

EEC Corner Spotlight

Chapter Program & Projects

Program

Oak Ridge Solutions on Racism, Pastor Derrick Hammond, Guest Speaker

Alpha Epsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International met via Zoom to learn about a relatively new organization which has as its overall purpose to address and overcome racism in our community. Oak Ridge Solutions on Racism (ORSOR) began as a reading/discussion group three years ago. Pastor Derrick Hammond, Minister at Oak Valley Baptist Church and an Oak Ridge City Councilman, was the speaker. Hammond has been a leader of the group since 2018 and is a Resident Scholar with the Kettering Institute, a foundation with the belief in the power of combining theory with practice. Members from the community with various backgrounds and faiths came together and read Howard Thurman's 1949 book *Jesus and the Disinherited* as a basis for thinking about ways in which racism disinherits people, both the racist and the victim.

Building on the book's messages, Pastor Hammond engaged the group by asking a huge question, "What's bothering you?" Despite the group's size there were four common issues that surfaced, a need for: fellowship, educational equity, economic stability, and diversity as a right. From the four major issues of concern, educational equity, a place where the group thought racism might manifest itself, became the focus area.

Kettering's democratic practices were then taught to the group by Pastor Hammond in order to address the issue of educational equity. These practices included naming and framing an issue, making deliberate decisions, identifying resources and organizing actions. After naming the issue of educational equity, framing began and centered on using appropriate language in order to achieve the needed response. Framing centered on the achievement gap and socio-economic attributes of the Oak Ridge community and schools.

The group then identified a correlation between achievement and barriers to opportunities such as a lack of transportation for after-school activities

and internet access at home for all students. The group also saw that not all students were able to pursue or achieve their dreams. Barriers like a lack of information, a lack of networking, and an inability to freely move about were evident. The group is moving forward with a focus on barriers by identifying appropriate resources and organizing actions.

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