LGBT Global Church Celebrates Marriage Equality and Addresses Violence

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Known globally as the “The Human Rights Church,” Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) convenes in Chicago, July 1-5, to mark 45 years of marriages and human rights for LGBT people and to support MCC’s ministries in 40 countries. Their 25th General Conference is at the Fairmont Millennium Park Hotel—200 North Columbus.

Celebration of the historic US Supreme Court decisions is on the docket, but MCC leaders are committed to lifting up ongoing persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the US and in the more than 70 countries where being gay is illegal and sometimes punishable by execution.

On Wednesday, at 1 p.m. (Central), Bishop Christopher Senyonjo – ardent opponent of Uganda’s “Kill the Gays” bill – and US Ambassador Dan Baer will join top MCC leaders in a press conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the worst arson attack against LGBT people in US history. Thirty-two people – almost all MCC members – died, but it was ignored for decades. Through recent documentary, theatre and television productions, this fire is becoming a milestone in the history of violence against LGBT people. If you cannot join in person, please call in: (605) 477-3000, Access Code: 774241#

MCC has been a driving force for decades to provide an alternative to shame-based churches. Nearly two thousand members and supporters from the USA and around the world will build on the 45 years of MCC ministries under the 2013 banner, “Believe!”

Keynote speakers and workshop leaders include:

* [Daniel Baer](http://believe.mccchurch.org/?s=baer), US Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE);
* [Bishop Christopher Senyonjo](http://believe.mccchurch.org/?page_id=1140), who is fighting Uganda’s proposed “Kill the Gays” bill;
* [Rev. John Thomas](http://believe.mccchurch.org/?s=john+thomas), retired head of the 3 million member United Church of Christ;
* [Rev. Dr. Bob Johanson](http://believe.mccchurch.org/?page_id=713), Distinguished Fellow, author of Leaders Make the Future;
* [Rev. Dr. Gary Paterson](http://believe.mccchurch.org/?page_id=888), Moderator of the United Church of Canada;
* USA Marriage Equality leaders, Rev. Candy Holmes, Rev. Dr. Jim Merritt, Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas;
* Rev. Cristiano Valero, leader in Brazil where the country looks to MCC for marriage leadership;
* Eastern Europeans leaders: Florin Buhuceanu (Romania), Leah (Moldova) – high risk areas;
* Rev. Jim Mulcahy (working in Ukraine) and Yuri (Moscow) face Orthodox Church resistance;
* Rev. Elder Hector Gutierrez speaks to marriage equality in Argentina, Brazil and Latin America;
* Leaders of the Global Justice Institute, Rev. Pat Bumgardner and Pastor Joseph Tolton.

MCC was the first to marry same-gender couples in 1968, first to legally wed a Colorado couple in 1993, and provided key leadership for marriage equality in Canada. MCC has been in the White House and on the steps of courthouses for over four decades. MCC leaders are still risking their lives in Eastern Europe where they have been attacked and arrested at pride events. They are on the ground in Uganda, Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, Zimbabwe, South Africa, etc. living out the future of equality before God and the law.

MCC’s human rights and justice work addresses the rights of women, people of color, sexual minorities and other groups facing challenges. MCC members and leaders work to empower and effect change by building bridges that liberate and promote sacred respect for all people. Calls to action and global dignitaries will drive the agenda for this policy-setting meeting, which now happens once every three years.

“Metropolitan Community Churches are on a bold mission to transform hearts, lives, and history…. Just as Jesus did, we are called to: Do justice, show kindness, and live humbly with God.” (Micah 6:8) – From MCC’s Statement of Vision.

For more information about the MCC and their affiliates, please visit mccchurch.org.

For interview appointments, contact:
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Read the full story at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/6/prweb10883936.htm>

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