

# European American Lutheran Association **EALA**

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

Fall 2013

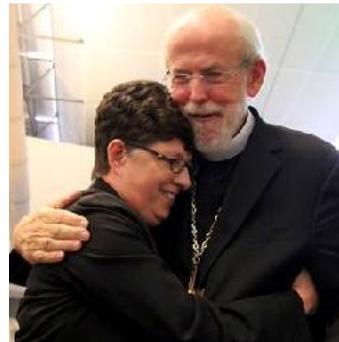
## CURRENT AND PAST ELCA PRESIDING BISHOPS SPEAK OF NEED FOR CHURCH TO BECOME MORE DIVERSE

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In an interview with a *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reporter, published on the day of her installation, October 5, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was asked what conversation she had desired to create at the 2013 Churchwide Assembly where she was elected. Her reply was, *Part of that conversation is that we're an overwhelmingly European-American church, and that the country is becoming more and more pluralistic. That's the context where God has planted us. How do our congregations reflect the neighborhoods where they are? How do we reflect that vision God had in Revelation where all people, all nationalities,*

*all languages are streaming to sing praises to the Lamb?*  
Outgoing Presiding Bishop



Mark Hanson at the August Assembly had said in the section of his report entitled "Commitment to Being a Diverse, Inclusive Church": *If we are serious about this commitment, and I trust we are,*

*then we who are white must ask what we must die to so that we might become a more inclusive and diverse church. When I am privileged by virtue of being white and male, I am not forced to stop and think about my privilege. Yet, when one is not in a position of privilege, the reality of being marginalized is constant. Therefore, our commitment calls for continuing work to create paths to leadership, decision-making, and participation in the ELCA that will reflect our becoming a Pentecost church—richly diverse, extending radical hospitality to all.* (His complete report can be read at [elca.org](http://elca.org) 2013 CWA Assembly Report, Section 2 Reports of Officers.)

### Six Common Goals for ELCA Ethnic Associations:

- 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 synods and Associations.

### REPORT ON THE JULY AFRICAN DESCENT LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION BIENNIAL MEETING BY EALA PRESIDENT FRED THOMAS-BREITFELD

In July fellow Board Member Harlan Johnson and I represented the EALA at the African Descent Lutheran Association Biennial Meeting. Held in Chicago, it was an exciting time of workshops, speakers, and uplifting worship. It was an honor to be able to hear the former pastor of Barack Obama, Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Jr. speak at this

event! Engaging and exciting, he inspired us all! With Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, ELCA Executive for Administration, setting the tone for the gathering with her uplifting preaching at the Opening Worship, to Rev. Dr. Frank Thomas of Brighton, MI challenging us as the Keynote Speaker, we were all fed with the power of God's word.

And, of course, there were business sessions. We are discovering that our ethnic associations face similar issues and address similar concerns—even more reason for us to work together to help create a more welcoming, just, and diverse church. I want to thank the ADLA for their gracious hospitality, and look forward to other times to be together.



## HAVE A N.A.A.C.P CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA?

Then you may want to consider joining it. So suggests EALA Board Member Harlan Johnson about his experience in Rockford, IL. He says in a more extensive article, “Experience with a Local NAACP Chapter”, *“I am grateful to be accepted in the NAACP chapter, and I have learned some important things.*

*There is a little booklet describing the NAACP, and as I leaf through it, I’m aware*

*of the fact that a lot of white people who have no interest in African Americans – even those who don’t particularly like African Americans – would discover that the goals of the NAACP are their goals! The NAACP was founded in Springfield, IL in 1909 by a group of eight people, six of them white, after a horrible race riot (whites killing Blacks).*

*I’d like to see more white involvement in the NAACP*

*now – and yet our society seems to have re-segregated itself in many ways, and it appears to me that few white people are active in the NAACP. I’m the only one I know of in Rockford.”*

To read Harlan’s article about his experiences with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, [click here](#).

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

## TWO DIFFERENT MOVIE REVIEWS OF “THE BUTLER”

In a review entitled “Truth and Reconciliation”, EALA Board Member, Sandy Jones of Greenville, SC, said *“From the minute this movie opened through the scenes of racial violence during the 60’s I was transported to a place somewhere between shame and profound sadness. And I cried. A friend of mine asked me why I cried.*

*She wanted to know if I cried from a sense of guilt. And I have to say I think I did cry from a sense of guilt. I grew up in a very integrated part of Southern California - in fact in my high school I was part of the minority. Honestly, until I*

*moved to the south, as an adult, I had no idea the depth of what had gone on during the civil rights movement.”* To read her entire review, [click here](#).

The other review, entitled “Freedom Riders and Soul Train”, was done by Pastor Andrena Ingram of St. Michaels Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, PA. She said, *“I have spent a few days thinking about “The Butler”. For me, it was an awesome movie. I have been thinking about persons who stated that they “cried through the whole movie”, and wondering if perhaps I missed*

*something - because I didn’t. I mean, I had a few “heart tugs”. I felt tears welling up a few times. But I didn’t cry”. If anything, the movie for me was a joyful one...I rejoiced at the end.”* “I cry for the continuance of outright blatant instances and subtleties of racism, for the injustices in the world, for misuse of power and authority, for systematic oppression, and institutionalized buffoonery.”

To read her entire review, [click here](#).

