sexuality in Africa.

U.S. scholars and activists are not the ones to lead the struggle for LGBT rights in Africa. That leadership is already coming from Africans such as Desmond Tutu, Michael Kimindu, Sylvia Tamale, and Esther Mombo. Only they can credibly challenge the idea that homosexuality comes from the West.

Develop a campaign to expose and isolate U.S. religious conservatives who foment homophobia in Africa.

Mainline churches' principled support for LGBT rights confirms many Africans' long-held belief that homosexuality is part of imperialism, legitimizing their homophobia. From a postcolonial perspective therefore, the role of western LGBT activists is to alert the international community about the oppression of LGBT persons in Africa and to support indigenous African activists. Outside involvement at the community level in Africa only inflames more bigotry against LGBT persons.

Currently, most research on human sexuality is done in the West, and Africa has simply been informed of the findings. The study of sexuality in Africa, by Africans for Africans could help correct misconceptions about homosexuality, including the notion that it is a western import. It would also help in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

Currently, most research on human sexuality is done in the West, and Africa has simply been informed of the findings. The study of sexuality in Africa, by Africans for Africans could help correct misconceptions about homosexuality, including the notion that it is a western import. It would also help in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

4. Build relationships with upcoming African church leadership.

The fear of becoming isolated from global Christianity has led U.S. mainline church leaders to engage in dialogue with conservative African religious leaders. They believe that if only they could bring about more understanding, African conservative religious leaders would accept them as legitimate partners.

However, as the rewriting of Kulah's statement reveals, U.S. conservatives are often the invisible hands behind African religious leaders. Furthermore, there is no reason to believe that the current church leadership in Uganda, Rwanda, or Nigeria, for example, is likely to embrace progressive ideas. The benefit of investing heavily in dialogue with such leadership is dubious at best.

Conservatives built their relationships with African religious leaders over time. Progressives must do the same. Rather than putting their resources into the current leadership, they should start building relationships with future leaders, through conferences, seminars, and theological training in both Africa and the United States. Instead of waiting for new bishops, who in any case may already have been influenced by the ideology of the Christian Right, they should immediately engage with upcoming African human rights activists, such as Bishop Christopher Ssenyonjo, Sylvia Tamale, Juliet Victor Mukasa of Uganda, and the Rev. Michael Kimindu of Kenya, and link them with longtime progressives such as the former South African Archbishops Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Njongonkulu Ndungane.

5. Work across denominations and around hierarchies.

Conservatives organize across denominational boundaries. As the example of Rick Warren demonstrates, U.S. conservatives of all denominations view mainline churches as their enemies. To counter this, U.S. progressives must also organize across denominations. That way, they can alert one another to the activities of IRD and renewal movements in their congregations and challenge them together, putting them and other sectors of the Religious Right on the defensive both in the United States and in Africa.

Similarly, U.S. conservatives have long ignored church hierarchies in cultivating relationships with Africans, taking advantage of mainline churches'

adherence to traditional structures, in which leaders relate to leaders. Progressives must learn that bishop-to-bishop relationships alone are insufficient and build relationships not only with African bishops but also with the people of Africa and their upcoming leaders, regardless of their status within the church hierarchy.

6. Expose the covert financing of African conservatives by various American religious conservatives.

While mainline Episcopal church funding in Africa goes toward visible service projects, conservative funding pays the salaries of archbishops and their staffs. Not surprisingly, the archbishops' offices have become mouthpieces for U.S. conservatives. Progressives should alert Africans to their churches' sources of funding and Americans to where their money is going.

Because of African misconceptions about mainline churches and their theologies, when mainline churches give money to African conservatives, it only creates suspicion. African church leaders feel confirmed in their belief that the funding is meant to entice Africans into homosexuality. Rather than providing endless aid, mainline churches must concentrate on changing attitudes. Until the misconceptions are overturned, no financial aid or charity can repair the damage.

7. Disseminate reliable information and continue the research.

• The involvement of U.S. conservatives in Africa needs further study, as U.S. conservative groups and even the U.S. government continue to fund African evangelical churches. In addition, U.S. conservative dealings with francophone Africa and the influence of their activities on the discourse of homosexuality in those countries is an understudied issue.

This report and other information about how renewal movements are destabilizing mainline denominations should be immediately and widely distributed among activists in the United States and internationally. Unless Africans are informed, conservative forces will continue its work of undermining mainline denominations, promoting conservative political positions, and fomenting violence against LGBT people on the continent. The renewal movement's opposition to these exclusionary right-wing LGBT human rights is directly linked to the suppression of reproductive justice and the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. People everywhere must understand the danger of policies and ideologies.

Appendix

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

African Evangelicals

African Christians who are theologically conservative but socially progressive. Mostly, these Christians uphold the Bible as inherently inspired. African Anglicans, United Methodists and Presbyterians in Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya identify themselves as Evangelicals.

American Anglican Council

An IRD-affiliated renewal movement within The Episcopal Church.

Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)

Unites renewal movements, Episcopal congregations, and dioceses that broke away from The Episcopal Church into a single church. Originally, such churches operated under overseas bishops.

Anglican Communion

The world-wide Anglican/Episcopal family of churches, comprising over 80 million members in 44 regional and national member churches around the globe in over 160 countries.

Anglican Mission in America (also known as AMiA)

The first group to accept Episcopal oversight from an African religious leader. The Anglican Church of Rwanda provides the oversight for the churches that identify with this mission.

The Anglican Network

An IRD-affiliated renewal movement within The Episcopal Church.

Association for Church Renewal (ACR)

An association of leaders of church renewal organizations and ministries that are related to mainline denominations in the United States and Canada. The group is coordinated by the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

The Church of Kenya

The Anglican Church in Kenya, which is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Church of Nigeria

The Anglican Church in Nigeria, the biggest Anglican Church in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Church of Uganda

The Anglican Church in Uganda, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Church Planting

The creation of a new church congregation for the purposes of attracting new or like-minded Christians.

Confessing Movement

A conservative renewal movement in the United Methodist Church affiliated with the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

Conservative Evangelicals

A subset of American evangelicals. This group is both theologically and socially conservative but not necessarily politically active.

The Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA)

An association of churches, self-described as a “missionary district,” in the United States under the leadership of the Archbishop of Nigeria.

Episcopal Action

A department of the Institute on Religion and Democracy dedicated to monitoring social justice activities in The Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America (TEC)

One of the provinces that make up the Anglican Communion, also known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America

The Episcopal General Convention

The governing body of The Episcopal Church (TEC), which meets every three years. The Convention is made of the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. It makes rules for the governing of the Church.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)

An American church body holding to Presbyterian governance within a conservative framework. Its General Assembly is in Livonia, Michigan. About 70 New Wineskins churches have affiliated with the EPC.

GAFCON

The “Global Anglican Future Conference” held in Jerusalem by worldwide conservative Anglican Bishops as an alternative to the Lambeth Conference in 2008. GAFCON bishops were behind the formation of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

Global South

A term in current usage describing the developing World, formerly called the Third World, which includes Africa, Central and South America, and parts of Asia. Usually, it is used in contrast to the global North.

Good News Movement

A renewal movement within the United Methodist Church. It is closely related to IRD and publishes the *Good News Magazine*.

Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD)

A neo-conservative Washington based think tank founded with the task of reducing the political influence of American mainline Protestant churches.

Lambeth Conference

A gathering of Anglican Bishops in Canterbury (UK) in the Anglican Communion held every ten years. Because each Anglican Church is autonomous, the Lambeth Conference does not have power to make rules for the whole Communion.

Mainline Churches

Established Protestant denominations, such as Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, and the United Church of Christ organizations. Often used loosely to contrast these groups with evangelical, fundamentalist, and non-denominational churches.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Eight international development goals United Nations member states and some international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. These include reducing extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health, ensuring environmental sustainability, provision of universal primary education, fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.

New Wineskins

A renewal movement within the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Presbyterian Action

A department of the Institute on Religion and Democracy dedicated to monitoring social justice activities in the Presbyterian Church.

The Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)

A Protestant denomination with offices in Louisville, Kentucky and about 2.3 million members. It traces its heritage to John Calvin and other reformed theologians.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)

The Presbyterian church in Kenya with its offices in Nairobi, Kenya. Although the denomination traces its history to the Church of Scotland, it still enjoys relations with Church of Scotland, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church USA and other reformed Churches.

Renewal Movements

Socially and theologically conservative groups created within mainline churches to transform those churches into more conservative institutions.

Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)

A local LGBT activist group in Uganda.

Social witness

A term describing how churches respond to God's call to work for peace and justice in the changing world. It is also called prophetic witness.

U.S. Christian Right

A range of right-wing Christian social movements and organizations characterized by strong support of conservative social and political values. Includes conservative factions of both mainline denominations and evangelicals. An influential part of the Republican Party, it represents about 15% of the voting public.

Uganda Christian University (UCU)

A U.S.-conservative funded university in Mukono, Uganda. It is officially owned by the Anglican Church of Uganda.

Uganda Partners

A charitable organization based in Texas and dedicated to raising funds for Uganda Christian University. Also known as Uganda Christian University Partners.

UMAction

A department of the Institute on Religion and Democracy dedicated to monitoring social justices activities of the United Methodist Church in the U.S.A. and abroad.

United Methodist Church

A mainline Protestant denomination headquartered in the United States. It traces its origins to John and Charles Wesley.

The UMC General Conference

The highest legislative body for the worldwide United Methodist Church Delegates meet every four years to pass resolutions that will govern the Church.

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EXCERPTS FROM A BILL FILED IN THE UGANDAN PARLIAMENT IN APRIL 2009

THE ANTI – HOMOSEXUALITY BILL, 2009

1. The Principle

The object of this Bill is to establish a comprehensive legislation to protect the traditional family by prohibiting (i) any form of sexual relations between people of the same sex; and (ii) the promotion or recognition of such sexual relations in public institutions as healthy, normal or an acceptable lifestyle, including in the public schools, through or with the support of any government entity in Uganda or any non- governmental organization inside or outside the country. Research indicates that the [sic] homosexuality has a variety of negative consequences including higher incidences of violence, sexually transmitted diseases, and use of drugs. The higher incidence of separation and break-up in homosexual relationships also creates a highly unstable environment for children raised by homosexuals through adoption or otherwise, and can have profound psychological consequences on those children. In addition, the promotion of homosexual behavior undermines our traditional family values....

This legislation is aimed at halting the advance of the "sexual rights" agenda, which seeks to establish additional legally protected classes based on sexual preferences and behaviors, as well as claims that people have rights based on these preferences and behaviors. Sexual rights activists have created new euphemisms to promote this agenda such as "sexual orientation," "gender identity," "sexual minorities" and "sexual rights."

This legislation further recognizes the fact that same sex attraction is not an innate and immutable characteristic and that people who experience this mental disorder can and have changed to a heterosexual orientation. It also recognizes that because

homosexuals are not born that way, but develop this disorder based on experiences and environmental conditions, it is preventable, especially among young people who are most vulnerable to recruitment into the homosexual lifestyle....

The Republic of Uganda needs comprehensive and enhanced legislation to protect our cultural, legal, religious, and traditional family values against the attempts of sexual rights activists seeking to impose their values of sexual promiscuity on Uganda.

PART II: PROHIBITION OF HOMOSEXUALITY AND RELATED PRACTICES

3. Prohibition of homosexuality

- (1) Homosexuality is prohibited.
- (2) Any person who engages in homosexuality contrary to sub-section (1) commits an offense and on conviction is liable to a fine not exceeding 500 currency points or imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or both....

5. Promotion of homosexuality

- (1) Any person who,
 - (a) Participates in production, trafficking, procuring, marketing, broadcasting, disseminating, publishing homosexual materials;
 - (b) Funds or sponsors homosexuality and related activities
 - (c) Offers premises and other fixed or movable assets
 - (d) Uses electronic devices which include internet, films, mobile phone and
 - (e) Who acts as an accomplice or attempts to legitimize or in any way abets homosexuality and related practices

Commits an offense and on conviction is liable to a fine of five thousand currency points or imprisonment of at least five years or both.

- (2) Where the offender is a corporate body or a business or an association or a Non-governmental organization conviction its Certificate of Registration shall be cancelled and the Director(s) or proprietors or promoter(s) shall be criminally liable.

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PRA Project Team and Advisory Committee

STAFF TEAM



Photographs by Aler Abdulla

Project Director **Kapya Kaoma** is an Anglican priest from Zambia now leading churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. A doctoral candidate at Boston University School of Theology, he has studied in evangelical schools in Zambia and the United Kingdom. From 1998 to 2001, he served as dean of St. John's Cathedral in Mutabe, Zimbabwe and lecturer at Africa University, where he coauthored a text in ethics, "Unity in Diversity." From 2001 to 2002, he was academic dean for St. John's Anglican Seminary in Kitwe, Zambia, where he launched its women's studies and church school training programs. An active campaigner for women's reproductive rights, Kaoma is a passionate activist for prophetic witness in the world.



Tarso Luís Ramos is Executive Director of Political Research Associates, a role he assumed after serving three years as PRA research director. As a journalist and researcher Tarso has investigated right-wing social movements since 1991. In the early 1990s, Tarso monitored and organized against attacks on the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and other states in the western U.S. Before joining PRA, he served as the founding director of Western States Center's racial justice program, which resists racist public policy initiatives and supports the base-building work of people-of-color-led social justice organizations. As PRA research director, Tarso managed the launch of three major projects — on civil liberties and domestic surveillance, Islamophobia and antisemitism on college campuses, and the relationship between U.S. and African social conservatives who are mobilizing against the human rights of LGBT people.



Senior Researcher **Pam Chamberlain** studies and writes about opposition to the reproductive justice and LGBT rights movements. She has worked with PRA since 1999, as an editor for the Activist Resource Kits, the lead researcher on their Campus Activism Project, and regular contributor to *The Public Eye*. Pam has been involved with feminist, peace, and human rights activism since her days as a high school teacher.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Very Rev. Dr. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, Dean and President of Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA and former PRA President is an Episcopal priest and advocate who served for 17 years (8 as chair) on the national board of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. As chair, she led the Coalition through a mission, name and organizational change that doubled the size of both staff and budget. She also serves on the board of NARAL: Pro-Choice America, The White House Project, as well as the bi-national advisory board of The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. She is the editor of *Boundary Wars: Intimacy and Distance in Healing Relationships*. http://www.publiceye.org/about-pra/pr_a_people.html

Frederick Clarkson is on the editorial board of *The Public Eye*, a publication of Political Research Associates and founder of *Talk to Action*, a group blog about the Christian Right. Fred is also an accomplished author and has published works on the IRD.

Episcopal Church USA

– **Jim Naughton** is Canon for Communications and Advancement in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and the author of *Following the Money Part 1* and *2*. Jim has followed the conservative activities in the Episcopal Church.

– **The Rev. Jan Nunley** is an Episcopal priest and a professional journalist. Until recently, she was The Executive Editor for digital communications for the Episcopal Church Center.

– **Katie Sherrod** is an Episcopal layperson, independent writer, producer and commentator in Fort Worth, Texas. She is the editor of and a contributor to “Grace & Gumption, Stories of Fort Worth Women,” published by the TCU Press; and “Women of the Passion, a Journey to the Cross.”

– **The Rev. Dr. Fredrica Harris Thompsett** is Mary Wolfe Professor of Historical Theology and faculty emerita at Episcopal Divinity School. She is a well-respected historian and theologian in The Episcopal Church. Professor Harris Thompsett has taught at different Episcopal seminaries including Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), Cambridge, MA, where for fourteen years she also served as Academic Dean.

United Methodist Church (UMC)

– **Jim Winkler** is General Secretary of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS). Jim has served as chief executive of the international public policy and social justice agency of The United Methodist Church since November 2000. As General Secretary, he works with staff, board members, church leaders, and local church members to seek the implementation of the denomination’s Social Principles through education and advocacy.

– **The Rev. Neal Christie** is Assistant General Secretary of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society (GBCS) for Education and Leadership Formation. The Reverend Christie has extensive knowledge on African United Methodists.

– **Cathy Knight** is Executive Director of “Church Within A Church Movement” in the United Methodist Church. The movement seeks to challenge policies that deny ordination to qualified candidates based on sexual orientation.

Presbyterian Church USA

– **The Rev. Dr. Joan M. Martin** is an ordained minister and William W. Rankin Associate Professor of Christian Social Ethics at the Episcopal Divinity School. She has written on both domestic and international social justice issues.

Consultant

Bishop Elect and Professor Ian Douglas, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA. **The Rev. Dr. Ian T. Douglas** is one of the most influential persons in the Anglican Communion. Recently elected Bishop of Connecticut, Ian is a passionate educator, missiologist and activist. A well accomplished author and recognized leader in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, Professor Douglas is a member of the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, as well as part of the Design Group for the 2008 Lambeth Conference. He is also member-elect of the Anglican Consultative Council.

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