

European American Lutheran Association (EALA) Newsletter

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Some Recent Words to the Board: How EALA Members Became Racialized and Socialized

A Report and Opinion by Editor Paul Bauman

For the last few months, the EALA Board of Directors has been starting their meetings early to allow time for a presentation and discussion with James Addington, a trainer with Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training which seeks to dismantle racism and build racial justice institutions, also an emphasis of the EALA.

Most recently he pointed out that European immigrants coming to the United States were immediately racialized and their descendents socialized to that reality. He called our attention to the 3/5th rule of the U.S. Constitution which has influenced this process. It says that those who were not free persons and bound for service, primarily African Americans at the time of the writing of the constitution, would be counted as 3/5 of all other persons (Article 1, Section 2). When our European forebears arrived, they were immediately considered as more important. They and their offspring had a different status. EALA members are recipients of that racialization. It is even part of the identification system of the U.S. Census Bureau. Race needs to be identified.

His analysis is both eye-opening and challenging. Everyone is identified today by race; and with that has come a certain socialization which accentuates the differences and creates superior and inferior feelings. In anti-racism work, it is referred to as “white privilege” for the former, and “internalized oppression” with the latter. Every person residing here is affected. All residents of the United States and members of the ELCA embody one or the other, often unconsciously.

Of course, this is anti-Christian. Jesus crossed barriers, reaching out to all. The Apostle Paul said there is “neither Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, but all are one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28) We can say that this is God’s vision for us to actualize as Christ’s people. It is and will always be a “work in progress”. But this is part of our call, I believe, individually and as an association.

One Community’s Response To The Trayvon Martin Tragedy

Trayvon was killed. What should we do here in Rockford, Illinois? We met Thursday, March 22. Many of the same people who had tried to help the community confront a previous tragedy and several young people joined with us. They had already had a rally the night before, having used social media to mobilize about a hundred people. We decided to focus on our own community and mobilize our people to face the problems we have here in Rockford.

Read the entire article, written by EALA Board member Harlan Johnson, on our website, www.elca-eala.org under In The News and learn how this has resulted in a new group focusing on community racial justice.

EALA Pres. Kathy Long's Reflections on Association of Asian and Pacific Islanders Assembly in April



Rev. Dr. Edmond Yee & Kathy,
presidents of AAPI and EALA

Kathy's reflections on this biennial gathering began with the words: "A great two days" and later added, "The AAPI is an amazing and diverse group of folks, both foreign and American born. I met so many wonderful folks who welcomed me as the EALA representative with gracious hospitality."

The AAPI covers all Lutherans from India, Indonesia, Phillipines, Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Malaysia, China, Laos, Korea, Taiwan, Japan and the other smaller island nations in the Pacific. Over 120 attended the gathering hosted by Christ Lutheran Church, Monterey Park, CA, a congregation which has been an integral part of the Chinese immigrant journey into America.

The assembly theme was "We and the Bible". Bible studies were led by 3 different people— Rev. Dr. Moses Penumaka, professor at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, CA, Rev. Thiem Baccam, pastor of Victory Lutheran Church, a Laotian congregation, Minneapolis, MN, and Rev. Dr. Surehkha, professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, PA.

A special feature to begin each assembly part was Singspiration, a praise-filled time full of joy and laughter, led by Rev. Dr. Pongsak Limthongviratn, ELCA Director for Asian and Pacific Island Ministries.

13th and 14th White Privilege Conference Notes

In late March, EALA Board member, Russell Meyer, joined staff from the ELCA Churchwide Offices in Chicago at the 13th Annual White Privilege Conference in Albuquerque, NM. Theme was "Intersectionality: Vision, Commitment, and Sustainable Partnerships"

The main presenter, Kimberly Crenshaw, coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989 to emphasize the link between race, gender, and other differences.

Read all of Russell's notes from a link on the Home page of our website www.elca-eala.org

The 14th Annual Conference will be held April 10-13, 2013 at Seattle, WA. Theme will be "The Color of Money, Reclaiming Our Humanity"

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