

European American Lutheran Association **EALA**

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



Board Working on Date and Site for 3rd EALA Conference and General Assembly

Winter 2015

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The EALA Bylaws call for a Biennial Conference and General Assembly (Business Meeting). The last one was held in October 2012 with the American Indian and Alaskan Native Association in a suburb of Minneapolis, Prior Lake. While one should have been held in 2014, all associations were requested not to schedule anything so all ethnic associations could meet together. Unfortunately that did not

materialize, so our Board of Directors is consulting with several associations about the possibility of a joint conference this year. It would be most likely in the fall. Watch your email for a news announcement about such a conference of possibly 2-3 days in length and plan to attend for education, inspiration, decision-making and networking.

The Movie *Selma*, M.L.King, and A New Normal

*An Opinion by David Schoob,
EALA Member Partner, West
Bend, WI*

I attended the movie *Selma* shortly after its release. As I watched the film I was filled with a mass of emotions: guilt, anger, fear, hope, determination and many others. At the end of the movie so many things were flowing through my mind that King's speech at the end did not register as deeply as it should have. So when I got home I read the speech.

I was moved deeply by King's words and imagery. But what struck me most was his talk about normalcy. He observed that the leaders of Alabama wished King and all the agitators would go home, "...and let Alabama return to normalcy." But King responded to that by saying, "That is exactly what we don't want, and we will not allow it to happen."

King pointed out that it was normalcy that led to the death of four innocent girls in a church bombing; it was normalcy that led to violence by the police toward lawful protesters; and it was normalcy that led to the beatings and deaths of many in the movement. These were the experiences of the "normal," in King's day.

So what is normal in our day? Profiling along racial lines is normal and even seen as necessary in our day. The shootings of unarmed young black men are accepted as normal. It is just the police protecting themselves it is argued. But when this happens over and over, is this the normal we want and shouldn't somebody challenge the norm? The norm is for people of color to live disproportionately in poverty, be disproportionately jailed and

disproportionately under and unemployed. Do we, the members of the white community today, want things to go back to normal? Do we even realize what normal is?

We can accept the normal or work for a *new* normal. King offers this vision in his speech: *The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that recognizes the dignity and worth of the Lord's children.The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy of brotherhood, the normalcy of true peace, the normalcy of justice.*

We in the white community are often consciously or unconsciously the upholders of the normal. What will we settle for as normal? Will it be a *new* normal?

Six Common Goals for ELCA Ethnic Associations:

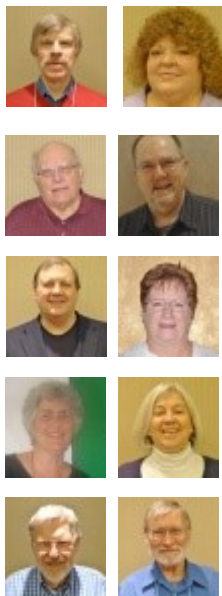
- Listen to the non-affiliated to hear relevance.
- Implement ways to serve those under 35.
- Convene caucuses to hear how young adults would become engaged in church.
- Ethnic Associations assist ELCA in drawing clear map for cross-cultural church.
- Engage Associations in developing young adult leadership.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



“...the Middle East is the cradle of Christianity, and that if we embrace our Christianity, we also have to recognize our faith heritage that begins in the Middle East...”

[Join the EALA as a registered partner, working for racial justice and inclusion at crossculturalchurch.org!](#)

Board Members



Editorial Team:
Paul Bauman, West Bend, WI, and
Russell Meyer, Tampa, FL

Have You Had THE TALK Yet?

An Opinion by Paul Bauman, Editorial Team

This is a question sometimes asked of parents with younger children suggesting the talk about “the birds and the bees”, human reproduction. But recently a member of our EALA Board of Directors said that maybe we, who are descended from people of European origin, need to have a talk with our offspring as to what it means for life. After all, parents with children of color have often said they need to tell them what it means to live in a white dominated world and how to deal with this reality.

So what could parents ,or anyone sharing of European American descent, say that might be helpful. Here are three suggestions:

Regard every person as a fellow human being on the journey of life with you. This means having a sense of concern and compassion for the other person. We all share the same

needs physically, emotionally, and spiritually, whatever our life challenges may be. All religions emphasize the need for adherents to show compassion to others. We all share a common humanity. As Christians we are called to love and care for every person.

Acknowledge European Americans (Whites) have unjustified and unearned advantages. Our heritage has emphasized taking more than giving. While selfishness is a human reality, practically every European nation, from where our forefathers came, were colonizers in all continents of this globe. When they settled here laws were passed to advantage them over people of color and others. It began with colonial laws and continued after our nation was born. With this white superiority came white privilege opening many doors of opportunity that were

often not available to people of color. We have become the favored group. Working individually and with others towards a more just society and opportunities for all becomes very appropriate for us to do.

Listen more and talk less with people of color. Because of our culturally given privilege, we tend to dominate and speak first when in diverse groups. It results often in people of color thinking that they and their opinions don’t count. Listening instead of talking helps open doors to the other person and we learn about them and their culture with its uniqueness and challenges. Listen first and speak later is good advice.

Sharing these three suggestions with children and other youth and possibly role playing each can help make it more than THE TALK. Best yet: be an example of each one.

A Women’s Month Reflection

The painting shocks one such that your eyes fall to the ground in shame. It hangs in the training room of [Casa Amiga, Juarez](#), as a real presence for those preparing to assist battered women and abused children. It’s a picture of a brutalized woman, stripped like Christ, hanging from a cross by a pair of handcuffs. The Mexico City artist depicts the femicide for which Juarez had become known. Together with faith leaders of the National Council of Churches, we visited

Casa Amiga and a Presbyterian congregation whose ministry included teaching trades to young victims of drug cartel violence. Those who have studied the whole systems relations along the southwest border realize we have more to learn about the US footprint in Central America. Our trade and drug war polices generate unintended consequences. One of them is violence against indigenous women and children. *Kyrie eleison!*

- Russell Meyer, Editorial Team

Taking PEACE NOT WALLS Seriously

In late fall Pastor Khader Khalila spoke to the EALA Board of Directors sharing some of his experiences as a Palestinian Christian and encouraging our ethnic association to become advocates for greater justice and fairness with matters effecting Arab Christians in Palestine. He suggested becoming more acquainted with

the ELCA’S PEACE NOT WALLS emphasis (elca.org and search Peace Not Walls). It provides all kinds of resources including potential speakers. Our sister ethnic group, the Association for Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, would welcome our support.