

Again this morning my email inbox was full of warnings of impending schism. The drum beats of division that have been pounding as the Claiming the Blessing initiative gained momentum and support have risen to a crescendo with the election June 7th of the Reverend Canon Gene Robinson as Bishop Coadjutor in the Diocese of New Hampshire. “Grave concern over a great crisis” write the bishops of South Carolina. “Never before has the church faced such a challenge,” wrote a General Convention Deputy. “Schism is inevitable,” say the leaders of the American Anglican Council.

“Or not,” is my reply.

What it takes to create schism is for someone to leave – and I am sick unto death with the unity of this church being placed on the shoulders of those of us who have committed to stay.

When are we going to hold accountable those who threaten to leave? When will we name the actions of those who have conspired with factions of the larger Anglican communion to actively oppress and marginalize its GLBT members with what it is: fomenting schism – creating conflict – sacrificing the unity of the church to their own agenda of power, control and heterosexism?

If schism happens – and I am convinced it will not – the blame will lie not with Claiming the Blessing, the Diocese of New Hampshire, Gene Robinson or the countless GLBT Christians living out their faith journeys in the Episcopal Church. It will lie firmly at the feet of those whose will to power is greater than their willingness to embrace the other, whose commitment to crisis is greater than their faith in the Gospel and whose singular obsession with things sexual has blinded them to the Spirit’s revelation via things incarnational.

The cornerstone of the Claiming the Blessing initiative has been this citation from the second chapter of Genesis: “I will bless you so that you will be a blessing.” The blessing of life-long, committed relationships of people who love each other and love Jesus will not split this church – they will bless this church. The election of one of the finest priests in the communion to take his place in the House of Bishops will not split this church – it will bless this church. Committed to stay in conversation with each other we will weather this storm as we have weathered the others that doomsayers have predicted would destroy this great church of ours – and we can get back to the business of being a blessing