

Eastern Region, ACPE

Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania

Web Address: <http://www.eneacpe.org>

REGIONAL NEWSLETTER

Winter to Spring Newsletter 2010



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- Calendar Reminders

Co-Regional Directors

The Reverend Jo Clare Wilson and

The Reverend Nancy Anderson

FROM THE *COORDS*

The sun has been shining and we believe that spring is finally here! The last month was too much rain for many people in the East. We hope you all are dry, finding warm weather and sightings of spring! This newsletter contains the REM Reflections from all the students who attended from the Eastern Region. We asked them to please submit their thoughts and reflections about the experience of attending REM and present them here for your reading. This experience is pivotal for many who are seeking to find their way in pastoral care training either for professional chaplaincy and supervisory training. Their reflections can help us to understand how our organization welcomes and encourages persons from all multicultural backgrounds. We invite your thoughts and comments in response to what you read for our next newsletter.

We are days away from Kansas City and the national conference. In Kansas City we are pleased that our own Denise Haines will be receiving the ACPE Distinguished Service Award for 2010. She will receive this award at the Presidential Dinner on Wednesday evening April 21 and we wanted the Eastern Region to know that prior to the ACPE Reception and Dinner WE WILL HOST A RECEPTION

HONORING DENISE in the Eastern Region suite. Please watch the bulletin board at the meeting for the location.

And we have 2 of our own meeting the Certification Commission Tom Chirido and David Fleenor - we wish them the very best. Stay tuned for the news from Kansas City! See you there.

REM 2010 REFLECTIONS

The following were written by the CPE students who attended REM from the Eastern Region:

Rev. Benjamin Rivera – Robert Woods Johnson University Hospital

The speakers were very well chosen for this event. Dr. Miguel De La Torre challenged the audience to work towards reconciliation while he broke down familiarize those present with oppressive systems. His presentation of reinterpreting Jonah as a new ethic of reconciliation was very well documented and conveyed in a non-threatening way. This enable the racially and ethnically mix audience to come together and work toward a better tomorrow that included all of God's children, the oppressor as well. Dr. De La Torre modeled this concept as he entertained questions that disputed his point of view. This encourages me to work as Dr. De La Torre in making a space for those involved in the system of oppression. I now want to work toward reconciliation between and with our communities. I worked in the past with the notion of righteous anger and retributive justice as the basis for my ministry. He truly challenged me to look inside and reconcile my approach to ministry to the heart and will of God.

Coming from a personality perspective, Dr. Kang address issues of the self and how it was traditionally understood. She guided us through how we, as humans, have the need to categorize and "put into box" to make some meaning and understanding of the world we live in. However, this very tendency leads us to dehumanize those individual that do not conform or are different from the mainstream. The salient concept that captivated me was her "crimes against humanity" instead of using such categories as "murder", "domestic violence" or "rape". This was based on the rational that all these events have, at their core, the intention to steal or deface the essence of humanity. This notion challenges the way I think about human beings. As someone that works with the "least of these" and outreach to the indigent now want to be aware of what my thinking process is and make the necessary adjustments to close the gap between my understanding of the gospel and how I address ministry.

Christine Davies - Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania

Being part of the REM Conference was an eye-opening experience for me. As a CPE resident and new chaplain, I enjoyed meeting and conversing with others in the field from across the country. I was also made more fully aware of issues surrounding diversity. As a member of a dominant culture, I had to come to terms with my own power and privilege and examine how I might use it to question the system and give voice to the voiceless. I found Dr. Namsoon Kang's lectures to be riveting and inspiring. She spoke of

race/culture/religion/sexual orientation as a point of departure, but not the point of arrival. She shared that when a colleague was giving her a difficult time and putting her into a box based on her culture, she announced, "I am Post Asian!" This was a powerful moment and became a defining point in the conference. It encouraged me to wrestle with the idea of living in a post-racial society and what it means to do chaplaincy in that context. Sometimes we have to embrace being post gender, post religion, post age in order to fully engage those who we are serving. These are still absolutely elements of our identity, but not a place to dwell and let limit our ministry.

I left the conference empowered, but also convicted. In one of his keynote addresses, to drive home his point, Dr. Miguel De La Torre proclaimed, "no one is getting into heaven without a letter of reference from an undocumented worker." This forced me to confront my own lack of action. What am I doing for undocumented workers? What am I doing for anyone forced to the margins of society? During CPE we do such a good job on focusing on the spiritual/emotional needs of the individual, but it's easy to neglect the larger social justice issues. As I return to the final unit of my residency, I hope to remember to confront myself on a continual basis. I hope to find ways to stand up for those who have had their rights trampled. And I hope to celebrate difference and diversity on a daily basis.

Kennedy Hampton, Sr. – Hartford Hospital

I attended the REM Conference 2010 in San Antonio, TX, this was my first REM. I found the conference very informative and a great place for networking. I was encouraged by the format used at the conference which consists of breakout discussion groups after each plenary session, wherein we gather in groups and discussed the issues presented by our keynote speakers. Professor Miguel A. De La Torre spoke about the undocumented workers and their plight. He reminded us how they are humans who have already escaped oppression in their homelands and came to America simply wanting an opportunity to live. They ought to be respected and yet they find themselves being taken advantage of even in the land of plenty. People hire them and refuse to pay them and threaten to turn them in if they don't accept the abuse they are receiving, many live under constant fear and stress. I was truly inspired by his lecture, however, I was truly touched by the sharing that took place in our breakout discussion group when one of the young ladies shared she was in America illegally and shared her personal plight. The fear she has daily of being deported to her homeland. She completely changed my view of who the illegal immigrant is. She was an educated woman yet she too was living with the daily fear that confronts the undocumented.

I began reflecting on the plantation slavery era/ a say plantation era because slavery still exists today it's just more technologically advanced. I reflected back to the time when the slave master would divide the families by selling off the father or even the children. To the plight of how the undocumented come here and have children who become citizens and yet the father could still be deported and sent back bringing about a division in the family. Seeing her face as she told her story touched my heart. Our ministry will be looking into how we can help the plight of the undocumented workers. We have a church in New Haven that we can partner with, St. Rosa Lima whose congregation is majority undocumented workers and they are always launching a campaign on their behalf. We will look into joining them in this plight; I thank the REM conference for this awareness. This will also help me in my CPE process as I now have a heightened awareness and a new face for the undocumented worker. I will also have to deal with my own bias that surfaced when I found myself surprised how educated she was.

The other plenary speaker was Professor Namsoon Kang, she too was equally informative. She talked about how sacred spaces aren't close spaces and her example was how God told Moses (Exodus 3:5) to take his shoes off the ground he stood on was holy ground...she shared that God made that space a sacred space and it wasn't a close space. She also spoke about liminal space and she described that place as somewhere you can ask crazy questions you would never ask anywhere else, and how that can be a sacred place, a place where you can encounter the divine even if the question is "who am I." It can be described as a place where compassion or collective monologue can take place. When I thought deeply about this I found this comforting because in the CPE process it can be very stressful and you need a space that's sacred and it doesn't have to incorporate boundaries or borders.

She also shared with us that nothing is natural everything is constructed. And from there she talked about Minority groups and who are they, and how it's not about numbers. She shared it can be a self conscious social unit. She also shared a powerful presentation about how we ought not let anyone define us by one aspect of who we are...we are more than male/female, African American or other, so don't let anyone pick one part of you and make that who you are. If you do, that is a disservice to your remaining characteristic or qualities. She tied that to what she called the politics of tokenism- as long as we have one person of color we are okay. She suggested not excepting that and reminding them you are as human as they are. As a minority in ACPE this may be something valuable to keep in the forefront of my mind.

Meghan Young – Hartford Hospital

"Language beyond language. Identity beyond Identity." – Professor Namsoon Kang

"I am you when I am I" – Pal Celan

Those two phrases seem to encompass what I'm taking away from the Racial Ethnic Multicultural Network Conference. They were key points and phrases brought up by Professor Namsoon Kang during her two plenary sessions. Professor Kang's words, called us to look at the language beyond language, and the identity beyond identity. They provided a call back to how we view humanity in ministry, and where we are called by God. I experience REM as a reminder that ministry happens in the boundaries where sacred space is formed in often the most uncomfortable tensions. Professor Miguel A. De La Torre, reminded us of our call to be prophetic in our role as ministers. He called us to respond to the systems of injustice and oppression in our world and community, to be angered, passionate, and aware. But ultimately, he called us to have the courage, to ask "How do you want us to walk with you" as we encounter our neighbors in the body of God.

The many challenging questions that were brought up during the REM Conference serve as a reminder to me, that in chaplaincy and ministry, we are often called to live in the questions. We are called to be in the process, continually looking for new questions that may guide us to new relationships of hope and challenge.

The REM Conference offered me great inspiration for thought and reflection. I was particularly appreciative of the opportunity to meet and converse with other ACPE students and supervisors. This opportunity offered me a variety of different perspectives from those going through and those who have already gone through "the process" of CPE. Over the three days of the conference, I felt as if something was happening inside me as I engaged both the plenary speakers and the CPE Supervisors and students of color. The engagement deepened my own sense of learning theologically, personality wise and educationally. Moreover, learning about the limited presence of African Americans in the history of ACPE and the profound absence of African Americans in the current make-up of ACPE had a profound effect on me and my

relationship to the whole CPE process. It connected me to the past accomplishments of African Americans in ACPE and caused in me a deeper appreciation and commitment to the CPE process in particular and ACPE in general. It invoked inside of me feelings of cultural pride and honor, noble obligation, responsibility and spiritual fervor. It allowed me to look at myself in my current process with the thoughts of those who have successfully completed this process before me; to look at the future with the sense of those who will come behind me; and to continue to challenge myself, in prayer and practice, to be the best student, teacher and provider of pastoral care that I can be. I am profoundly grateful for my experience at the REM 2010 conference.

Rev. Melvin John P. Miller, M.Div. – Hartford Hospital

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Immanuel Bae – Bridgeport Hospital

It was my first experience of attending at the REM conference, held at San Antonio last Feb. 3-6. It was especially unforgettable for me because it was also my first experience attending a professional conference with my wife, Rev. Jongmi who is also a chaplain and supervisory student. I was a joy and opportunity of developing our relationship in a new and challenging way as a friend and colleague who are searching for the same interest and goal of ministry. I believe that it will be keep challenging and strengthening our relationship further when we are on our journey of CPE in the same boat.

Through the conference, I was challenged to see many other chaplains with different cultural and racial backgrounds and encouraged to do it with more renewed passion and interest. I also found that how much important to understand the diversity and difference of each culture and race in our ministry of CPE. Without fully understanding multicultural issues, I think it will be difficult to implement our ministry of listening and caring because of the fact that everybody’s life situation, values, perception of moral standards, as well as religious perspectives are so much different from each other. Through the lectures and small group discussions, I was motivated to accept and develop the multicultural issues within my CPE ministry to

accommodate and broaden the horizon of awareness. In this point, it was such a productive and useful conference for me. I appreciate for my supervisor giving me such a good chance to attend in the conference and Eastern Region of ACPE.

Rev. Jongmi Bae, BCC – HealthCare Chaplaincy

“I am much more than a Korean woman” – Reflection on REM Conference

“I am much more than a Korean woman.” Among so many powerful words from Dr. Namsoon Kang and Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, the main speakers in REM, this statement of Dr. Kang has been staying with me. As I reflect on the reasons of why this ordinary simple sentence gave me such a strong impression, I found several messages.

First of all, this trip to REM was giving me a chance to take the first trip with my husband who was also in chaplaincy, as a professional woman. Where ever I went to meetings or trips with my husband before, I had been just a pastor’s wife/ just a “Korean woman” showing my smile silently next to my husband. So sitting in the conference room with my husband at REM was confusing and uncomfortable for me struggling with my identity of who I was. I experienced myself hesitating to go group discussions. As I sat in a struggle between my old and new self-perception of my identity, I believe, the message came to me saying that I was much more than a Korean woman. That was not just Dr. Kang’s voice, happened to be a Korean woman, but also was my inner voice. It was a new and necessary experience to confirm my pastoral and professional identity. I am grateful that REM offered me a chance to confirm who I was as a professional woman.

I had been struggling with my marginality in this society. As I participated in REM, I realized that I was not alone there. I was not the only one who had been experiencing pain, alienation, humiliation, and struggling with survival in this society. I also learned that people, black or white or yellow or rich or poor, has own marginality in some sense. I found myself feeling connected, related, safe, and excited in the marginal group during the conference. We were much more than minority in one group. I am finally able to celebrate of my marginality, may be not always though, because I am much more than a Korean woman.

CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE NEWS

The Eastern Region Certification committee met at Tuscarora Conference Center from March 24th thru the 26th. The committee met with 12 applicants. Six met for Readiness Consultations, four met requesting Supervisory Candidacy status, one met for extension of Supervisory Candidacy status, and one met requesting a consultation around Candidacy. At this time the region has three new Supervisory Candidates. Join me in celebrating our new Supervisory Candidates: Christopher Brown, Koshin Paley Ellison, and Benjamin Rivera.

The Fall Eastern Region Certification meetings will be held September 19th thru the 21st at Stony Point Retreat Center. Check the Eastern Region web page for the Declaration date.



(Certification Committee members John DeVelder, Jeffrey Silberman, Greg Stoddard, Chair Maureen Mitchell and Kathleen Davis working at Tuscarora Inn March 2010)



Eastern Region Certification Committee at Work



Dan Petronella, Beth Glover, Paul Steinke, Ralph Ciampa and Johnny Bush at the Certification Committee meeting in Mt. Bethel, PA

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- National ACPE Conference, April 21 – 24, 2010 Kansas City, Kansas
- Eastern Region Certification Committee Meeting – Stony Point, NY September 20-21, 2010
- Oct 3 – 5, 2010 Eastern Regional Meeting in Reading, PA *Watch for details to come*
- Seminar on Supervision – Stony Point, NY Oct 24 – 25, 2010

OFFICERS OF THE REGION

Chair: Paul Steinke

Chair Elect: Martin Montonye

Secretary: Angie Van Hise

Treasurer: David Sticklely

Board Representatives: Greg Stoddard and Ken Hayden

Accreditation Chair: Vacant

Certification Chair: Maureen Mitchell

Standards: Peter Kuhn

Nominating: Jay Cooke

Ethics: Ray Cooley

Clinical Members: Claudia Landau

Annual Conference: David Fleenor

Strategic Planning: Martin Montonye

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