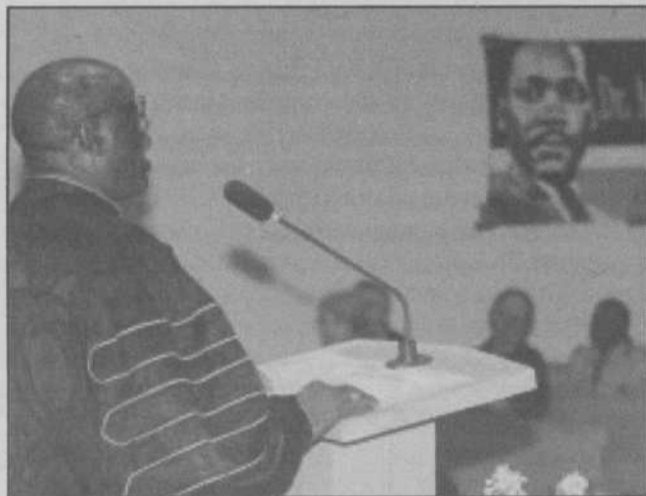


Members of the Alpha and Omega Ministries choir lift their voices on Sunday during the M.L.K. Free Gospel Explosion at Portals of Glory Church of God In Christ. The event was sponsored by the Las Vegas Gospel Announcers Network.



(Left) The Dr. Rev. S.S. Rogers did a rendition of the "I Have A Dream" speech during Friday night's interfaith service at Holy Trinity AME. Mariyah Burton sings at the Gospel Explosion.

Gospel recording artist David Williams digs deep during a performance at the Gospel Explosion. A team of mimes from Second Baptist church performed a pantomime for the audience at the Gospel Explosion.



The Rev. Jesse Scott, bottom left, along with other members of churches in the valley, reads from prepared text during Friday's interfaith service at Holy Trinity AME church.

Church targets racism in forum

By Asmeret Asghedom
Sentinel-Voice

"We shall overcome!" the participants of the Conquering Racism workshop sang with locked arms at the Community Lutheran Church on 3720 East Tropicana Ave. Saturday. Members of the congregation hosted the five-hour event that included prayer, discussion, food, and a sing-along.

The workshop was designed to honor Martin Luther King Jr. and his plights while fighting racism. Inez Torres Davis from the Chicago-based Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America led the discussions.

Senior Pastor Mark, Pastor Niles Strohl, Arsenia Walker and Ken Larson all of the Community Lutheran Church in Las Vegas were discussion panelist and led a few of the sessions.

The workshops focused on identifying the blind spots of racism.

"[The workshop] is a faith-based approach to conquering racism," Larson said.

Although the speakers emphasized the significance of utilizing the spirit of the church to fight racism, they recognized the complications when tying the two together.

"Dr. Martin Luther King once said, 'The most segregated hour in the week is Sunday morning.' That's still a true statement," Davis said.

Davis said that as complicated as it is, the church can still be instrumental toward fighting racism.

"My church in Chicago has hosted open forums across the country addressing racism and white-skin privilege," she explained. "Inter-racism discussion doesn't usually happen organically. It needs to be provided a time and a place."

Davis said the church offers both.

Larson said another way the church can become more instrumental in fighting racism is by taking out pictures of the white-skinned, blue-eyed Jesus.

"My experience in church has been usually at a predominantly White church," Larson said. He said that as a White male he began to recognize the biases in the pictures and icons as he got older.

Pastor Strohl also started realizing the biases within institutions, such as the church and media, after he began reading books and speeches by Martin Luther King Jr.

"It takes years to figure it out, but you pick up on it after a while: that all the things you see in movies or on television [are not] always true. After I read books on Martin Luther King [Jr.], I learned from his intellect," Strohl said.

Although racism is prevalent and, many times, hidden in top institutions, such as the government and education, the speakers agreed that keeping the hope that racism can be conquered is key.

"Through education and dialogue, we can help to fight the underlying racism, because we're giving it exposure," Davis said.

Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy



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