



Empowered by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the mission of Lutheran Human Relations Association is to bring people together to do justice by:

- breaking down hostilities and fears between peoples;
- bridging racial, cultural, class, gender, age, ability and other separations; and
- building up human community.

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“Sheer Hatred at Work”: Frank Jude and Justice

Rev. Ken Wheeler

I have just finished reading a rather powerful book entitled *Sons of Mississippi*. The author, Paul Hendrickson, focuses on a photo of six county sheriffs who were meeting just outside of Ole Miss University in 1962.

They were there in anticipation of James Meredith, an African-American enrolling in this bastion of Mississippi culture and academia. It was a prospect that had all of white Mississippi in an uproar.

Governor Ross Barnett, a staunch segregationist, declared that no black man would ever enter the doors of Ole Miss as a student.

In 1962 and prior, hatred was the religion of the state. It had been that religious fervor that allowed the brutal murder of 14 year old Emmett Till and then protected his murderers.

Law enforcement in the state of Mississippi in the 40's, 50's and 60's was not about ensuring justice for African-Americans. In fact, law enforcement was often complicit in the injustice of keeping black folks in their place.

I remember looking at the picture of Emmett Till as his body was dragged from the deepness of the Talahatchee river; his face had been beaten beyond recognition and though in this instance he was not beaten at the hands of law enforcement, it was law enforcement who protected the perpetrators and it was an all white jury that refused to convict them.

This brings me to the recent beating of Frank Jude, a black man brutally beaten by we know at least three white policemen; there may have been at least a dozen. When I saw Mr. Jude's face, I could not shake the memory of young Emmett Till.

The force at work in the beating of Emmett was the very same force at work in the beating of Frank Jude. While the District Attorney, E. Michael McCann, refused to charge these three officers with a hate crime, it is clear to me when I look at the face of Mr. Jude that nothing but sheer hatred was at work. What was this beating about

if it was not about hatred? How do we explain the severity of the beating and the simultaneous emasculation of this man?

Consider the history of racism in this country and how that history has informed the way that every institution, not the least of which has been the criminal justice system in general, and every police department across this nation in particular, has treated African-Americans. Because of that history it is important that these men who have been charged are prosecuted to the full extent of the law if they are found to be guilty, and that the jury not be swayed by the fact that they are policemen. This is a situation where these men must not be able to hide behind their badge. This is a time when every person, no matter their color, who has been incensed by this unacceptable brutality must stand as a united voice and demand from those who are called to protect and serve something far better than what we have seen from the hands of these three policemen.

This is a time when we must be vigilant as a community to insure that we don't allow justice to be tarnished and to give citizens of color a reason to believe that we can trust those servants of the law and not be afraid that every time we are stopped for being in the "wrong part of town," -whatever that means- that we're not going to end up looking like Frank Jude or something far worse.

This is not a time for silence. Let your voices be heard on this matter. We owe this much to Emmett Till and Frank Jude and the countless others that we don't know about.

Frank Jude is an African-American who attended a party at the home of an off-duty policeman in October of 2004. Somewhere in the course of the evening he was accused of stealing the policeman's badge and gun. Neither the gun nor badge were ever found on Mr. Jude's person, but he was viciously and brutally beaten by several of the policeman who were present at the party and by those policemen who were called to the scene.

Rev. Ken Wheeler is Assistant to the Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA.

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What's Inside

- p. 2 **European American Antiracist Association Forming**
Rev. Mark Thompson
Remember Whose We Are and Re-Member With One Another
Pauline Redmond
- P. 3 **With Thanks for Your Partnership in Ministry**
- p. 4 **Special Thanks to Our Star Volunteers!**

ELCA Offers Regarding Bridges Five Day Facilitator/Leadership Trainings

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) through the Commission for Multicultural Ministries is offering two more opportunities this year for pastors and lay leaders to understand and answer God's call to work for racial justice.

DATES: *June 26-30, 2005*
September 27- October 1, 2005
COST: *approx. \$500 per person includes room and board (travel arrangements/expenses not included).*

You are encouraged to send a team of persons from your congregation or institution (at least 2 – clergy and lay, preferably 3-4). One person can not do this alone in any institution. The site is the Cabrini Retreat Center in Des Plaines, IL.

The training, using the *Regarding Bridges Model*, was developed by Lutheran Human Relations Association staff and consultants. About 150 leaders from synods, congregations, and other institutions have taken part in the training over the last five years.

Materials and tools are provided for the journey of creating and maintaining an anti-racist/oppressive, inclusive community. The training provides information and tools for understanding and breaking down individual, cultural and institutional racism and the rebuilding of more inclusive, just communities in which to live, work and play. Contact the LHRA office if you have questions about the training.

For other questions or to get on the mailing list, contact: Christine May, Director of Racial Justice Ministries, ELCA -Commission for Multicultural Ministries 8765 W. Higgins Rd. Chicago, IL 60631-4185 1-800-638-3522, X 2835 or 773-380-2835 (Direct) christine.may@elca.org

“Living Together in Trust and Hope”

The Easy Yoke Retreat House, Millville, Minnesota, was the site of the fourth annual Racial Reconciliation Retreat. The gathering, held on April 1-2, was hosted by Pauline Redmond and her husband Rev. Jack Miller. A story on page 2 of this issue details the history of the retreat and highlights this year's event.



European American Antiracist Association Forming

Rev. Mark Thompson

The city of Milwaukee has continued to have a series of high profile events take place which demonstrate the on-going realities of racial chasms. In a recent court case, a former police chief of African ancestry, Arthur Jones, was found guilty of not promoting enough European-American officers to higher positions of rank. Such a ruling has led to countless words written in many publications from a variety of perspectives. One such piece was written by a columnist for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, who wrote, among other things,

“Society, too, could find out why blacks were disproportionately rare in the promotion pool. If it’s because of ongoing injustice, that can be changed with recruiting the reluctant or providing better schooling for the ill-prepared.” (Crossroads Section, 4/10/05).

These words illustrate the ignorance which resides in many people of European ancestry in this country, and around the world. The author falls into the trap of blaming the African-American community for years of unjust promotion policies by claiming qualified candidates were reluctant to pursue career advancement or else the whole community of people was just unqualified. The statement, “Society, too, could find out why blacks were disproportionately rare in the promotion pool” should read, “White folks should find out why blacks are disproportionately rare in the

promotion pool.” People of color, by and large, already know why this reality has existed and continues to be the norm today. It is the European Ancestry community which must better educate itself as to the systemic nature of white privilege in this country’s legislative, legal and economic history.

“There are no people of color in our community, so there are no racial problems or issues.”

How many people have heard words such as these in their community? A large majority of ELCA congregations are in non-urban communities where there are indeed few people of color. It is hard to combat racism when the key participants, people of European Ancestry, continue to debate or deny its very existence. The five ethnic associations which exist under the umbrella of the ELCA have all clearly and repeatedly called for a gathering of European-Americans who have matured in their faith journey enough to be able to acknowledge the sin of racism does in fact exist in all facets of life, church included. People of color are calling for allies within the white community to self-identify themselves as anti-racists, people who are growing in their awareness of the privileges bestowed upon them solely based on the color of their skin.

The time is long overdue for such a gathering of the faithful. Toward that end, a new association is being formed which will stand alongside the other ethnic associations; the **European American Anti Racist**

Association (EAARA). Following the ELCA National Assembly in Orlando in the Summer of 2005, this association will be organized within the Multi-Cultural Ministries Unit of the ELCA (the proposed name for the Commission for Multicultural Ministries). Members of EAARA will be invited to continue the process of educating ourselves as to the systemic nature of racism and the privileges that come with such a system. EAARA will seek to help the European community own the plague of racism as first and foremost a problem that white people must address. EAARA will be ready to stand with sisters and brothers of color as allies in the journey toward justice.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters, not many of you were wise by human standards (1 Cor 1:26).

Let us as Europeans and European Americans grow in our understanding of racism and pledge our lives and our faith journey to becoming Anti-Racists in a world and society where it is all too easy to remain quiet and ignorant. Please consider becoming a member of EAARA.*

Pastor Mark is Co-Pastor, with his wife Kristin Nielsen, at Good Shepherd Lutheran in Milwaukee.

*LHRA will publish membership details as soon as they become available.

Remember Whose We Are and Re-Member With One Another

Pauline Redmond

“Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus says. He knew that his disciples would need tangible rituals and dates to remember his teachings and commemorate their time together. Whenever we break bread as a sacrament or meal with friends, we remember until he comes again. Commemorating dates can be an important tool for our work together if we choose them prayerfully and carefully.

I have begun to use three powerful dates commemorating Martin Luther King Jr., (“renewer of society and martyr 1968”, in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*), for personal devotions and educational work. The first two dates commemorate his birth- the federal holiday, the third Monday of January- and his birthday January 15. I use the federal holiday as a day on-not a day off- to attend an event or talk with people about Dr. King and his impact on my life and the world. I use January 15 to challenge myself in a physical and spiritual discipline. When people ask me how long I’ve quit smoking, I say, “Martin Luther King’s birthday, 1996!” “How long have you been exercising?” “Martin Luther King’s birthday this year!” Sometimes that leads to some interesting comments- or not. January 15th is still out there as an important marker. The third date commemorates when Martin Luther King, Jr. was martyred. For the past four years, on the weekend closest to April 4th, I renew my vow to struggle against the hatred which killed him. I host a small retreat which includes some of his speeches or commentary, and discussion of racial reconciliation work. Asking others to join me has led to the deepening of my appreciation for King’s prophetic witness and the long struggle we have together. Each year’s content and attendance has been very different.

This year the retreat, “Living Together in Trust and Hope”, was very memorable because Marilyn Miller of

LHRA was guest at an evening open house and then facilitated a one-day Saturday workshop April 1-2. She gave a brief introduction to the Bible-based materials, exercises and discussion which LHRA has developed for group work- for church staffs, congregations, seminaries and other organizations.



Pastor Jack Miller of a two-point congregation: St. Matthew-Granger; St. Paul’s-Harmony, Minnesota.

“We must use time creatively...and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.” Letter from Birmingham Jail, January 16, 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Having Marilyn visit our small town, meeting neighbors, some local farmers, two of the ELCA Southeastern Minnesota Synod staff, and serving as guest preacher at our two rural congregations was a great witness and opening for ongoing work. It was inspiring and encouraging to everyone involved. Each one of us makes a difference where we live. Let’s share ideas about the work we’re doing in our own way and place and discover ways to grow and deepen the work of LHRA!



Pedro-Jesus Romero of Centro Comesino added to the lively discussions.



Pauline Redmond, pictured above, is a long-time LHRA member and is currently serving on the LHRA Board of Directors. Her experience in peace and justice work and grass roots organizing is put to use as she walks with people of rural ministries, migrant communities and Somali refugees in her current hometown of Millville, Minnesota.

With Thanks for Your Partnership in Ministry

Lutheran Human Relations is an association of members who share in the life of the organization by electing the board of directors, providing the financial base of the association and carrying out the ministry in their daily lives, congregations and communities. We thank each of the following persons, congregations, or organizations who supported LHRA during the 2003-2004 fiscal year (October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004) through financial contributions, purchase of resources, or payment for services. If we have not listed your name correctly or have inadvertently omitted your name, please let us know. We are grateful for our partnership in ministry and thank you for continued support.

Congregations and Organizations

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Bethel Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO
Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis, MN
Christ the Victor Lutheran, New Berlin, WI
Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee, WI
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Special Thanks to Our Star Volunteers!

As with most non-profits, fulfilling the mission of LHRA would not be possible without the help of our volunteers. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers who've helped us in the office this past year:



Thanks to Marie DeJesus, Helen Schultz and Arleen Ziemer who are always available to stuff envelopes when our appeals and other mailings are ready to go out, and work steadily and cheerfully, never complaining about the paper cuts that go along with the job.



Thanks to Jazzmyne Henry, an 8th grader at Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee and 2005 Cross Lutheran Confirmation Class member, who helped with various office duties during one of her school breaks, and to Georgia Eubanks, who also helps out with miscellaneous tasks from time to time.



Three cheers to Esther Rusch who comes in on a weekly basis to help with data entry. Her patience with the sometimes uncooperative computers is a blessing, and we cherish her wisdom and passion for social justice work that she shares with us when she's here.



Thanks to Max Bodenbach. With his help the task of moving to our current office and our (VERY) slow unpacking process was eased tremendously as he helped us pack and unpack dozens of boxes of books, videos and resources. Max has also taken on the time consuming task of cataloging all of our books (nearly 300 so far!) and will soon begin entering the titles, author and subject into a database, thus helping us make better use of the wonderful resources that have been collected over the years.

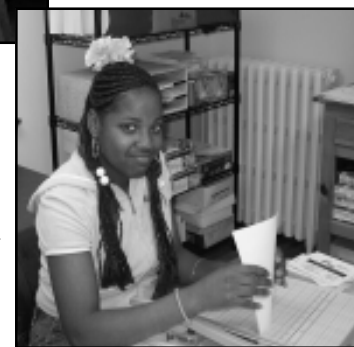


A big thanks to Joyce Caldwell and Miguel DeJesus who generously donate consultation time in the ongoing process of developing, implementing and assessing our programs.

There are always plenty of opportunities for our friends and members to get involved, so please give us a call if you're in the Milwaukee area and have some time to volunteer!



Max B. spent many hours cataloging nearly 300 books that are part of LHRA's resource library.



Jazzmyne H. spent over a week of a school break helping with a mailing and other tasks.

Yes!

I want to join with others in the work of breaking down hostilities and fears, bridging separations, and, building up human community.

I want to be a member of LHRA

- Here is my annual membership of \$30 (individuals), \$40 (families). Please send me the **Vanguard** to keep me posted on current issues of concern.

I want to help Lutheran Human Relations strengthen and expand its ministry.

- Here's my special gift of \$_____

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