

Supplemental Report

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the Asiamerica Ministry Office be affirmed for the leadership it has given to the development and strengthening of Asian congregations of the Episcopal Church, the number of which has dramatically increased in the past decade; and be it further

Resolved, That the Asiamerica Ministry Office be given the necessary financial support during this Decade of Evangelism to enable it to develop strategy plans for Asian congregational development, especially in regard to Southeast Asians, in response to the rapid population increase as evidenced by the 1990 census and in expectation of the continued increase into the 21st century; and be it further

Resolved, That the Asiamerica Ministry Office report its findings and plans to the 71st General Convention. (1991 General Convention Resolution D168)

What is the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry?

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry is a program of the Episcopal Church to assist the development of Asian and Pacific Island ministries in partnership with the dioceses of the Episcopal Church. It is more than a chaplaincy to serve church members who have moved to the United States from other areas where the Anglican Communion has been present. It is a missionary program of evangelism and service to bring people of Asian and Pacific Island background into the branch of the body of Christ that is represented by the Episcopal Church.

Who are the Asian and Pacific Islanders?

For many of those who are included in the classification as Asians in the United States, this identity as Asians is relatively new. Traditionally, persons from Asia identify themselves with their ancestral homelands and cultures, and sometimes even go to the extent of identifying themselves by a particular dialect of language that is spoken. Asians in the United States are Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Burmese, Thai, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong, each with unique and sometimes even mutually exclusive cultural and historical perspectives. Sometimes the peoples from the Pacific Islands—Hawaiians, Samoans, Fijians, Tongans—also are linked with those of Asian identities. However, for historical and political reasons, the Hawaiians have chosen to relate more closely with the American Indian ministries. In the case of the Samoans, the number of undocumented aliens in this group make it difficult to provide a ministry without exposing such persons to legal sanctions.

Each of the groups has a particular immigration history and pattern. Some groups willingly left their ancestral homelands in search of new opportunities in the United States. Others were victims of deadly conflict in their traditional homelands and were brought here to be relocated as refugees in a strange land where they were not prepared to live.

What is the population of Asians in the United States?

Recent ethnic statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the Asian population throughout the United States increased an estimated 79.5 percent in the 1980s, from 3.46 million in 1980 to approximately 6.9 million by 1990. This represents a rate of growth seven times faster than the general population and makes Asians the fastest growing ethnic group in the country.

Although the immigration of Asians to the United States first started with the arrival of Chinese attracted by the California gold rush in 1849, restrictive laws prevented much immigration from Asian countries until 1965, when legal restrictions finally were removed. Since the change of the U.S. immigration law in 1965, Asian and Pacific Island countries now account for more than one-third of all immigration into the United States each year. In 1975, at the end of the war in Vietnam, large numbers of Indochinese refugees added to the growing population of Asian and Pacific Island people in the United States. The total number of persons of Asian background listed in the 1960 U.S. census was 877,934. In 1970 the total was 1,429,562; in 1980 it was 3,466,421. The total in 1990 is 6,908,638. Persons of Asian background comprised almost 3 per cent of the total U.S. population in 1990, up from 1.5 per cent in 1980. This is almost a doubling of the population every decade, and this phenomenal growth is expected to continue into the next century.

The rapid growth of Asian newcomers is radically changing the mix of Asians in the United States. Japanese have been the largest group of Asians in the population since 1910. Until 1970, Japanese and Chinese descendants of immigrants from the late 19th or early 20th century have made up two-thirds of the Asian population in the United States. However, Japanese immigration has been almost nonexistent since 1960 and as a group they were overtaken by Chinese in 1980. The 1990 census shows now that the Chinese are the largest Asian group, followed by the Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, Korean and Vietnamese.

Rather than concentrating on traditional urban areas like San Francisco and New York to settle, Asian newcomers have moved to many areas in the country where Asians have never lived before and are changing the face of many American communities with their families, customs and businesses.

What are some of the problems of the Asian communities?

As a whole, Asians suffer from the stereotype of a successful and model community. It seems that they are represented far beyond their population ratio at virtually every top-ranking university. Many Asian newcomers seem to be climbing the economic ladder with remarkable speed, establishing businesses and purchasing property within a relatively short time after arriving in this country. Statistics show that the median household income for Asians exceeds not only that of U.S. families in general but also the level reported by whites. However, these household statistics are somewhat misleading since Asian families are much more likely than whites to rely on the paychecks of two or more family members. Even so, their overall gains in earning power have come far more rapidly than those of any prior group of immigrants, many of whom had to labor a generation or more before achieving an average standard of living.

Given their diversity, it is all but impossible to justify the stereotype of the successful and model community for all Asians. However, in the area of education the 1980 census recorded that 35 percent of adults age 25 and older among the six main Asian groups were college

graduates, more than double the 17 percent of white adults. Comparisons within the Asian community show some of the extremes between the groups, 52 percent of adult Asian Indians in the United States are college graduates compared to more than one third of Chinese and Filipino. This high academic achievement record reflects the value that is placed on education by all of the Asian groups, along with the parental pressure, support and discipline to succeed.

Education alone cannot account for the apparent success of recent Asian immigrants. Even with such a high percentage of college graduates and an even higher percentage of high school graduates, many Asians experience difficulty in finding jobs within the existing corporate structure of U.S. businesses and institutions. Partly this is due to discrimination on the basis of race, to differences in job training and professional standards, and to difficulties of language and cultural understanding. Many Asians have chosen to develop their own employment opportunities by following a professional or entrepreneurial route and have succeeded by dint of long hours of work and personal sacrifices. It also helps when there is support from the family and others in the community. Also, some have been able to bring sufficient sums of money into the country to enable them to make a new start. Recent arrivals from Hong Kong, for example, have transferred their resources to this country to start new businesses and to purchase property.

Not all in the Asian community reflect this successful and model community image. Some come from an agrarian and rural background with little formal education and are illiterate even in their own language. They could have survived if they had stayed in their traditional homelands. However, many have fled their home countries for political and economic reasons and have become displaced refugee persons in a foreign culture. For those in this group, the road to success is more like an obstacle course.

What are some of the challenges facing the Asian communities?

The challenge Asians have in common is the tension they feel to preserve and practice their own cultural heritage and traditions while also taking responsibility for living in a new country with many different cultures that at times are in seeming conflict with one another. In areas where they are concentrated, some have little need to relate to other cultures and to speak any language other than their own mother tongue. They can continue to live their life as they knew it in their home country. For most, however, they have to learn to become multicultural and multilingual persons in order to survive in their personal and professional lives.

Asians are also experiencing some backlash born of their successes. There are rumblings at some universities about establishing quotas for them in order to restrict admission. Some have become so numerous in communities where Asians have not lived before that they threaten other residents in the community, who react to their presence by enacting laws to restrict their activities and expression and by hostile actions against their businesses, their homes, their persons, and their families. They feel threatened by what many fear is a resurgence of blatant anti-Asian prejudice and violence.

Such incidents remind them of their vulnerability. They have not forgotten that during World War II 110,000 Japanese in the United States, many of whom were U.S. citizens, were herded into camps and denied due process of law. Germans and Italians in the United States were not subject to such treatment although the same logic which led to Japanese internment could have been applied to these other groups as well.

THE BLUE BOOK

Why is there a concern for Asian and Pacific Island ministries in the Episcopal Church?

The Episcopal Church has been involved in missionary work in Asia for well over one hundred years, working particularly in China, Japan and the Philippines. Other branches of the Anglican Communion have also been involved in missionary work in Asia, including many areas where the Episcopal Church has not been present.

More than 80 percent of the new immigrants are not Christians and do not feel the need to knock on the Church's door. This represents a challenge and an opportunity for the Episcopal Church to be involved in missionary work at home. Many of the immigrants have left behind family and friends to seek a new life in a land of great promise of economic opportunity, fairness, and equal protection under the law. Family and friends in the Asian context have traditionally been a source of social stability and moral support. In the pursuit of the American Dream, many find an emptiness that cannot be fulfilled by material success alone or by the failure to achieve their goals. The spiritual dimension that the Church provides is much needed to fill this emptiness and to provide social stability and moral support. The new family in Christ is a gift that the Church can provide to all Asians who value the family structure and its functions. The Church is also an institution which can enable them to bridge the cultural tensions and to work for reconciliation among different cultures by encouraging respect, understanding and acceptance.

When was the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry started?

In March of 1973 the bishops of the Eighth Province of the Episcopal Church heard a request from the Rev. Canon James S. Pun, who was then the vicar of True Sunshine Church in San Francisco, for a national Chinese ministry in the Episcopal Church to help minister to the increasing numbers of Chinese moving into various parts of the country.

An ad hoc committee was formed to study the matter. The dramatic pattern of increased immigration was found also in other ethnic groups from Asia. As a missionary strategy to enable the work of evangelism among these new people, a recommendation was made for a national effort to develop Asian and Pacific Island ministries. The Rev. Canon John H.M. Yamazaki, who was then the rector of St. Mary's Church in Los Angeles, took this recommendation to the Executive Council of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, where he served as a representative of the Eighth Province. The Ven. Lincoln P. Eng, then rector of St. Bartholomew's Church in Beaverton, Oregon, and executive secretary of the ad hoc committee, and the Rev. Winston W. Ching, then vicar of St. John the Evangelist Church in San Francisco and chair of the ad hoc committee, presented a proposal to the Executive Council meeting in Louisville just prior to the General Convention. A resolution was then submitted to the 64th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, which met in Louisville, Kentucky, from September 29 to October 11, 1973, to establish the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry in order to deepen and strengthen existing ministries of the Episcopal Church involved with Asian and Pacific Island people as well as to establish new ones. The resolution was adopted and the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry was established.

The word "Asiamerica" was invented to include both American born as well as foreign born persons of Asian ancestry.

How does the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry work?

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry works as a partner-in-mission with local dioceses by providing consultations, training events, scholarships, resource materials, and financial grants to strengthen existing congregations and to begin new ones.

It has focused on congregational development rather than on delivery of social services as a strategy to include Asian and Pacific Island people as members of the Episcopal Church and thereby to develop communities within the Episcopal Church to respond to the social, economic and spiritual needs of persons in the various ethnic communities.

What is Partners-in-Mission?

Partners-in-Mission was a principle adopted by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1973 which states in part that: "The responsibility for mission in any place belongs primarily to the church in that place. However, the universality of the gospel and the oneness of God's mission must be shared in each and every place with fellow Christians from each and every part of the world with their distinctive insights and contributions."

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry recognized that each local diocese was responsible for strengthening existing ministries and creating new ones through the appropriate agencies within the diocese. However, it also recognized that many dioceses did not have the necessary experience and resources for ministries involving Asian and Pacific Island people and needed the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry to serve as a partner-in-mission. Some representatives of the local ethnic communities were also needed to serve as partners and to provide the additional assistance and advice needed in the process.

What is the national consultation?

Each year since 1974, congregations and dioceses involved in ministries related to the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry have been invited to send representatives to attend a National Consultation to help strengthen and deepen the ministries of existing congregations and to identify and provide strategies for the development of new ministries.

The consultation is an important part of the national program to enable congregational development, leadership training and material resource development.

What is an ethnic convocation?

An ethnic convocation is a body that represents congregations and ministries of the Episcopal Church involved with a particular Asian ethnic group. Its purpose is to enable the congregations and ministries to meet in the spirit of partners-in-mission to plan more effectively for ministries involving the respective ethnic group: to help strengthen, expand and develop existing and new ministries for more effective ministry and evangelism, to encourage theological reflection on traditional forms of ethnic culture and religious life in order to proclaim the Gospel in more meaningful terms, to serve as a council of advice to the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Commission, and to review, refine, and recommend for funding the programs related to the ethnic convocation. All the ethnic convocations meet at the time of the National Consultation.

THE BLUE BOOK

The ethnic convocations include the following groups: Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean and Southeast Asian (including Cambodian, Hmong, Lao and Vietnamese). In addition, groups representing the diocesan representatives, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar, the Philippine Independent Church and the Church of South India are also invited to meet at the National Consultation.

What is the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Commission?

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Commission is an appointed body of the national Church to initiate new Asiamerica Ministries and develop existing ones.

Members are appointed by the Presiding Bishop for an annual term with a limit of six consecutive years in office.

Presently, the commission consists of ten members, five of whom are the elected conveners of their respective ethnic convocations related to the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry, one person elected by the group of diocesan representatives, one person elected by the Young Adult Convocation, one person who represents women's ministries, and two persons who have been appointed as liaisons by the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar and the Philippine Independent Church. All these persons are then nominated to the Presiding Bishop for appointment to the commission.

Who helps to coordinate the work of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry?

The Officer for Asiamerica Ministry is responsible to coordinate the work of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry and serves on the staff of the Presiding Bishop through the Advocacy, Witness and Justice Ministries unit at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City.

What has the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry accomplished?

Since its establishment by General Convention in 1973, the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry office has been actively involved in strengthening and expanding ministries of the Episcopal Church involving Asian and Pacific Island peoples.

The Dioceses of California, Chicago, Dallas, Eau Claire, El Camino Real, Fond du Lac, Fort Worth, Hawaii, Long Island, Los Angeles, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Olympia, Pennsylvania, San Diego, San Joaquin, Virginia, West Texas, and Western New York have been especially active in establishing and expanding their ministries involving Asian and Pacific Island peoples.

Dioceses have received assistance from the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry through consultations and grants regarding the development of strategies and policies, personnel recruitment and development, and financial support for their ministries.

Agreements between the Episcopal Church and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar and the Philippine Independent Church have mandated the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry to relate and develop relationships with the respective congregations here in the United States and to their official representatives from India and the Philippines. Similar agreements are being considered for the Churches of North India and South India. Close relationships have been maintained with Episcopal and Anglican dioceses in Asia.

The Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry office has been actively involved in developing resource materials and leadership training programs to meet the liturgical, educational, cultural, evangelistic and spiritual requirements of ministries involving Asian and Pacific Island peoples. The Korean translation of the Book of Common Prayer has been completed and is now being used in the Korean congregations. Translations of the Book of Common Prayer are being completed in Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

What are some of the learnings of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry?

The development of congregations to serve Asian and Pacific Islanders has taken many forms depending on local circumstances. The following are some of the models of Asian church development in the Episcopal Church:

Classic: the method historically used with one congregation acquiring a building for worship and program and staffed by at least one priest. Features: fiscal and physical independence and responsibility, clearly defined identity. Example: True Sunshine, San Francisco, Diocese of California, was established as a mission congregation in 1905 and attained parish status in 1973.

Rented or Shared Facility: two separate congregations, one an ethnic congregation, sharing the same facilities, with the ethnic congregation renting. Features: less expensive than building or maintaining one's own facilities; opportunity for lessor congregation to engage in intercultural sharing. However, there is little or no control of access to facilities, the ethnic congregation can become dependent on Euro-Americans, and there is a strong need to be sensitive to cultural differences. Example: St. Benedict's, Alhambra, Diocese of Los Angeles, was established as a Filipino mission in 1988 at St. Martha's, West Covina. In 1991, they moved to Holy Trinity, Alhambra. This church serves Filipinos from a wide geographic area, including Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties.

Integrated: a Euro-American congregation invites members of an ethnic group to share in its complete expression of worship, education, and program. Features: a sense of belonging to the whole, intercultural sharing and heightened sensitivity. Example: St. John's, Olympia, Diocese of Olympia, began ministry with Cambodians in 1983. In 1993, Cambodians numbered 103 of a total membership of 763. St. John's is cooperating with the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry to facilitate the completion of the translation of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer into Khmer. They have begun a process to identify persons of Cambodian background to be presented for ordination and are exploring appropriate theological education alternatives to the traditional preparation for ordination.

Merged: a new Asian-American congregation yoked to a declining Euro-American congregation with a single ethnic priest serving both constituencies under one church name or identity. Features: ownership and control of facility, revitalization of declining constituency. However, the ethnic priest may find that it takes more time to serve the Euro-American constituency because of the dynamics of a declining population and because the priest may lack a proficiency in English. The ethnic constituency then feels neglected, and the ethnic priest may incur resentment among both the Euro-American constituency and the ethnic constituency for having to share the time of the clergy. Example: St. Francis, Norwalk,

Diocese of Los Angeles. The mainly Euro-American congregation and a Korean congregation were merged and placed under the care of the Korean priest.

Fellowship: a loose affiliation where participants are also members of other Episcopal Church congregations. The primary focus is fellowship. Features: low-cost and self-supporting; provides cultural nurture that local congregations lack; provides a place for non-affiliated to join by cultural identification. However, organizational structure and how it relates as a congregation can be unclear. Example: Metropolitan Filipino Ministry, New York City, began in 1983 and has met in different churches around the city. Now hosted by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Manhattan, Diocese of New York, it meets one Saturday evening each month and serves a four-state region.

Host Groups: an established ethnic member of a Euro-American congregation invites non-affiliated persons into her or his church. Features: low-cost and self-supporting; increases membership of established congregation. Example: the Church of the Good Shepherd, Manhattan, Diocese of New York, has about ten Filipino communicants attracted primarily by other Filipinos.

Regional: one regional missionary makes contact with non-affiliated persons of a particular ethnic group and introduces them to different host congregations in the region. Faith formation, spiritual development, pastoral care and evangelism take place in various host congregations with the collaboration of the regional missionary. Features: specialized outreach to a dispersed population. However, building and maintaining coalition support for a regional ministry, especially across diocesan boundaries, can be taxing. Example: Metropolitan Japanese Ministry, serving the Dioceses of New York, Long Island, and Newark. Over a dozen congregations participate in this ministry.

Ecumenical: a congregation established and maintained jointly by a Euro-American congregation and a partner church of a compatible denomination and served by one priest. Features: facilities can be shared with mutual funding, with equitable representation, and the opportunity for intercultural sharing. However, intercultural sensitivity must be nurtured. Example: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Wood Ridge, Diocese of Newark, is shared by an Episcopal Church congregation and a Church of South India congregation, with joint worship alternating with separate worship and served by one priest.

What are the challenges for the Episcopal Church regarding the Asiamerica Ministry?

Ministry involving Asian and Pacific Islanders presents many demands and challenges. Issues of how to develop and encourage intercultural sensitivity, how to honor and nurture traditional identity and still participate in American society, how to resolve intergenerational conflicts and keep both the older immigrants and their children raised in this country or born here in the same congregation, and how to raise up more ethnic leaders continue to be of high priority. Without the encouragement of partners-in-mission beyond the congregation, with other congregations, dioceses, and the national Episcopal Church community, few of these efforts would have been possible or successful. These next years call for the careful cultivation of the efforts of the past twenty years and strategic decision-making to maximize new

opportunities to include more persons of Asian and Pacific Island background, both new immigrants and the generations born and raised here, to become members of the Episcopal Church and to share in the life and decision-making on all levels of the Church to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.