



The Newsletter of Asian/Pacific Islander Unitarian Universalists and their Allies

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Young Kim (right) at A/PIC Business Meeting

### A/PIC President's Letter

Dear friends,

Years ago, when I was new to Unitarian Universalism and the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus was still just an idea, I read an excerpt from W.E.B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk*. He wrote of something he called "double-consciousness," which was a revolutionary idea for its time. He wrote: "the Negro is ... gifted with second-sight in this American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. (see Letter, 5)

### UUs On the Move in Manila

by Guerrero Roberto Ma (UU Community of Manila, Philippines)



Michael Lim preaches for the last time in Bicutan with Pastor Carlos translating.

It's been a busy last few months for the Unitarian Universalists of Metro Manila, Philippines.

The community in Bicutan, a suburb of the capital, has a new worship venue: a simple roof with posts, built on a vacant lot owned by one of the board members. Funding for the building came from Michael Lim, the former president of the congregation who has since moved back to his native Malaysia, as well as contributions from other congregants. Previously services were held in an abandoned school and then in a house of one of the congregants.

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## *Standing on the Side of Love*

by Alexander Lok-tin Szeto (*Spiritual Seekers Society, Hong Kong*)

**M**y name is Alexander. I founded the first UU community in Hong Kong, the Spiritual Seekers Society (ssshk.tripod.com).

On March 12<sup>th</sup> this year, I testified at a Panel meeting of the Legislative Council ("Legco," a sort of parliament) of Hong Kong in support of gay rights.

About six months ago, Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK, the local public radio/TV service) broadcasted a gay-friendly TV documentary. It elicited some complaints to the Broadcasting Authority (BA) and subsequently the Authority ruled that RTHK was biased because the gay couples interviewed expressed their wish for same-sex marriage but the opposite viewpoint was not presented.

That ruling raised great concern among human rights organizations for its open discrimination against homosexuals. The Legco's Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting decided to hold a meeting to discuss this issue and invited organizations and individuals to submit written papers and to present their views in person. The vice-president of the Spiritual Seekers Society (SSS), Medeleine, who is also a volunteer working for Amnesty International, drafted a paper in support of RTHK and asked me to edit and send it to Legco. The Panel then invited two representatives from SSS, along with some 30 organizations, to attend and speak on the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. I extended the invitation to all SSS members to be representatives but nobody was willing to go, so I decided to attend myself, with the support from my wife Flora who sat next to me all through the meeting.

I have never had an opportunity to speak before any law-making authority and I was so nervous that I couldn't sleep the night before. I have always hated making speeches or leading anything or being the focus of attention, but I had to do this anyway or else the SSS seats would remain vacant.

The meeting started at 1 pm and the time allocated to each organization was just two minutes, so in the morning I worked on condensing the long paper sent to Legco down to a two-minute speech.



*Rev. John Clifford, Executive Secretary of ICUU, conducts a service for the Hong Kong UU community*

I seldom wear suits but thought the occasion called for one. On arrival at the Legco building, I found that few delegates wore suits, which made me look a bit out-dated! The two-storey granite building, first opened in 1912, is neo-classical in style supported by Ionic columns. Flora and I circled around it several times before finding the correct entrance. The outside of the building was familiar to us but we never thought that one day we would walk through those doors.

A lady at the counter greeted us with a friendly smile and asked for our names and organization identity. After scanning the long list of delegates for our names, she gave up in frustration and asked us to look them up ourselves. There were security guards posted here and there and the interior was thickly carpeted in red while fixtures were gold-coloured. We were led to a waiting room where I saw many familiar faces from various gay-rights and progressive Christian groups. A seating plan was provided so we could find our seats with ease. Thick background documents were provided. Everything was well organized.

Eventually, we entered the grand chamber which I was previously only able to see on TV. I occupied one of the legislators' seats. Each seat is equipped with a straw-coloured leather chair that can slide forward and backward but not move in other directions, a wooden bench covered with matching straw-coloured leather, a clip-microphone, and an ear-piece for listening to the interpreter. Even the lid of the glass

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of water provided and the glass holder were gold-coloured.

I noticed two SSS members observing from the public section, and I felt supported. I was the third person to speak, right after my friend and SSS Vice-President Medeleine who represented Amnesty International. I am a slow-thinker and my presentation skills are terrible, so I could only read from my draft word for word. I was impressed by the many good presentations by the delegates of other organizations. Among the 30 some groups and individuals, only three groups and two individuals supported the Broadcasting Authority's ruling, all of them from the Christian Right. The most impressive were the incisive comments made by the legislators. They made their points very clearly and precisely, piercing into the heart of the issue. Finally, a motion calling for the reversal of the BA's ruling was successfully passed. Although the motion has no binding power on the BA, it is a triumph for the RTHK staff and other media workers. We were all pleased (except the five BA fans). How do I know that I am doing the right thing to support gay rights? Simple. We UUs stand on the side of love!

When I returned home, I found that someone had already posted the link of the Legco recordings on the Liberal Christian Forum website (<http://armbell.com/liberalhk>) and praised my speech for clarity. That was a great encouragement for me. Medeleine called me later to say how excited she was. Me too!



Alexander with his wife Flora

## Hong Kong UUs' Testimonial

The Spiritual Seekers Society is a liberal religious organization which comprises members from different religions such as Buddhism and Christianity, and also from humanism and atheism, etc. Our common foundation is built on freedom, tolerance, and reason. Freedom, tolerance, and reason.

It has been said that the TV documentary *Gay Lovers* of the *Hong Kong Connection* series is biased and advocates immorality. Homosexuality, as a sexual orientation analogous to heterosexuality, is not chosen but, rather, discovered by the subject. Homosexuality does not harm others. Homosexuals are a minority group in the society and are being oppressed. If the TV programme were advocating something, what it advocates are tolerance, understanding, acceptance, and compassion to minority groups. Tolerance, understanding, acceptance, and compassion are noble elements of human morality. They are the manifestations of the bright side of human nature. If we want to preserve these desirable qualities and want to pass them to our next generation, that TV programme should precisely be broadcasted in the family viewing hours (in fact, it should also be employed as a teaching aid in schools) to educate our next generation with these good characters.

Some may say that we should not be tolerant of immoral behaviours. The TV programme showed two pairs of faithful homosexual lovers. Being gay lovers does not harm others. How can a faithful gay couple be less moral than a heterosexual couple?

Tolerance, understanding, acceptance, and compassion to the disadvantaged are noble and fragile human moral values. They should be inculcated, treasured, and adored, but not "strongly advised"\* against, diminished, or negated.

We respect freedom of religion. But some fossilized doctrines of a particular religion should not be exported to and forced upon the whole society to oppress the minority, or to constrict the freedom of conscience of public media.

Finally, we support legislation to remove discrimination of any form, to create a more tolerant and humane society.

\*This was the phrase with which the Broadcasting Authority criticized the TV documentary *Gay Lovers*.

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Bob Guerrero and Joseph Santos-Lyons on Chalice Forum

The first worship service in the new “chapel” took place on February 11 and was officiated by the president of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines, Reverend Henry Legaje. Also in attendance was Lee Boeke Burke from the UU Partner Church Council. Lee visited almost all of the congregations on the island of Negros, where the UUCP is headquartered.

Boeke Burke also visited the UU Manila Youth Conference the day before, where youth from the Bicutan Congregation, the congregation from Valenzuela (another Manila suburb), and two emerging groups from Bulacan (a province north of Manila), participated in the conference led by intern minister Joseph Santos-Lyons from Portland, Oregon.

UU has also been on the radio in Metro Manila. Four thirty-minute episodes of “The Progressive Religious Forum” aired on AM station DWAD, all throughout January. Most of the programs touched on the basics of UUism and progressive religion and were hosted by UU Bicutan president Bob Guerrero. Lim, Santos-Lyons, and a candidate for the UU ministry, Carlos Angana also appeared in the show. There are plans to move the show to a better time slot on a more popular AM station.

Angana is a former Assemblies of God pastor who has since become a UU. Another ex-AOG minister, Juliet Vasquez, serves the Valenzuela parish.

Bicutan has also expanded its microfinance program now serving 16 women micro-entrepreneurs, up from 12. One of the microfinance groups is already on its second cycle. The Manila UUs plan to restart the program in Valenzuela as well.

The UUCP also has a new website ([uuphilippines.org](http://uuphilippines.org)) set up by Raffy Concepcion, a progressive Catholic who is sympathetic to UU.

Joseph Santos-Lyons, before concluding a very fruitful internship last March 21<sup>st</sup>, also built networks among young professionals in the Manila area with regular discussion groups and worship services in Quezon City, another part of Metro Manila. On March 4<sup>th</sup> a dinner was held for all the young professionals interested in UU. It attracted 13 people. This group intends to meet monthly.

A UU from River Road Unitarian Church in Maryland, Lori Michaelson, emailed the group and announced that she and her husband, also a UU, would be moving to the Philippines for two years and were looking forward to contributing in the church. They will help fill the leadership void created by the loss of Michael Lim and the end of Santos-Lyon’s internship.

Both Metro Manila congregations have applied for affiliation with the UUCP and as of press time are awaiting approval from the UUCP’s yearly convention in April.

UUCP intends to send a representative to the ICUU conference in Germany in November, and it likely will be Lenna Desuasido, a young member of the Bicutan board who is a dynamic UU young professional.

Lastly, the Bicutan community have launched a scholarship fund that will allow four of their promising youth to attend college this coming June.

The UUs of Metro Manila hope to continue strengthening the progressive religious voice in this overwhelmingly Catholic country. They have a site for the social networking service Friendster ([friendster.com/uumanila](http://friendster.com/uumanila)) which currently has dozens of friends linked to it.

### Website Address List in this Issue

<http://uuphilippines.org>

<http://friendster.com/uumanila>

<http://ssshk.tripod.com>

<http://armbell.com/liberalhk>

<http://uaa.org/re/reach/justice/antiracist.html>

<http://ua.edu/academic/facsen/diversity/continuum>

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"One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

I realized that this was my experience as well. As a kid, being a hyphenated American meant living in two worlds. My home life was dominated by Korean customs and culture, but at school my goal was to be more "American" than my white classmates. And this dual existence continues to this day.

It is ironic that the religion that prompted my spiritual rebirth has also prompted me to come to grips with its biggest shortcoming: that for all its strivings to be inclusive and welcoming, Unitarian Universalism only feeds the American half of my Asian-American soul.

While my experience may not mirror yours, the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus is a place where we can let our hair down. Through A/PIC we can share our stories, build solidarity, and work to perfect our religious movement.

In the coming months we will begin a planning process where we will assess our five-year history and take a hard look at our organization's capacity. Then we will begin planning for the future. We will ask three big questions:

1. What do we want to change?
2. What will that change look like?
3. How will we get there?

Despite my reservations, I still believe that Unitarian Universalism's greatest days are still to come. A/PIC awaits your voice. Unitarian Universalism awaits our voices. This sentiment reminds me of the last verse of Carolyn McDade's hymn, *We'll Build a Land*:

*Come, build a land where the mantles of praises  
resound from spirits once faint and once weak;  
where like oaks of righteousness stand her people.  
Oh come build the land, my people we seek.*

In Faith,

Young Kim

## ***Now is the Time — Leading Congregations into a Multiracial, Multicultural Future***

by KokHeong and Mike McNaughton (Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, NM)

**W**e took the opportunity to arrive one day early, on February 16, in order to attend the 2007 UUA's National Conference held in Arlington, VA, prior to the A/PIC Annual Meeting.

The conference was organized by UUA's Congregational Services and is like a mini General Assembly held once a year in a different city with a different focus that spans several years in a row. This year, because it was so close to Washington, DC, where we held our A/PIC Annual Meeting, several of us (Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris, Vivien Hao, Hiro Nishikawa, Karen Eng, Sharmila Khare, Julie Agarwal, Catie Chi Olson, and ourselves) took advantage of this unique opportunity to do both.

In his 1963 speech delivered at Western Michigan University, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "At 11:00 on Sunday morning when we stand and sing and Christ has no east or west, we stand at the most segregated hour in this nation. This is tragic. Nobody of honesty can overlook this."

Things haven't changed much in 44 years! Today, 90% of all houses of worship in the United States are 90% or more of one racial group. What defines a desegregated congregation? According to keynote speaker Rev. Jacqueline Lewis of the Middle Collegiate Church in New York City, it's a congregation where 20% of its members are not of the same racial group as the dominant group. Look around! How many of our UU Congregations qualify? For our Los Alamos congregation with 144 certified members, for example, that means we'd have to have 29 non-white members. Today, we can count on the fingers of one hand the number of racial minorities in our church.

Our country is fast becoming a multiracial, multicultural, and probably the most racially diverse country in the world. By the year 2050, some estimate that there will not be a single, majority race in this country. Public schools and workplaces are more racially diverse than houses of worship. If our congregations do not reflect the racial diversity of our

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neighborhood, it means that we've created filters in our sanctuary walls that essentially block out those who wish to enter. Some of these filters are invisible, deeply buried in our psyche. Many of these filters are embedded in all the things we do when we "do church." We say we are welcoming. We say we are inclusive. But ARE we?

One Sunday in March, we led an Adult Religious Exploration Forum to find out how inclusive we are as a congregation. We asked participants to place our church on the following continuum on becoming an anti-racist multicultural institution to see where we stand.

1. Exclusive (a segregated institution)
2. Passive (a "club" institution)
3. Symbolic Change (a multicultural institution)
4. Identity Change (an anti-racist institution)
5. Structural Change (a transforming institution)
6. Fully Inclusive (a transformed institution in a transformed society)

Guess what? The answer did not surprise us. We are at between stage 3 (symbolic change) and stage 4 (identity change).

Where does YOUR congregation stand? You might want to try this exercise. More resources can be found at [uua.org/re/reach/justice/antiracist.html](http://uua.org/re/reach/justice/antiracist.html) and [ua.edu/academic/facsen/diversity/continuum.html](http://ua.edu/academic/facsen/diversity/continuum.html)

### ***Become an A/PIC Member!***

A/PIC membership is open to all individuals who self-identify as partly or wholly Asian or Pacific Island in heritage or origin.

To become a member, simply state your intention by sending an email to [steering@apiuu.org](mailto:steering@apiuu.org) with the following information:

- ◆ Your full name
- ◆ The name of your congregation or UU organization with which you claim affiliation
- ◆ Your ethnic identity
- ◆ Contact information: mailing address and phone number
- ◆ A statement of intent (eg. I, \_\_\_\_\_, intend to be counted as a voting member of A/PIC.)

Membership privileges include:

- ◆ Voting
- ◆ Holding elected offices
- ◆ Accessibility to the members' only section of our website
- ◆ Scholarships to conferences and meetings
- ◆ Subscription to the members' only email list
- ◆ Receiving minutes of all Steering Committee phone conferences
- ◆ Receiving bi-annual updates on our Membership Directory
- ◆ Receiving copies of Hot Rice three times a year

***And..... There are no membership dues!***

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