



Report of the Multicultural Ministries Unit

Program Committee

Mr. Aureo F. Andino, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2009)
Pr. Anthony M. Bateza, Chicago, Ill. (2009)
Mr. Stephen A. Berg, Mankato, Minn. (2009)
Pr. Mark A. Cerniglia, Columbia, S.C. (2011)
Pr. Khader El-Yateem, Brooklyn, N.Y. (2009)
Ms. Karris Golden, Waterloo, Iowa (2011)
Pr. Jessedavid Hill, Charlotte, N.C. (2009)
Mr. Lorenzo Cyril Johnson, Union City, N.J. (2009)
Ms. Fumei Liang, Huntington Beach, Calif. (2013)
Ms. Angela R. Miller, Chicago, Ill.
Ms. Patricia M. Robinson, Wyncote, Pa. (2011)
Pr. Jackie D. Russell, Oaks, Okla. (2013)
Mr. Alfred Sagar, Brandon, Miss. (2011)
Pr. Rosemary Sanchez-Guzman, El Paso, Texas (2011)

Advisors

Pr. Chi Shih Chen, *president*, Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the ELCA
Ms. Elizabeth Gaskins, *president*, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association in the ELCA
Pr. Nelson H. Rabell-Gonzalez, *president*, Association of Latino Ministries in the ELCA
Ms. Katherine B. Long, *president*, European American Lutheran Association
Bp. Wayne N. Miller, Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Pr. O. Dennis Mims, *president*, African American Lutheran Association
Pr. J. Pablo Obregon, ELCA Church Council
Mr. Fuad Nijim, *president*, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage
Bp. Margaret G. Payne, New England Synod

Pr. Sherman G. Hicks, *executive director*

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Multicultural Ministries (MM) program unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is to guide and assist this church in becoming multicultural and in reaching the goal of full partnership and participation of African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native people in church and society. The constitutional description of this unit appears in continuing resolution 16.12.E07. printed in Section X of this volume. The program committee consists of 14 persons elected by the Churchwide Assembly from each of the following communities of this church: African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, Biracial, and White.

Report of Work for 2007–2009

Multicultural Ministries continues to focus on several strategic areas, including implementation of the ethnic ministry strategies in conjunction with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) program unit; confronting the scandalous realities of racial, ethnic, and cultural barriers that often are the root causes of exclusion, poverty, hunger, and violence; and pursuit of the commitment of this church to becoming more diverse, multicultural, and multigenerational.

Leadership: Asian Lutheran International Conference

Approximately 130 Lutherans from both sides of the Pacific Rim participated in the Fifth Asian Lutheran International Conference (ALIC) held in Hong Kong, February 6–10, 2009. Professor J. Paul Rajashekar delivered a keynote paper on Asian churches in changing contexts. Two ELCA synodical bishops were among 40 non-Asian participants. Seven Asian bishops also were present at the conference. In addition to participating in the conference, attendees worshiped at several local congregations and visited ministries and institutions in Hong Kong.

ALIC is a grass-roots movement that emerged out of the Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the ELCA. The first conference took place in 1999. Since that time, Multicultural Ministries staff has assisted this conference in empowering Asian ethnic ministries in the ELCA. The ALIC seeks to address the common concerns faced by Asian Lutherans by promoting dialogue and networking. ALIC serves as a forum for supporting theological reflection among Asian Lutherans with reference to specific cultural issues and the development of resources in the areas of worship, Christian education, and theological education for the benefit of Asian Lutheran ministries.

Leadership: Latino Lay Schools of Theology

Seventy Latino and Latina Lutheran leaders gathered in Chicago, Ill., to evaluate the lay schools of theology. This gathering was held in partnership with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission and the Vocation and Education program units. During the gathering participants heard and discussed reports from various regions about the progress of these schools of theology. A task force has been created to work on strengthening and affirming the lay schools that are currently in place. Another area discussed during the gathering was opportunities for reaching out to a growing Latino community in the United States. The dialogue and conversation was focused in part on the barriers currently in place and the actions that

could be taken to overcome them. Multicultural Ministries is committed to working with the Latino community to increase a visible presence of Latino leaders as they move into full participatory integration.

Leadership: American Indian and Alaska Native Youth and Young Adults

In November 2007 the American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries in the ELCA provided “Becoming,” a leadership-training event for American Indian and Alaska Native young people ages 16–22. The emphasis of the event was building self-esteem, exploring leadership gifts, and building skills that can be used in these young adults’ communities, congregations, and career planning.

Leadership: Multicultural

Approximately 40 teaching theologians of the ELCA gathered July 29–Aug. 1, 2008, in Prior Lake, Minn., for a multicultural seminar, “New Day Begun: Engaging Our Wholeness.” The invited guests were theologians of color or those whose primary language is other than English, with a representative group of White theologians.

The multicultural seminar brought these theologians together to engage in a dynamic discussion about the calling of the Church in the twenty-first century to be racially, ethnically, and culturally inclusive. Conversations at the event focused on the theological and social realities that contribute to this church’s understanding of mission in today’s multicultural settings. Multicultural Ministries, the Vocation and Education (VE) program unit, and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) sponsored the multicultural seminar.

The first multicultural seminar, in October 2004, celebrated the teaching ministry of the Rev. Albert “Pete” Pero, emeritus professor of systematic theology at LSTC. The second seminar honored the Rev. Edmond Yee, professor of Asian studies and director of the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (PLTS), Berkeley, Calif. LSTC and PLTS are two of the eight ELCA seminaries.

Leadership: Women of Color in Ministry

Multicultural Ministries, in collaboration with Vocation and Education and Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, gathered approximately 150 ELCA women of color in ministry for the first of an anticipated three gatherings to support this important group of leaders. Centered on the theme “At the Sound of Our Name: A Gathering of Women of Color in Ministry,” this event focused on strengthening the individual and collective voices of these women to transform the congregations and ministry settings they serve in Christ by bearing witness to the Gospel, and to assist in the growth of multicultural leadership in the ELCA.

This event was designed to reach beyond the circle of the 30 clergy women of color who gathered in an event in 2000 to include all rostered women, candidates, teaching theologians, graduate students, executive-level staff of the churchwide

organization, synodical staff members, and women of color serving in agency executive leadership, an approximate pool of 250 women of color with access to more spheres of influence. Participants organized in circles to move beyond isolation to begin networking across and along these lines at more local levels where access, ownership, and commitment toward issues for change are likely to be strongest.

Racial Justice

Six workshops on Internalized Racial Oppression (IRO) were conducted: two at Peace Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Wash., for Pacific Lutheran University; one at the American Indian Family Camp in Oaks, Okla.; one for the EOCM–Black Pastors Serving White Congregations Conference; and two at Sojourner Douglas College, Baltimore, Md. Combined IRO and White Privilege workshops were conducted at Peace Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Wash.

In addition to the workshops, the IRO’s ethnic-specific resource development work continues with the African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Latino communities. Since June 2008 a series of conference calls, e-mails, and face-to-face meetings has advanced the work of this project. The writers met in Chicago, December 10–11, 2008. The project was to be completed by May 2009.

Resource: Native Nations: Standing Together for Civil Rights

The American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries of the Multicultural Ministries program unit, in cooperation with respected American Indian leaders and the ELCA Communication Services unit, produced *Native Nations: Standing Together for Civil Rights*, a one-hour documentary aired on the ABC network in November and December 2008, and now available on DVD. This documentary encompasses the time period from the Minnesota Massacre in 1862 when 38 American Indian warriors were hanged (the largest one-time hanging in U.S. history) up to the present. *Native Nations* will continue to be shown in 2009 on the NBC network and the Hallmark channel.

Evangelism and Outreach: Multicultural

The Multicultural Ministries program unit, in partnership with four synods of this church, held a joint multicultural event, “No Longer Strangers: Ministry in the 21st Century,” in Dallas, Texas, January 28–30, 2009. The biblical text for the event was Ephesians 2:19: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”

The participating synods were the Arkansas-Oklahoma, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, Southwestern Texas, and Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synods. The event focused on engaging and equipping rostered and lay leaders in an intentional process of ministry of and with persons of varying races, cultures, and ethnicities who reside in communities where congregations may be located. Multicultural Ministries looks forward to using this event as a blueprint for other regional multicultural events throughout the ELCA.

Outreach: Multiracial Young Adults

“Joys, Struggles, Discoveries: You Welcome Me” was held June 20–22, 2008, in Chicago, Ill., for young adults ages 18–25, and was the first-ever ELCA leadership event specifically welcoming people of multiracial heritage. The event drew 20 participants for Bible study, worship, mentoring, leadership, networking, and discussions of faith, identity, vocation, and the meaning of being multiracial in this church and in the broader society. The Multicultural Ministries unit was able to host this even thanks to a generous grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and in partnership with the Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, Vocation and Education, and Church in Society program units. This particular collaboration and cooperation shows the wider commitment to increase and strengthen collaboration, cooperation, coordination, and communication among the communities of color, which must include, honor, and affirm its multiracial members. This project began a paradigm shift by creating new relationships, establishing strong networks, forming new alliances, and increasing a visible presence of multiracial leaders as they move into full participatory integration within their contexts. There is much work that still needs to be done in this area as the unit continues to help this church become more inclusive.

Outreach: African Descent Youth and Young Adults

An African Descent Young Adult Consultation, “Sitting at the Welcome Table: African Descent Adults Taking Their Rightful Place Within the Life of the Church,” was held October 2–5, 2008, in Atlanta, Ga. The goals of the consultation included raising awareness of this church and identifying the challenges for full participation within this church. There were 72 African American, African Caribbean, and African National participants, ages 19–38.

ELCA Leaders of Color Database

Multicultural Ministries staff created a database to assist this church as it identifies people of color with gifts needed to strengthen mission. Multicultural Ministries continuously receives requests from synods and churchwide units asking for recommendations and nominations for African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Latino persons to fill positions on committees, boards, and staff, and to serve on contract assignments in the ELCA. The newly created database includes a multicultural leader information data bank, which will help the staff of Multicultural Ministries respond to these requests.

New Ethnic Association

In November 2006 the ELCA Church Council affirmed the creation of the European American Lutheran Association (EALA), this church’s sixth ethnic association. The EALA held its constituting convention October 31–November 1, 2008, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Ill. There were 40 people in attendance. The organization now officially stands alongside the African Descent, American Indian and Alaska Native, Arab and

Middle Eastern, Asian, and Latino associations. The officers elected were the following:

President: Ms. Katherine B. Long, Redmond, Wash.

Vice President: Pr. Lyle A. Kleman, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Secretary: Pr. Frederick Thomas-Breitfeld, Milwaukee, Wisc.

Treasurer: Ms. Kathy Smith, Iowa City, Iowa

The European American Lutheran Association partners with the brothers and sisters of the other ethnic associations working within the ELCA to carry out this church’s commitments to be increasingly anti-racist, multicultural, and inclusive in fulfilling its mission and ministry.

Major Directions for 2009–2011

In the coming biennium, Multicultural Ministries will focus on the following:

- Continuing implementation and support of the American Indian and Alaska Native Strategic Plan (1991), Asian and Pacific Islander Strategic Plan (2001), Latino Ministry Strategy (2001), Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy (2005), and the African Descent Ministry Strategy (2005);
- Implementation of the Multicultural Ministries strategic goals, which include:
 - 1) To increase the number of ethnic-specific and multicultural congregations, and deepen the discipleship of congregational members;
 - 2) To increase and strengthen cohesiveness within and among ethnic communities;
 - 3) To equip congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression to become an anti-racist, multicultural church;
 - 4) To increase the number of clergy and rostered lay leaders in congregations, synods, seminaries, and the churchwide expression from the African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native communities;
- Empowerment of multiracial, multiethnic youth and young adults;
- Building of stronger cohesion within and among African Descent, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and American Indian and Alaska Native communities, working for peace and justice across all cultures.

Sherman G. Hicks, *executive director*

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