Affirmation and Invitation

What is an Affirmation? Webster’s tells us it’s a positive assertion or declaration. I think of it as “breathing life” into an intention. And for me, Invitation means someone wants me to attend an event, be a team member or join in something that holds the promise of a joyful outcome, (like coming to the Lord’s table!) However, it may also involve a lot of work! That’s okay, the Invitation is what’s important. It feels good to be valued.

ECCT is into a two-year Season of Racial Healing, Justice, & Reconciliation. We are an inviting church; we post signs that say “All are Welcome.” Why do we need to Affirm and Invite? It is God’s church after all. Yet, we are learning new things this Season: the Episcopal Church has a history to overcome. Here’s a story: When I talk about my faith to some People of Color, I get this question: “Isn’t the Episcopal church a White church?” Or, when I meet White people, I am asked, “Are you Baptist?” This has happened quite a few times and my answers are always “no” and “no.” I then explain my faith journey.

So to me, in these divided times in America and around the world, where the cloud of separation hangs over God’s creation, making affirmative efforts is a powerful thing to do. I believe in Affirming God’s people, all colors, languages and cultures are welcome in the Episcopal Church and can help to overcome parts of our history and break down the stereotype of what is a White church or a Black church.

Another story: Years ago, I worked in a racial justice ministry in New Jersey, where I then lived. Our small, diverse group held church-sponsored anti-racism training. Soon, we figured out that it was
wonderful to do this work, but at the end of the day, we returned to
our segregated lives. We decided to break that pattern, take an
affirming action and enjoy each other at a deeper level, and we did.

How does one move from affirming to taking action - growing our
intentions? For me it was normalizing more diverse people, places and
experiences I welcomed into my life. Thought was given to saying
“yes” rather than “no” and actually seeking out difference; then, I
accepted God’s invitation and followed the path God laid for me. Like
the time I took a belly-dancing class and ended up going to the
instructor’s Bahá’í wedding reception!

Carol M. Taylor, Trinity Church, Lime Rock

Recent added resources to Season webpages (as noted in weekly
eNewsletter issues): Henry Louis Gates, Jr.’s recent works on
Reconstruction:

(1) PBS documentary shown in April and available on DVD,
“Reconstruction: America After the Civil War.” Documentary link:
https://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction/

(2) Book (hardcover, ebook, audiobook) published April 2, Stony the

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resolution and for resources, events, and more. ECCT’s Racial Healing,
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