

Subject: Diocese of Bethlehem Anti-Racism response to John Kitagawa's request
From: "Scott Allen" <gambaguy@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, 9 Jun 2011 08:01:53 -0400
To: <archives@episcopalarchives.org>
CC: "Howard Stringfellow" <archdeacon@diobeth.org>, "Paul Marshall" <bpoffice@diobeth.org>

Dear John,

The Archdeacon of our diocese has asked me to respond on behalf of the Bishop to your letter of 12 May 2011 regarding anti-racism work in the Diocese of Bethlehem.

I serve as the Bishop's representative to the Province III Anti-Racism Commission and I am sure you are well aware of the fine work the Commission under the leadership of Ms. Nancy Bolden (Pittsburgh) is doing in our Province. We have met several times around the Province and share information, experiences and programmatic strategies for the work of Anti-Racism Training in our respective Dioceses.

Last Spring the Province held a "Train the Trainer" event in Martinsburg, WV led by The Rev. Jane Oasin which was very successful and most dioceses of the Province had a team of people present. The Rev. Trula Hollywood and I attended this event and were trained as Trainers for this diocese in the curriculum "Seeing the Face of God in Each Other". As a result of this, and in order to comply with the requests of General Convention legislation and implementation of anti-racism training, our Fall Clergy Retreat will be devoted to Anti-Racism Training using this curriculum. An added plus is that our Bishop plans to invite Moravian and Lutheran clergy to participate as well. This will occur September 25-27, 2011 at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Wernersville, PA.

In addition, we hope to get some more folks interested in being trainers so we can plan our next steps in including the laity who serve on Diocesan Council and Standing Committee so that this can eventually be offered on a regional basis to vestries and other lay parish leaders in our Diocese. The Anti-Racism work in the Diocese is part of the work of the Safe Spaces Committee of the Diocese.

As far as implementation of a "Day of Repentance and Service of Repentance" in our diocese, this has not occurred. Several of us attended the one held in Philadelphia a couple of years ago when the Presiding Bishop led the liturgy, but the Service has not been planned in our diocese as of yet. Impediments may be that our Diocese is small and we have decided to put our meager financial and human resources into Anti-Racism training as a pre-cursor to a Service of Repentance. Our area is growing in its Latino population and the Black community constitutes only about 3% of the total population of the 14 counties of Northeastern PA (the geographic area of our diocese). The Diocese of Bethlehem is still predominantly White European in its make-up. Some of this has historical roots and slavery was not a big part of the history of this part of Pennsylvania. We felt that it was important for people to grasp and understand concepts such as "White Privilege" in order to make a service of this nature comprehensible and insure a good attendance..

I hope this helps inform you as to what is happening in our diocese and that we are supportive of the mandates asked in the General Convention legislation regarding Anti-Racism training and doing tangible activities in that direction.

Peace,

The Rev. T. Scott Allen
Bethlehem