

Brass tacks: We don't have enough money to do everything we want to do. God's mission is screaming for and at us, but funding is tight. One consequence: We, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, have only 64 missionaries preaching the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

So what to do? One solution will be heard this morning in the Stewardship Committee, Resolution D051, "The 80-Cent Solution: Support for World Missionaries." Emerging from the small Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, it's an effort to engage every Episcopalian in mission. How? By asking

each member of this Church to give 80 cents per person per year.

I know ... it's pennies. But that's all we need to double the size of our missionary corps. The resulting \$1.6 million - if everyone gave, we would have at least that much - would fund 80 new missionaries.

Double full disclosure: First, D051 resulted from comments I've been making for the past year. Second, I am a missionary. Which means that I'm doubly biased as well. I want the money because I want more missionaries, and I want



more missionaries because we are the face of the American Church for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world.

By inviting each Episcopalian to contribute mere pennies to this endeavor, we can do more to increase our relationships throughout the Communion, strengthen the bonds of affection and proclaim the unity of Christ's Body than any other action we could take. (Ms. Stanley is an appointed missionary of the Episcopal Church. She has served for four years in Sudan, and in August will begin serving in Haiti.)

College for Bishops

By the Rev. Lauren R. Stanley

Whenever priests are elected bishops, their lives change. No longer are they in a parish, small or large. No longer do they have a vestry made up of people they personally know. Their concerns are no longer for one parish or ministry, but for all the people of the diocese.

It can be an overwhelming change. In 2006, General Convention mandated a three-year program of formation for newly elected bishops, but despite the mandate, the funding has never been provided.

The mandate did give birth to the new program, *Living Our Vows: A Peer Coaching and Residential Program*, which "binds us in relationships." The program provides coaching and training, and includes both peer reviews and "360" reviews by diocesan leaders.

Living Our Vows "provides bang for the buck," says Bishop Suffragan F. Clayton Matthews of the Office of Pastoral Development, who is in charge of the program. "In terms of what's going on in this Church, in terms of (a

bishop's) impact on a diocese, the people in the pews and clergy, this program offers the best bang for the buck. ... Bishops get training and coaching, build up networks ... It makes them a better bishop for the people."

However, without funding, the program cannot continue without dioceses being double-taxed to pay for their bishops' participation. Resolution A008 calls for \$367,500 for the triennium, a small price to pay to help bishops become more effective pastors and leaders.

There's No Parting a Man and his Wagon

By Emily Cherry

You've probably seen him hanging around the Convention Center each morning—a frequently bow-tied gentleman pulling a Radio Flyer red wagon full of hot-off-the-press copies of *Center Aisle*. That's Steve Van Voorhees of the Diocese of Virginia, a *Center Aisle* volunteer, also known as the wagon master.

For four Conventions now, the Virginia has offered *Center Aisle* as a gift to General Convention. And for four Conventions, Steve has offered the red wagon as his gift.

He orders the wagon online and ships it ahead of time to the hotel. He brings his tools along and puts the unassembled cart together in our workroom. Steve takes the wagon for a test run around the conference table before putting it to work early each morning. Copies of our opinion journal are distributed to different sites around the area. Then, when Convention is over, Steve will donate the wagon to a local charity.

He's Steve Van Voorhees, and he's the wagon master.



Wagon Master Steve Van Voorhees mans his station in front of the Convention Center.

Photo: Kate Hahn

OffCenter



Cartoon: Mike Kerr

- Committee Open Hearings
Rules of Order, 8:30 a.m., D093
Structure, Hilt. Calif. Blm. A, 7:30 a.m., 10 min., D066
National/International Concerns, Hilton Laguna A, 7:30 a.m., 15 min., A033, D060
Social/Urban Affr., Hilton Capistrano AB, 7:30 a.m., 15 min., B025, C083, D018, D032, D036, D063
Prayer Book, Liturgy, and Church Music, Hilton Avila AB, 7:30 a.m., 30 min., A094, A099, A100, B004, C004, C009, C017, C019, C025, C028, C029, C031, C041, C042, C056, C076, C077, C078, D043, D056
CPF, 7:30 a.m., 15 min., B024, D061
Stewardship/Development, Grand Ballroom Salon F, 7:30 a.m., 15 min., D055
Communications, Hilton Malibu, 7:30 a.m., 1 min., D058



Center Aisle is an opinion journal offered by the Diocese of Virginia as a gift to General Convention. We offer analysis and opinions from a variety of sources that reflect the transformational center of our Church. www.centeraisle.net

"The middle is not the midpoint on a line between two extremes. In the life of faith, the great bulk of people are at the center, and that center is faith in the Risen Christ." —The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee, Bishop of Virginia

Perspective

Our Turn to Listen, Watch and Pray

By the Rev. Dr. A. Katherine Grieb, Virginia Theological Seminary

Dr. Grieb is a member of the Covenant Design Group.

The best thing that could happen to the proposed Covenant for the Anglican Communion at this General Convention is nothing at all.

Though there undoubtedly will be strongly worded resolutions proposed from several quarters, the committee or committees handling these resolutions would do well to promote one that expresses the ongoing commitment of the Episcopal Church to the Anglican Communion in general and to the Windsor/Covenant process in particular—and nothing more.

That's because the present draft of the proposed Covenant is not yet in its final form. There has not been sufficient opportunity to study it carefully. The time is not yet ripe for General Convention to engage in extensive debate and formal consideration of this proposal.

The process of review still has hurdles to clear. The Anglican Consultative Council, meeting recently in Jamaica, has recommended remanding Section 4 of the third (Ridley Cambridge) draft of the Covenant to the provinces for further study and comment. Those responses are expected to be received by October. Shortly thereafter, a small group of people who have previously served on the Covenant Design Group and who are representative of the various concerns of the provinces will meet to discuss these responses and to re-craft Section 4 as appropriate. At that point, a final draft of the proposed Covenant might be distributed to the provinces for further study. Only after all those steps would the process of ratification begin.

But General Convention is not expected to meet again until 2012. Shouldn't



the Episcopal Church go on record now in anticipation of the final draft that probably will be released in early 2010?

No, for several reasons.

In the first place, the Episcopal Church, through its representatives at the Anglican Consultative Council, was instrumental in ensuring that Section 4 of the proposed Covenant would be carefully considered by the provinces before the Covenant as a whole is released to them for possible ratification. It would not be good form procedurally for our General Convention to subvert this process by its own untimely comment on the Ridley Cambridge draft as it presently stands.

Second, what the provinces will recommend by way of proposed revisions of Section 4 is genuinely unknown. The Covenant process is designed to be as open and consultative as possible. This will encourage fresh approaches, as well as proposed revisions that might remove stumbling blocks to ratification.

Finally, and most importantly, our honoring the Covenant process would signal clearly that the Episcopal Church will not make a pre-emptive pronouncement about the anticipated outcome as if we could determine it in advance. Our considered restraint would show our willingness to listen to other voices within the Anglican Communion and to learn from them.

We have a reputation in some quarters

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Editorial

It's All About Trust

That chill in the air is not from a Pacific breeze. It's from the small but growing cracks in the relationship between the Houses of Bishops and Deputies.

Don't misunderstand. There's still plenty of good will to go around. But on matters that threaten to divide the Communion, the wind seems to be blowing in different directions.

Deputies, their ranks depleted of many of their former conservative colleagues, are showing signs of impatience with B033, the compromise resolution on human sexuality that passed in last-minute, dramatic fashion in 2006. The bishops, who've been busy building bonds among themselves and throughout the Communion, seem more cautious about how to move beyond B033, more wary of the risk of fracturing the Anglican Communion.

The divergence underscores the importance of having independent Houses in our Convention. It also reflects something as fundamental as getting to know your neighbor.

Because there are fewer bishops than deputies and because bishops meet more frequently during the year, the bishops have more opportunities to build relationships of trust—to get to know each other, not just at

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Day of Rest

Center Aisle will take a break from publishing tomorrow. Check back with us on Monday for our next issue.

Stay in Touch with Center Aisle

Read us online at www.centeraisle.net and www.centeraisle.wordpress.com.

Share your opinions by sending an e-mail to centeraisle@thediocese.net.

Follow us on Twitter (Twitter.com/CenterAisle) or join our Facebook page.

Pick up a paper copy around the hotels and Convention Center every morning.

Mind Your Manners!

Convention has displayed a generous spirit of listening and respect – until yesterday. A deputy in need of an attitude adjustment twice was disrespectful toward House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson. His tone, his body language and his snarky comments have no place here.

Decorum is the norm, even if we don't like the legislation or understand its importance. Everyone here deserves respect, especially the presiding officers of both Houses. Not only is the whole Church watching us, so is the world.

The secular media need to see us living the Good News, not erupting in immaturity and quite poor manners.

Letters to the Editor

Though I'm not at General Convention, this is the first Convention since I have been a member of the Diocese of Virginia. And I am thrilled that Center Aisle is being published.

I hope that every bishop and deputy at General Convention reads it. I especially like the editorial, "10-Day Forecast," and if I were there, I would try to get every bishop and deputy to heed to the principles of the four goals that were laid out.

If the General Convention were to do a better job at this, then perhaps this would be a time of hope, as it is supposed to be, rather than a time of fear, which, at least for me, it has become.

Jay Vaidya
Diocese of Virginia

Want to share your voice and opinion?

Center Aisle wants your feedback, thoughts and suggestions. Send your letter to the editor to centeraisle@thediocese.net.

Center Aisle



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Hope and Spirit

Holiness and Hope

A spirit of holiness, hope and compassion filled the World Mission meeting last night, bringing together the hearts and minds of the subcommittee members tasked with addressing B033 issues.

Prayerfully sharing their hopes as well as fears, the subcommittee members faithfully tried to discern a path not just for this General Convention, but for the Church and the Communion, in the years ahead.

Regardless of personal feelings, this subcommittee needs the prayers of this Church so that the holiness of last night continues throughout Convention.

—The Rev. Lauren R. Stanley

Feeling the Spirit

The House of Deputies continued its meeting as a "Committee of the Whole" with a palpable spirit of intentional listening. Twenty-seven deputies spoke under the lottery system decided upon in advance; with few exceptions, they were respectful of and to each other. Now the World Mission Committee, with the guidance of deputies, must wrestle with what General Convention should do next. If the same tenor of respect and care is taken by everyone here, we may find unity in our diversity.

—The Rev. Lauren R. Stanley

The Money Is There

Last night, 102 people, including 25 young adults, sat at tables and shared their experiences of how the Church spends its money. Using the Public Narrative approach, the Program, Budget and Finance Committee asked people to talk from their hearts about money. The people's response: "The money is there." Concerns lay not with the absence of funds but in how to take the passion expressed here in Convention and convey it to the people in the pews. The message: If we tell the story, the money will come.

—Matthew Lukens

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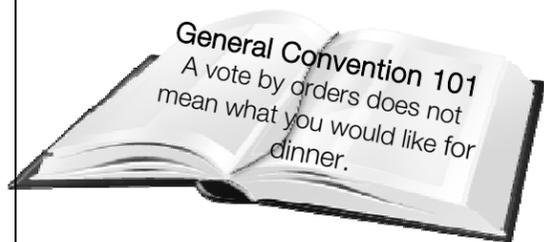
home but around the world. The deputies have no counterpart to the Lambeth Conference, where bishops from all corners of the Communion talk, listen and reflect. Lambeth offers a firsthand, vivid illustration of the rich diversity of our Communion.

The result is as basic as human nature. When the bishops hear the Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, they engage with someone they've gotten to know. For deputies, the Archbishop of Canterbury is an exotic visitor—a remote scholar with a touch of otherworldliness. That may be why some deputies were heard to respond to Dr. Williams' plea to stop inspecting his words for hidden agendas with questions such as, "What was that about"?

So here's the bottom line: There is no Lambeth counterpart for deputies on the horizon. If anything, there is talk of ways to reduce the length and expense of meetings. That means we need the patience to look for other ways to build relationships in our Church and Communion. The prospect of a reinvigorated Listening Process is one promising option.

But it will take more than that. Dr. Williams talked about relationship building during Wednesday's economic forum. You can't build trust by just saying "trust me," he noted. You have to intentionally build the bonds.

That's the challenge that remains before us as a Church. It's not easy to demonstrate patience when passions are this high, when the issues are this significant. But without patience, we run the risk of becoming more of an "us-against-them" debating society than a community of faith. And there are no "us's" and "thems" in God's very good creation.



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of the Anglican Communion for rushing ahead and not waiting for others. It would not hurt us to be recognized as a province that knows how to speak after considered reflection and extensive conversation with our Anglican Communion partners. It is our turn to listen, watch and pray.

Virginia Voices

One Door

By the Rev. Susan E. Goff

Opinions and positions from the deputation of the Diocese of Virginia

Many of our conversations about Episcopal elections and the Anglican Communion are shaped by the image of a single line. In this image, a door to the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons lies at one end of the line and a door to full participation in the Anglican Communion lies at the other.

This image suggests that keeping a door open at one end necessarily requires closing the door at the other end. This is the wrong image, given that the issues are far more complex, textured and nuanced than what a single thin line can convey.

I suggest that we change the image that shapes our deliberations by bending the line into a circle in which the two ends meet in one

door, one open door. Through this one, broad, open door, all are invited fully into the community of the Church, and all are sent out for community not only with the Anglican Communion, but with the entire world around us. Jesus shows us how to change a line into a circle. As the Collect for Mission in the service of Morning Prayer puts it, Jesus "stretched out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross so that everyone might come within the reach of his saving embrace." Jesus reshaped the line of his stretched arms into the circle of his embrace.

Envisioning a line with two doors presents us with a false dichotomy. Envisioning a circle with a single wide door that opens both inward and outward gives us hope.

I believe with all my heart that we can keep the door wide open to the full inclusion of all persons and to full relationship in the Anglican Communion. But in a legislative process that requires us to vote up or down, yes or no, I don't know how to create that circle or to keep the door open. We as a Convention don't yet know how to do it. But the powerful, creative, living, breathing Holy Spirit does.

As we listen to the Spirit in Scripture and in the voices of others, and as we worship and pray together, we call upon the Holy Spirit to come down in cleansing wind and burning fire to teach us how to do what we cannot do on our own. Holy Spirit, show us a way, a higher way, Christ's own way.



Triangle of Hope

By Emily Cherry and Don Cowles

Today and tomorrow, Convention participants can explore the Church's role in the slave trade through film. "Raising the Breach: The Episcopal Church and Slavery Atonement" (Saturday, 2-3 p.m., Marriott Ballroom Salon F) and "Traces of the Trade" (Sunday, 7 p.m., Marriott Ballroom Salon F) both explore complicity in the transatlantic slave trade.

That issue is close to the hearts of many from the Diocese of Virginia, thanks to the Triangle of Hope.

A triangle is really a remarkable shape. Its arms support one another, depending on each other for their very existence. The Triangle of Hope partnership had a similar relationship in mind when the Dioceses of Virginia, Liverpool and Kumasi, Ghana, all complicit in the slave trade, decided to turn a relationship of despair into one of hope through honest conversation.

Today, that conversation has turned into action. Center Aisle asked Don Cowles, a St. Paul's, Richmond, parishioner and member of the Triangle of Hope team, to explain the partnership's importance:

In June 2007, we walked the "slave trail" along the banks of Virginia's James River, toward the holding pens of the old slave market in Richmond—20 of us—bishops, priests and lay leaders from Virginia, West Africa and Liverpool.

We remembered our shameful slave triangle that lasted 200 years, enslaved hundreds of thousands of Africans and generated tremendous wealth. My own church, St. Paul's, Richmond, was built using slave labor.

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee of the Diocese of Virginia had invited the bishops of Liverpool and Kumasi, to the 400th anniversary commemoration of the settlement of Jamestown and asked how God might transform our former "triangle of despair" into a "triangle of hope."

Here I first met Father Joseph Osei of Kumasi, who was completing his doctoral studies at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. I was a retired lawyer and businessman, working for racial reconciliation. At Joseph's initiative, we began to imagine a micro-finance program of small loans, funded Triangle of Hope churches for the benefit of the poor in Kumasi.

Before he returned to Ghana in October 2007, Joseph asked if St. Paul's might finance the venture's start-up. St. Paul's agreed, pledging \$3,000 with the understanding that personal relationships of trust would grow among the people of the Triangle of Hope.

Joseph and I also met with Craig Cole of Five Talents. An expert in Chris-

tian micro-finance, Craig challenged us to (1) beware that we do no harm, because a failed program can erode trust; (2) find a reliable financial partner for day-to-day implementation; and (3) teach the Gospel at least as much as you teach business.

So began our journey through history toward healing and hope. After hard work, a journey to Ghana to reaffirm our commitment to the Triangle of Hope and development of a business plan, we are ready to launch our pilot project of two small groups, each with six mutually supportive parishioners from St. Paul's and Kumasi.

And so we continue on our pilgrimage, a group of diverse people working toward the fulfillment of their humanity together.



Walking the slave trail in Richmond, Va.

Photo: Don Cowles