

ISSUES

2009

FRIDAY JULY 17

Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry: Its Aspirations

The word “Asian American” was coined in the late 1960’s in the crucible of student uprisings at San Francisco State and UC Berkeley. Among the activists were Chinese and Japanese American students on these campuses. They took sides with the Vietnamese, both in the South and the North, who they saw were being victimized by the massive military assault on Vietnam in order to crush the Communists led by Ho Chi Minh.

With the leadership of the Rev’d Winston Ching, the office of Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM) was established in 1973 in order to serve the needs of Asians in America and Americans of Asian heritage. Since 2004, the Rev’d Wilfred Vergara has served in the capacity. The EAM National Consultation has been held annually, typically in the West Coast where the largest number of our constituency resides. The EAM Council consists of seven Convocations: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, Southeast Asian and Diocesan Representatives.

Our ministry targets a number of formidable issues, including:

1. Discrimination against Asians; but also racism among and by Asians and Asian Americans.
2. Empowerment of Asian-American and Asian Episcopalians. It might be noted that the stereotype of Asian Americans as “model minority” makes it exceedingly difficult to persuade Asian Americans to seek a vocation in the Church.
3. Reconciliation among Asians and Asian Americans, especially as a result of Japan’s atrocities committed against other Asians during the World War II.

The Philippines is among the largest Roman

Catholic countries. South Korea has some of the largest churches in the world, as exemplified by Yoido, a Pentecostal church with over 830,000 members in one parish. And yet, Asian American churches in the United States are small and scattered. Many of them can no longer find clergy who share their heritage.

In June 2010, the EAM National Consultation will meet in the Diocese of Northern California. Preparations are now well underway to meet squarely our objectives as identified above.

We ask for your prayerful support.

T. James Kodera, EAMA
President, EAM Council,

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Poverty and Its Impact on Children

I usually keep a couple of large plastic bins in my office stocked with food for families in need. Last week I walked into the lobby of the Cathedral and Wally, a volunteer, was looking for food for a young mother, her child, and elderly mother. The bins were empty. I invited her into my office and emptied out the food from the bins in my office.

That evening, I received a call about another family from our parish. It seems the younger children (5&6) kept coming into the kitchen, opening the refrigerator, and finding nothing. They did this repeatedly throughout the day. Their mother asked them why they kept doing this, they replied “we are hoping that one of these times there will be some food that has appeared while we were not looking”.

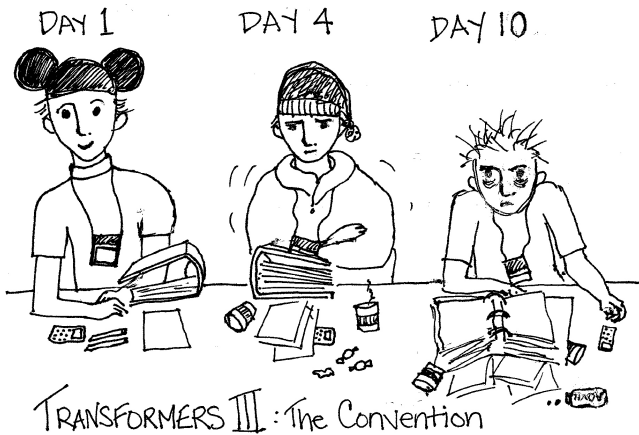
The faith of a child who still hopes that “food will appear while they are looking” basically called my own faith into question. “Food will not appear” for these and thousands of children in our country and in our churches, unless those of us who are economically, politically, emotionally, and spiritually able commit ourselves to change the root causes of poverty that allow those realities to exist in our own country, to say nothing of the rest of the world.

As The Episcopal Church, we struggle with cuts in our institutional budget and we often seem to conclude that outreach is the area that “sacrificially” needs to be cut. What about considering these words written in the fourth century by Ambrose:

“The large rooms of which you are so proud are in fact your shame. They are big enough to hold crowds – also big enough to shut out the voice of

the poor... There is your sister or brother, naked, crying! And you stand confused over the choice of an attractive floor covering.”

adapted from a piece
by Carmen Guerro
by Dianne Aid, ENEJ



Susan Williams

Communication issues mean that we have three of Susan's cartoons to use up. If they fit in the Friday edition, you will find them here; if not, I'll post them on a separate web page under ISSUES 2009.

Great Appreciation

Every General Convention leaves me with a wonderful feeling of gratitude. It is a privilege to be able to edit this publication and a joy to work with our staff. Mike Shirley is an old hand at ISSUES and a steady supportive friendship in what I'm trying to do. Matt Stewart has joined the ISSUES Staff with enthusiasm, energy, and a willingness to try most anything. Our writers are a source of inspiration, I want to give them public thanks: Dianne Aid, Katie Sherrod, Caro Hall, Mike and Matt, Mike Maloney, Jim Kodera, Michael Schut, Joe Doss, Bruce Garner, Pat Abrams, Ed Rodman, Henry Adkins, Tim Yeager, John Harris, Lane Denson, Elizabeth Kaeton, Nell Bolton, Juan Oliver, Diane Pollard, Byron Rushing, and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship's Young Adult Presence, (Nicole Janelle, coordinator, Catherine Healy, Michelle Harvey, Allison Vogel song, Anson Stewart, Brad McDonald, and Joseph Mathews.)

Ron Miller, ISSUES Staff

The ISSUES Sports Page

As I was handing out ISSUES Wednesday morning, a bishop, with his tongue planted firmly

in cheek, complained that there was no sports page in ISSUES. As one who always observes all episcopal directives, I offer the first ISSUES Sports Page.

I'm a Boston sports fan. I live and die by the risings and fallings of the Red Sox. (And I must also confess that my favorite usage of the term *ubuntu* was when it was the rallying cry of the Celtics in 2008 when they beat the Lakers.) Of course, the term fan is short for fanatic. And there is something to that. I'm way too affected by the most recent Sox score, especially when things aren't going well.

But I think there may something redemptive in this as well. A passionate sports fan is one who cares deeply about something over which she or he has no control. The challenges are to learn to manage one's emotions, to be gracious in times of victory, and to maintain one's hope and passion in the face of loss. These are virtues of the Christian life as well. As we watch the last few box scores of General Convention go by (i.e. Resolution F198: Lay order vote 712 - 92% concurring...) and, as we reflect on the past ten or so days, whether there've been more wins or losses for us, may we grow in our capacity to live faithfully. May we face up to our finitude and lack of control in this vast world, but nevertheless remain confident and joyous, trusting in the gracious provision of our loving God.

Matt Stewart, ISSUES staff

And lest that not be enough for the bishop, here's a portion of real box score for you:

All-Star Game – July 14, 2009

AL All-Stars 4 Final
NL All-Stars 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
AL	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	8	1	
NL	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	1	

W: Papelbon (1-0) L: Bell (0-1) S: Rivera (1)

Gentle hints may not be enough!

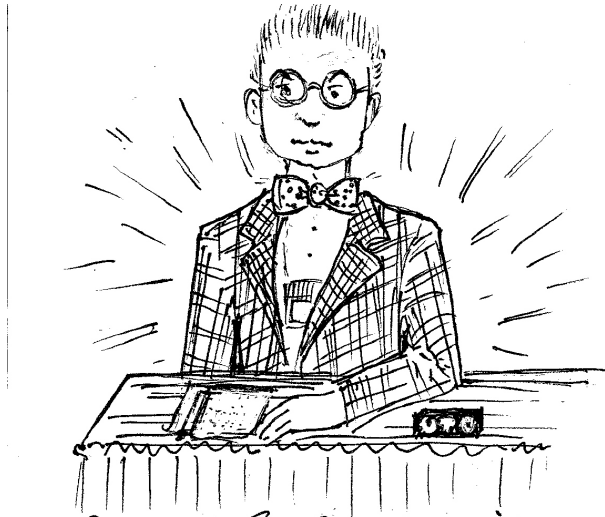
ISSUES and The Consultation are at Convention to share in the fellowship, to greet old and new friends, and to help the Legislative Houses in their deliberations. None of our constituent groups have deep pockets; they are all dependent on the kindness of friends. ISSUES, particularly, is intended to help our friends see the work of Convention in a different way, and to perhaps shine light on an overlooked aspect of the discussions. There is no angel funding ISSUES,

life would be easier if there were. So, we need your contribution, large or small. (Large is preferred, but we don't discriminate by size, either.)

If you have found our efforts of interest or amusement, please send a contribution payable to The Consultation, 1430 S. Hanover St. Baltimore, MD 21230

The Editors

Another motion



Resolved: The Secretary is doing his best to keep the Deputies awake and alert.
Vote Now: 1 Yes, 2 No.

Susan Williams

Here I Am, Send Me

'Mission is our life' said the Presiding Bishop in her sermon on Sunday. The honesty of this Convention has created an environment which makes it possible for us to turn our attention more fully to mission. There are thousands of LGBT people already in the Episcopal Church and many more watching on the edges. Since D025 states unequivocally that their gifts are accepted and valued in this Church there is a new opportunity for their energy to be harnessed for mission.

The Convention t-shirts which Integrity created as a witness during the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit 'Here I am Send Me – I am a witness to God's inclusive Love' pointed out that LGBT people are a resource for the Church's mission, not objects to be sacrificed. Although this Convention has not moved to a defining statement of 'all the sacraments for all the baptized,' it has made very significant steps in that

direction.

Our call to LGBT people, their family and friends is to take this fresh wind of change and inclusion and communicate to the world that we worship a God whose love is extravagant and inclusive, and we belong to a church which is moving ever closer to demonstrating the qualities of that God. A Church which has spoken quietly but clearly that it is working towards living into our slogan "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You".

(T-shirts are available after Convention at <http://www.cafepress.com/integrityusa/6804844>)

Caro Hall, Integrity

Quick Reflection on the State of The Church

"When, oh when, will we be free of the labeled boxes that we put people in? We cannot pass resolutions on some because we do not know enough about them, we pull people out of one box and re-pack them to be stored in the attic, or to be hung on a Christmas tree for a season. Our baptismal covenant's statement, "Respect the dignity of every human being," can help us put the boxes in the recycle bin to return to a nurturing earth."

Dianne Aid, ENEJ

A Prayer from New Hampshire deputies

Dear Jesus Christ, Lover of souls, you have sustained us through the first 8 days of General Convention to strengthen your church from the inside: Guide us to embrace and respond to the urgent cries brought from the outside where we live and minister. Empower us to work on behalf of the poor, of the oppressed, and of this fragile earth. You are the Incarnation and we your image. Anoint us now for doing justice sparked by your Holy Spirit. Amen

Bill Exner & Sarah Lawton



Hold on - Susie's gone to get
the Book of Occasional Services.

Susan Williams

Stories with a Purpose

I am one whose first instinct is to roll my eyes when I hear the word "story." It is, of course, commonplace to use that s-word in the church nowadays. And I know I am not alone in being one to be conveniently unavailable for most church events where I'll be asked to, yet again, tell my story or hear someone else's.

And, while most of this surely stems from my own personality, I still think there is some wisdom in being skeptical about this storytelling enterprise we've engaged in so wholeheartedly in the church. My experience is that storytelling gatherings can devolve in problematic ways. Sometimes, they become yet another situation in the church where strong personalities monopolize the conversation, rather than places where opportunities are made for the voiceless to be heard. Sometimes, they become a "profoundness competition" amongst those trying to impress their peers (or their bishops.) Sometimes, they become a way of manipulating for a self-serving personal agenda. Sometimes, they can form us in ways that makes us more self-involved rather than more concerned with the other. And, of course, sometimes they simply fall short because the storytellers are those who want to hear their own voices. Our stories are culturally constructed and so are not intrinsically good or true. Often they can confuse the truth, mire us deeper in the status quo, or even become new texts of terror.

This all being said, I want to commend the church for bringing Marshall Ganz into our midst to guide

us in the Public Narrative Project. With his community organizing background, Marshall has led the General Convention into, not a navel-gazing brand of storytelling, but rather a brand of storytelling that is mission-focused. He has encouraged us to remain on topic, so that our stories not meander off into meaninglessness. He has encouraged us to remain attentive to our audience so our stories suggest something pertinent to those who are listening. He has trained his coaches to ask probing questions so that our stories lead not only to self-awareness and community-awareness but most importantly to action. And he has encouraged us to be SHORT. (When our story is ten times longer than Jesus' longest parable maybe we've gone a bit overboard...)

May we be a church whose stories are personal and compelling... but always in the pursuit of peace, justice, and the mission of God.

Matt Stewart, ISSUES Staff

Some personal reflections

In contrast to recent conventions when the legislative process was slow if it moved at all, both houses seem to have devised ways to move legislation relatively quickly. Rather than getting approval at all, the problem seems to be coping with the large number of initiatives which deserve convention action; many of these are left-over from previous conventions. Given the recommendations from the PB&F Committee, it is worrisome to consider that General Convention may be shortened further.

We hope that the decision in Deputies to move most Concurrences to the Consent Calendar will mean that the amount of business transacted will increase without effectiveness suffering. As one who was observing the House of Deputies yesterday, a comment was made that "Paint dries more slowly when the humidity is high!"

This convention has a better feel than recent ones, since those who were threatening schism have gone their way. We trust that the actions taken here on LGBT issues will be seen by most of the Communion as appropriate actions for this culture, and that the other provinces will see that their future lies in a similar direction.

Ron Miller, ISSUES Staff