



European American Lutheran Association **EALA**

To be a visible and nameable anti-racist witness for a cross-cultural church

Summer 2013

Progress Continues on Linking and Focusing the ELCA's Ethnic Associations

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Six Common Goals:

- Listen to the non-affiliated to hear relevance.
- Implement ways to serve those under 35.
- Convene caucuses to hear how young adults would become engaged in church.
- Ethnic Associations assist ELCA in drawing clear map for cross-cultural church.
- Engage Associations' in developing young adult leadership.
- Establish communications between Associations and synods.

As mentioned in our early spring newsletter, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) for the first time in its 25 year history, had a gathering of leadership from her six authorized ethnic associations in January at Chicago. The majority of our Board of Directors was part of the 100 plus in attendance.

Six common goals for the ethnic associations were identified. One pertained to those not identified with a congregation: To listen to the people for whom the church has lost relevance. Two related to the youth and young adults of the church: To implement a

variety of ways to serve those who are up to 35 years of age; To convene caucuses to listen to the youth and young adults about how they would like to be engaged in the church and faith life. Three focused on the ethnic associations: To engage and empower the ethnic associations to assist the ELCA in the development of a clear map to become an authentically anti-racist cross-cultural church; To engage the ethnic associations in leadership development/formation for youth and young adults; To establish an effective vehicle for communication among and between the ethnic



associations and the synods.

In April a smaller group, representing the associations, developed objectives for achieving each goal. One of our EALA representatives reported that, while 3 of the 6 goals pertained to youth and young adults, hardly any were present to establish the objectives.

EALA Representatives Attending African Descent Lutheran Association Biennial Assembly in July

The 14th Biennial Assembly of the African Descent Lutheran Association will be held at the Drake Hotel in downtown Chicago July 3-7. Theme of the gathering is "Nobody Greater: Faith Engaged" based on John

14:12. Their registration site says they are expecting it to be a "spirit filled, uplifting event". Attending from our EALA will be our president, Fred Thomas-Breitfeld, of Milwaukee and Harlan Johnson of Rockford, IL, a

member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Resources from the April White Privilege Conference (WPC) in Seattle



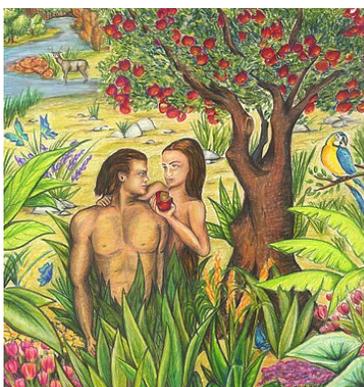
Board of Director member Harlan Johnson attended this 14th Annual Gathering April 10-13. It has grown from a small first-time attendance in Pella, IA to Seattle, with over two thousand. WPC always includes a number of plenary sessions and a great number of workshops focusing on understanding, respecting, and connecting. Harlan reports that the cross-cultural workshop, “Helpful Tips for Leading

and Facilitating Conversations about Race” emphasized that we don’t “fix” people of other cultures, but need to facilitate, inviting sharing of experiences. The leaders offered their website, cultureconnecting.com, as a place for other ideas. “Cultural humility” was suggested as an appropriate stance at the workshop, “Engaging White People for Racial and Economic Justice”. A plenary, “What

Anti-Racists Stand to Gain from Greater Class Awareness”, focused on the value of mobilizing European descent working class people to build more cross-class alliances. The 15th Annual WPC will be held in Madison, WI on tentative dates of March 26-29. Check out their website, whileprivilegeconference.com, for additional resources and eventual final dates.

An Opinion: Dealing with a Social Construct and Domination (By Editorial Team Member Paul Bauman, West Bend, WI)

“People have been educated and socialized to believe in certain racial characteristics and differences.”



Several people of color on our Greater Milwaukee Synod Anti-Racism Team have reminded me occasionally that race, in this church’s primary area of mission, namely, the U.S.A., is a social construct created in the early years of this nation to give white indentured servants a sense of better status than the African American slaves. Race became the basis for white superiority and privilege. A guest on a Wisconsin Public Radio program recently made a similar point that race is a social construct. People have been educated and

socialized to believe in certain racial characteristics and differences. Americans have been racialized. It can bring out the worst in us as humans, identified by us Christians as sin. In addition some point out that domination of others is part of our survival instinct manifested further as selfishness adding power to race as a social construct.

As Lutheran Christians we understand that this is not all that we are, admittedly sinners but also saints, who then by the power of the Spirit can become more than we are. We can deal

with the negative in us and others. We can choose otherwise on occasion and reflect Christ’s love and care. It calls for us to put down the old Adam and Eve and let the new self in Christ show forth. It can be intentional and even unintentional. It is a way to deal with a negative social construct from our nation’s history, plus our desire to dominate. In so doing, we will help fulfill the theme of our ELCA’s 25th year—All Things New. I believe, we of the EALA, individually and together, have this possibility.

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