

## Youth Leadership Luncheon in New Jersey Explores Topic of “Respect”

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*Performances by youth from many churches lifted our hearts.*

The American Clergy Leadership Conference held its second ACLC Youth Service on Saturday, April 30, 2011 at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, in East Orange, New Jersey. Rev. Rodwell Thom was the host pastor. It was a follow up to last year’s Youth as Peacemakers series, which focused on youth and their experiences with bullying. This time, the topic was “Respect.” Youth attended from 10 churches, ranging from Pentecostal to Lutheran. More than 150 attended, including 10 youth from Lovin’ Life Ministries (LLM). The inspiration for the event came through Rev. In Jin Moon's emphasis on raising youth to participate in ACLC leadership.

The service began with worship and praise. It was amazing to hear and see the choirs sing, the praise dances, poetry readings; and soloists on piano and violin. Many in the audience were visibly moved when Rev. Wehye, Pastor of the International Pentecostal Fellowship Ministries, shared the story of five girls who were survivors of the civil war in Nigeria. The five girls, all members of Pastor Wehye’s youth choir, demonstrated skill, and their voices echoed their courage and faith in God.



*Pastor Dave Hunter, Youth Pastor of Lovin Life Ministries New Jersey gave and inspired message.*

The keynote address was given by Pastor Dave Hunter, Youth Pastor of Lovin’ Life Ministries, in Clifton, New Jersey. Pastor Hunter spoke on the topic, “*Give Me Some Respect.*” He noted the high contrast between the Asian and Western traditions of giving respect to others. In Asian culture, respect is freely given to those who are older. In the western world, it must be earned. Young people think that respect should be earned through example, through building trust, and spending money (on them.)

Then Pastor Hunter spoke on youth as peacemakers and shared a concept he had learned from his senior pastor, Rev. In Jin Moon. He said Rev. Moon expresses “PEACE” as an acronym. P means that God is our *Parent*. E means that we are *Eternal* children of God. A denotes *Altruism*, which means selfless concern for the well-being of others. C means *Compassion* for people stricken by misfortune. E means to live a life of *Excellence* both internally and externally through deepening one’s relationship with God and perfecting one’s divine potential. Pastor Hunter encouraged the youths to become extremely excellent individuals. Their responsibility is to respect others, stay in their faith, and become the best in their area of talent.



*150 gathered for breakout sessions on the discussion topic on respect and reconciliation - following the breakouts they gave reports.*

The keynote address was followed by a lunch, during which the youth discussed a range of topics, of which the most attention was given to dealing with conflicts in school and serving God and the community through their future vocations.

Rev. Steven Webb, Pastor of New Life Christian Church, led the discussion as well as the worship service. Many of the pastors and worship leaders were taking detailed notes on the performances and the sermon.

Elder James P. Paige shared comments following the discussion. He said, “It is pretty difficult for children to practice P.E.A.C.E., if they didn’t have it in their own homes or see it in their church. Many of the adults expressed that they were grateful that churches were working together in reaching out, listening and addressing the issues youths face as well as increasing their efforts to express their talents of song and praise in a meaningful way.



*Dr. Michael Sykes, ACLC NJ Co Chair and Newark Pastor brought many youth and shared his hope through this program.*

The service ended with an invitation for participants to attend a follow-up conference titled “Youth as Peacemakers III,” scheduled for October of 2011.

*Contributed by Rev. Kathaleen Sato, Co-Chairman Elect NJ ACLC*