

Jeannie's Corner on Convention

June 17, 2006

Greetings to you from beautiful downtown Columbus! My hope is to give you a little different perspective on happenings that are related to General Convention but not focused on legislation. Instead, I think it might be fun to share my impressions of events, places, and people here.

First, it's a much longer drive to Columbus from Memphis than the AAA maps said. However, once we settled in to our room, we walked over to the Convention Center to register. While our hotel is attached to the Convention Center, don't let that fool you – it's about a three-block walk just to get to the Exhibit Hall. Next time I will bring more comfortable shoes...

The Exhibit Hall is huge, with over 250 booths. Some booths are Episcopal Church related, such as 'The Daughters of The King', 'The Church Pension Fund', and 'National Episcopal Cursillo', but there are also booths from all over the world.

'Gifts From The Holy Land' offers crèche sets and other wooden items hand made by craftspeople and carpenters from Jesus' homeland. There are "singing bowls" hand hammered over an open fire by men in Nepal. There are baby blankets and afghans hand made on an outdoor loom by women in Peru. Because of the sale of these beautiful items, the women who weave them have brought electricity to their village, located close to Macchu Picchu. The 'Amish Fudge' booth is always popular, as is the 'Washington National Cathedral Gifts' booth. There is a Russian Orthodox booth offering beautiful icons and silver Russian crosses, and 'China Ethnic Crafts', selling hand-embroidered handbags, bookmarks and tote bags. The women who make these items are not educated, and are hardly literate in Chinese, but, for the first time, they have been able to earn enough money to feed their families.

Of course, I need to mention that it is the missionaries to these regions who bring the items in to sell. And as far as I can tell (and I've asked) all the items in the Exhibit Hall are "fair trade", which means that the local people are paid appropriately for their work, and not exploited with unfairly low wages.

Next time, I will tell you about the Bishop's Spouses – otherwise known as the "House of Spouse" and what we've been up to! Thank you for your prayers.

Faithfully,

Jeannie