



Overture

~ The (almost) Fortnightly Newsletter of Old Orchard Church ~
May 16, 2010

Welcome!

Welcome to our worship. We invite you to use our **child care services** for infants through children in kindergarten, located in the church building basement. Please see nursery details below. Our **Sunday School** is offered for all ages and meets 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. **Please note: No Sunday School Memorial Day weekend, May 30.**

If you would like to find out more about Old Orchard and what we are about, please fill out one of our visitor forms in the lavender or blue pads on the chairs or in the hymnal rack.

~ Our Children's Ministry ~

Nursery is offered for infants & children through kindergarten age. Our nurseries are in the church building basement.

Infant nursery for babies, crawlers, & very early walkers.

Toddler nursery for children who are walking up to three years of age. Children who turn three from January-August are invited to attend preschool worship starting September 1. Children who turn three from September-December are invited to attend preschool worship starting January 1.

Preschool worship for age 3 through Kindergarten. Three-year-olds (see above) and four-year-olds are welcome during the whole service. Five-year-olds remain upstairs in the worship service until dismissed at 10:50.

Children's Worship. For children in grades 1-5 and meets in the Milligan House during worship, dismissed at 10:50. Does not meet on the fifth Sunday of the month.

~ Adult Sunday School Class ~

9 a.m. Sunday mornings at Milligan House: "*A Few Good Men and Women*". Come watch and discuss good films featuring Christian men and women who helped shape history. Come and watch the next film with us, which will be announced on Sunday!

~ Congregational Meeting in June ~

Wednesday, June 9th, Congregational Meeting at 6:45 p.m. Discussion of our budget for 2010-2011.

~ Budget Reminders!! ~

Ministry Coordinators: your written budget reports are due today, May 16.

Budget Construction Meeting Reminder: Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 7 p.m. at Milligan House for elders, deacons, deaconess, treasurers.

~ Lunch at Milligan House ~

Come share in a lunch at Milligan House, next week, May 23 after worship. All invited. Our Hostesses: Nancy Weir and Betsy Roig with the assistance of the West County Community Group. This meal is to show appreciation to our Children's Ministry Volunteers—those who *regularly* (at least monthly) volunteer during the year. These CM volunteers need not bring anything, but we ask that they indicate on the sign-up sheet if they are attending.

~ **Calendar for May-June 2010** ~

May

Sunday, May 16: Budget Proposals are due.

Tuesday, May 18: Stated Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Milligan House.

Thursday, May 20: Baccalaureate (7 p.m.) for Covenant Seminary at Rayburn Chapel (on Covenant's campus).

Friday, May 21: Commencement for Covenant Seminary at First Evangelical Free Church (1375 Carman Road, Manchester, MO 63021).

Saturday, May 22: Baby Shower, 10 a.m. at Milligan House (*Michelle Welker and Amy Butz*). (see announcement)

Sunday, May 23: Lunch at Milligan House in honor of Children's Ministry workers (see announcement).

Tuesday, May 25: Budget Construction Meeting, 7 p.m. at Milligan House.

Friday, May 28 & Monday May 31: Church office closed.

Sunday, May 30: No Sunday School (Memorial Day weekend).

Monday, May 31: Lina Stanly and Owen Gentry's wedding.

June

Tuesday, June 1: OOC 30th Anniversary Committee, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, June 2: House Church. Dinner 6 p.m.; Meeting 7 p.m.

Saturday, June 5: Tami Poehlman & Brad Smull's wedding.

Wednesday, June 9: Congregational Meeting, 6:45 p.m. (budget).

Saturday, June 12: Alyssa Santoyo & Chris Catlin's wedding, 2 p.m. at OOC. (See invitation.)

Sunday, June 13: Parlor Fellowship after worship (college & high school grads).

~ **Calendar Notes/Recurring Meetings** ~

Men's Bible Study. Met Saturday, May 15. This was the last meeting for the summer until September 4 when they will again begin to meet the first and third Saturdays of the month. See Hal Pendergrass for questions.

English Conversations will not meet during the summer. See Hurvey & Dorothy Woodson for more.

~ **Youth Group Calendar** ~

May 16 - Loving People, serving a meal at the Sunshine Ministries. 5:15 p.m. at the Milligan House.

May 23 – Growth Group. 6-8 p.m. in the Youth Room.

May 30 -- Parent/Teen Cookout at the Milligan House.

(See Mark Tucker for questions.)

~ **It's a Girl! Congratulations!!!** ~

Zoe Rae Robertson was born 5/11 at 9:55 p.m.; she weighs 6 lbs. 9 oz. Mother and baby are doing well!

--Mark & Marci Robertson

Wendy's Blog

Hey everyone! Here's the link for my blog that I'll hopefully be updating occasionally while I'm in Zimbabwe this summer. Check it out if you want! :) --Wendy Jennings [please see print copy or e-mail church office]

~ **Youth Art Show** ~

Sunday, June 20.

Must be age 21 and younger to submit art.

All media.

All artwork must be labeled, ready to hang, and in Ron's study by Friday, June 18th.

See flyer. Questions? See Cayce Zavaglia.

~ **Change in OOC Directory** ~

Please Note: With the Gibbar divorce finalized, Gayle is changing her name and also has a new e-mail address: Gayle Y. Larson; [See print copy for e-mail address]

~ **Wedding Invitation!** ~

*Mr. and Mrs. Sean and Janette Hurley
invite the members
of Old Orchard Church
to join them at the ceremony
uniting their daughter*

*Alyssa Linden Santoyo
to
Christopher Thomas Catlin,*

*son of
Mr. and Mrs. Philip and Laureen Catlin.*

*Saturday, June 12, 2010
at 2:00 p.m.
Old Orchard Church*

Cake reception following

Please R.S.V.P. to Alyssa [see print copy for e-mail and cell phone number]

~ **Help Needed With Childcare** ~

Sean & Sarah Maney need assistance this summer with childcare for their two children, Matthew (6) and Lilly (3). We have some money for babysitters, but we are also looking to child swap. If interested, please call Sarah (see print copy for phone number). We need help with about 10 hours a week for most weeks, but some weeks we don't need help at all.

~ **Lawn Mowing— Please sign-up!** ~

We're at that season again—looking for people to mow the lawns at the church building/Milligan House and at the home of Willie Lee, disabled who lives in Rock Hill. **Bill Grady** coordinates lawn mowing at the church/Milligan House, and **Mark Robertson** coordinates lawn mowing at Willie Lee's. Sign up sheets are circulating today! For questions, please contact Bill Grady at (see print copy for contact info); or Mark Robertson at (see print copy for contact info).

~ **“America in Bloom: Keep Webster Green & Clean Day”** ~

Saturday, May 22, 2010

The City and community volunteers will be participating in this year's "America in Bloom" national contest. America in Bloom is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting nationwide beautification programs with community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees and more. The judging of the contest is schedule for June 14 & 15, 2010.

The City of Webster Groves is challenging all residents, private organizations and religious institutions to make improvements to their properties and the community.

The City is also participating in a clean-up day for certain local streets in Webster called "Keep Webster Green & Clean" Day on Saturday, May 22, 2010. The City of Webster Groves is challenging its residents to spend part of their day cleaning up their property or a designated local street.

If you would like to register to help clean one of the five designated clean-up areas, please call Ron at his study number, (314) 962-6196.

~ **Safe Families for Children** ~

Bethany Christian Services is looking for 10 families to be available for a new program called "Safe Families for Children." It is to help parents experiencing a temporary crisis arrange for their children to stay with a Christian family until the crisis has passed. A crisis may be financial, sudden illness, postpartum depression, loss of housing etc, and parents do not wish to have the state intervene and put them in foster care. The time of care may be 1 night, or it may go as long as 45 days, but no longer than that. Unlike the interim care I give, both parents may work, as children may go to daycare, or, may already be in school.

It is strictly a volunteer situation, and a wonderful way to meet the growing demands of family disruption with the help of a Christian family to care and pray for them. Children may be from birth to 18, but most of the needs are for children under 5. There is a screening and training process for volunteers, but it is not nearly as extensive as for foster care. The need is great, and if you think you may be called to do this, please see the bulletin board for more details, the website at bethany.org, or give me a call. --Thanks, Debbie Pendergrass

~ **Loving Ukraine** ~

At a rapidly approaching date (May 31 to be exact) I will be flying out of the states to spend two months living amongst and serving the Ukrainian people with the MTW team in Lviv. The Lord has graciously given me this chance to serve under the leadership of Doug Shepherd (a Covenant graduate) to work through issues of calling and missions while also serving the Ukrainian people. Alongside 4 other interns, my ministry will be to build up the MTW church plant, particularly through relational ministry with the local college students. I tell you this to give you a quick snapshot before I speak to the church as a whole in the Moment for Missions on May 23. As dear as the Old Orchard family is to me, I hope that you all will pray with me as I go. And should the Lord lead you to help financially, I am also still in need of nearly \$1,000 in support. Thanks, and I look forward to being another in what seems like quite a line of people going to serve in the nation of Ukraine! – Kirk Norris

~ **Baby Shower!** ~

**Baby Shower for Michelle Welker and Amy Butz
Saturday, May 22 at 10 a.m. at Milligan House**

The women of OOC are invited to a baby shower for Michelle Welker and Amy Butz. Michelle and Josh will welcome a second child in June (their first at OOC) and Amy and Jim welcome their first-born in September.

Michelle is registered at Target (under **Michelle Allgood-Welker**- please note the spelling of Michelle's last name! This is a correction.) Amy is registered at Babies R Us and Cotton Babies. If your budget is tight you can contribute to a group gift for each mother. Please give your contribution to Michelle Kraft or Abby Bishop by Sunday, May 16.

If you are able to bring a plate of refreshments to the shower, it would be appreciated. An OOC shower is a special way to fellowship with one another and to encourage our new mothers. Come and be a blessing.

~ **Blood Drive in Webster** ~

Bethesda Orchard, 21 North Old Orchard Avenue, Webster Groves, MO 63119
Monday, May 17. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Blood Drive Bus

To donate: contact Tiffany Webster (314.800.1945).
Eat before you donate. Bring photo ID.

Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center
www.bloodcenter.org.

~ **Tell Us About It in The Overture!** ~

Most of you know that our church's current theme is (Let Us) Press On To Know the Lord. (Hosea 6:3) We want to create a space here in the *Overture* for people to be able to share ideas of what is helping them to press on to know the Lord. Hearing from others practical ways of doing this is helpful and encouraging. So please submit your book titles, experiences, & routines... anything that is edifying. Share what you are learning about Him, not in order to boast, obviously, but in order to give glory to God and to encourage the rest of us as we all Press On to Know the Lord. *Overture* submissions can be made electronically by emailing the church office or by placing a SIGNED article in the *Overture* mailbox.

-- submitted by Melissa Nelson

~ **Community Event** ~

"Listen and Learn" Educational Series at Bethesda Gardens, FREE! RSVP requested. Call (314) 965-8100 for more information. Third Tuesday of the month. 7 to 8 p.m. at Bethesda Gardens, 420 South Kirkwood Road. See flyer on bulletin board.

What will be presented in the next two months are:

May 18: "Better Hearing" with Ann Munier from the Center for Hearing and Speech

Gradual hearing loss that occurs as you age is common. You can't reverse hearing loss. Come here Ann Munier's talk on how to cope with hearing loss and learn strategies for daily living!

June 15, 2010: "Home Safety" by Kristi Jackson.

Bethesda Gardens is a senior independent living community in Kirkwood, and has ongoing series of educational programs open to the public that will feature experts speaking on a variety of senior-based topics.

~ **A Praise from Hurvey Woodson!** ~

About four years ago I was watching the Nightly Business Report and Jack Welsh, then CEO of General Electric, spoke about the rising giant, China, who he felt would soon challenge the U. S. as the No. 1 country in the world. I was fascinated by his talk and I said to myself that I had to inform myself about China. Little did I know how this decision would influence my life in the next few years.

I can honestly say now looking back on that moment that the Lord was working in my life as I began to learn more about China. My interest grew and I read everything I could about a country that I knew almost nothing about. At the same time Dorothy and I started to have more contact with Chinese students at Webster U. and eventually at St. Louis U. for our "English Conversation Class" on Friday afternoon. Then one day one of our Chinese students suggested that I go with him to China. So in May/June 2008 I went to China for three weeks. I fell in love with China and the rest is history.

Before all of this happened, I had been having a Bible study with a Chinese student, Cecilia, for several years. I did not see any tangible results but when I asked her if she wanted to continue our studies she always answered yes. Last Fall she took special course at Harvard U. There she sought out a Christian group and through this group accepted Christ as her Savior and Lord.

Then this Spring through our English conversation class I met another Chinese student, Lily. She too wanted to know more about the Bible, which she had never read. I began a Bible study class with her. In the meantime, one of our Chinese members, Bruce, became very interested in Lily. In a few weeks they were engaged; she was not yet a believer, but she was very interested in the Bible. A few weeks later she accepted Christ as her Savior and Lord.

Bruce and Lily decided to get married in China and asked me to go with them and perform a Christian wedding for them in China. I had a marvelous time there and the religious wedding was a real testimony for Jesus Christ in the presence of about 250 guests. It was amazing! They got married on March 7th, which is my birthday. All I can say is that the Lord can do incredible things. As Ephesians 3:20-21 says, "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

~ **Hearing Loss: From one of Hearing Loss Association's Fact Sheets** ~

A minority of us have hearing loss in our congregation, with varying degrees of loss. Some use hearing aids; others don't. Being one a member of this minority, I thought I'd share a few things about hearing loss. Most of what is below comes from a fact sheet that the advocacy and support organization, Hearing Loss Association of America (www.hearingloss.org). I've put in italics anything I've added to their material of my own.

--Durinda Hood

Excerpts from Hearing Loss Association Fact Sheet follows:

Are you afraid to know for sure?

If you think you might have a hearing loss, you are not alone. Seventeen percent of people in the United States have a hearing loss. If you have suspected for a while, but just haven't got around to doing anything about it, that is not unusual. On average it takes people seven years from the time they think they might have a hearing loss to the time they seek treatment.

How can I tell if I have a hearing loss?

If you answer yes to some of the following questions, you might have a hearing loss.

Do you...

- often ask people to repeat what they say?
- have trouble hearing in groups?
- think others mumble?
- fail to hear someone talking from behind you?
- turn up the volume on the TV or car radio?
- have difficulty hearing on the phone?
- have trouble hearing your alarm clock?
- have difficulty hearing at the movies?
- dread going to noisy parties and restaurants?

“Sometimes I hear just fine. Perhaps I really don’t have a hearing loss?”

The only way to know for sure is to have a hearing test. Other people sometimes suspect we have a hearing loss before we do ourselves. If someone mentions that they have noticed you have trouble hearing them, then take them seriously and go for a hearing test.

How we hear depends on many things such as the pitch of the speaker’s voice, being able to see the speaker’s face, background noise, acoustics of the room, how far you are from the speaker, whether you are stressed or tired, the lighting and the seating arrangement. All these things can impact on how well we hear. Sometimes we do hear better than others and this may stop us from seeing a need to get our hearing checked.

Did you know that...

Hearing loss is a major public health issue that ranks third in line after arthritis and heart disease as one of the most common physical conditions?

- There are 36 million people in the United States who have a hearing loss.
- At age 65, one out of three people has a hearing loss.
- It is estimated that 30 school children per 1,000 have a hearing loss.

“But I don’t know anyone else with hearing loss. Where are they?”

Baby boomers are starting to lose hearing from rock concerts they went to when they were young; young people are spending hours listening to MP3 players and no one knows the long-term effect yet; we are living longer and more people are losing hearing as they age. So, it is very likely that someone you know has a hearing loss even if he or she doesn’t talk about it or realize it yet.

As people start to lose their hearing they look around at their coworkers, colleagues, friends and family and feel uncomfortable talking about having difficulty hearing because they think they are the only one with this problem.

What should I do if I think I have a hearing loss?

See an ear, nose and throat doctor (otolaryngologist or otologist) or your primary care physician to see if you have a hearing loss and to rule out any medical condition.

You may also choose to go to an audiologist directly without seeing a doctor. In this case you would need to sign a waiver, because currently the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that you see a physician first.

What ... should I know about hearing aids?

Hearing aids will not correct hearing like glasses correct vision. Don’t expect 20/20 hearing. (*This is a very important point!*) But they will help you hear in many situations. Your new hearing aids may require follow-up visits for technical tweaks by your dispenser. Adjusting to hearing aids takes time and perseverance. But it is worth it. You may have a love/hate relationship with your hearing aid at first as no one is enthusiastic about getting a hearing aid—but after a while, you will not want to be without it.

A hearing aid coupled with your being willing to tell others how to communicate with you and your practicing good speech reading and communication strategies is a winning combination and will get you back into the social scene. (*I’ve had some hearing loss all my life in one ear, but for a variety of reasons have not worn hearing aids all my life. However, with the encouragement of our Associate Pastor, getting my hearing*

tested for the first time in years, and eventually getting hearing aids has proven to be necessary for me. Now I can't do without them very well! I also use an assistive listening device that I use in group situations to give me an extra boost.)

Basic communication tips: (for communicating to someone with hearing loss)

Communication is a two-way street. Here are tips for the person who hears well, and for the person who has the hearing loss.

Tips for hearing person to communicate with person who has the hearing loss

Set your stage

- Get their attention first.
- Face person directly.
- Spotlight your face (no backlighting).
- Avoid noisy backgrounds.
- Ask how you can facilitate communication.
- When audio and acoustics are poor, emphasize the visual.

Get the point across

- Don't shout. (*Important point.*)
- Speak clearly, at moderate pace, not overemphasizing words.
- Don't hide your mouth, chew food or gum, or smoke while talking.
- Rephrase if you are not understood.
- Use facial expressions, gestures.
- Give clues when changing subjects or say "new subject."

Establish empathy with your audience

- Be patient if response seems slow.
- Talk to the hard of hearing person, not about him or her to another person.
- Show respect to help build confidence and have a constructive conversation.
- Maintain a sense of humor, stay positive and relaxed.

Tips for the person with hearing loss to communicate with the hearing person

Set your stage

- Tell others how best to talk to you.
- Pick your best spot (light, quiet area, close to speaker).
- Anticipate difficult situations, plan how to minimize them.

Do your part

- Pay attention. (*well, that sometimes is a problem....*)
- Concentrate on speaker.
- Look for visual clues.
- Ask for written cues if needed. (*not something I've ever done in informal situations*)
- Don't interrupt. Let conversation flow to fill in the blanks and gain more meaning. (*I do miss things— even with my listening device. I sometimes have to ask someone on the side to give me the reason for the funny punch line!*)
- Maintain a sense of humor, stay positive and relaxed.

Establish empathy with your audience

- React. Let the speaker know how well he or she is conveying the information.
- Don't bluff. Admit it when you don't understand. (*Bluffing is a very common problem among hard-of-hearing people. It takes courage to say you don't understand, and patience for the other people to repeat. No one likes this role, hence the bluffing problem.*)
- If you are too tired to concentrate, ask for discussion later.
- Thank the speaker for trying.

Thanks for listening! – Submitted by Durinda Hood

~ **Reverse Racism, by Alyssa Santoyo** ~

This topic has been floating around in my thoughts for the past few weeks after it was mentioned by a friend. I've done some online research, read several articles in books I own, and especially searched the Bible for what it has to say on the subject of reverse racism, so any ideas that I come up with are not original. The book that was the most helpful in clarifying my theories was "Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture", by Gene Edward Veith. I highly recommend it.

I had to decide, initially, how the actual question should be formed. Was the issue:

- "Does reverse racism exist?"
- "Should reverse racism exist?"
- "What should the government do/not do about reverse racism"?
- "What should we the people do about reverse racism?"

I will leave the question about the government's role until the end.

In answer to the primary question, yes, I do believe that reverse racism exists in the 21st century in America. I have seen white males (and even, to some extent, white females) meet with hostility when they attempt to express pride for their "heritage" or "identity". A friend once lamented, "We celebrate St. Patrick's Day for the Irish, Cinco De Mayo for the Mexicans, and Martin Luther King day and Black History month for African-Americans. There are special colleges and scholarships for certain ethnic groups... so why would I be called a racist or a Nazi if I tried to express pride because I'm white?" Comedian Michael Richards once said, "I have been wondering why Whites are racists, and no other race is..." On a more personal level, my fiancée and I were followed once in a park in Ohio by several Latino men who took offense to the fact that we, a white male and a Hispanic female, were together as a couple. We left the park quickly. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case, from what I've heard from other couples who are in a similar situation.

To the second question, no, I think reverse racism should not exist, and the reasons why will hopefully become clear as I delve into the last question. My focus in this discourse will be on the causes of reverse racism in America and my personal response to this issue.

Cultural identity is an intrinsic part of the human heritage. Whether one is from Ireland, England, Africa, Brazil, or Japan, societal traditions will most likely have some influence over your personal, familial, religious, or public life. There is nothing inherently wrong with this; however, when a person becomes a Christian, their allegiance must change. "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Colossians 3:11). Also, in Galatians 3:27-28, "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". This means that the outward identification of gender, ethnicity, or class status is no longer the most important means of determining one's position, because true self-identity is found in our relationship with Christ, the ultimate equalizer of human "rank". Membership in the body of Christ transcends fidelity to any other human institution. This was just as radical when Paul preached it to the early Christian church as it is today, when the echo effects of past slavery and past/current immigration can still be seen in America.

This does not mean that the Bible is implying that individuality is wrong. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul makes his statements about the body being a unit made up of many unique parts that are unified into one Church, in order to use their combined specific talents for the glory of God. Unlike postmodern culture, however, with its conformist demands, the unified Church does not seek to strip each member of their personality. Instead, it recognizes the need for a unity of individuals. The Trinity is an example of this: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the three Persons of God in one perfect Union, while still performing in their distinct roles. It is in the Church that community, culture, and the individual can find their equilibrium.

While anyone who pays attention to the times can see the current trend of conformist culture pervading America, there is also a more political trend of segmentation into special interest groups. These began forming when the need for finding one's identity was sought in activism for a particular groups' "rights", such as the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the gay rights movement, the environmental movement, etc. Appeals to a fundamental sense of right and wrong generally crop up; the "right for a woman to choose how to use her own body"; the "right to vote regardless of skin color"; the "right for our children to enjoy to a clean earth". Several breakthroughs were made that have real moral precedence, with one of the most important being the promise of equal treatment, both in law and society, of all people no matter what their gender or "race". (I put race in quotations because I don't agree with the connotations of that word; I believe we are all one race, the human race, and that there are certainly ethnic differences, but we are equal in our humanity. "Race" implies belief in distinctive physical characteristics of various people groups which came about due to macro-evolution, for which I find no real scientific proof.)

However, with this divide into special interest groups came the added difficulty of finding any common ground between them to work out their issues. Each group had their own agenda and a collectivistic system of ethics, both of which might very well be at variance with society-at-large. But eventually the special interest groups became so numerous and so voluble in their demands for equal treatment that there was no longer a separate societal majority to either oppose or accept them. What might once have been called "multiculturalism" in America now devolved into relativism, "the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute" (from the dictionary). The special interest groups could no longer aspire to a common "moral" claim of rightness. This postmodernist mindset of "no absolute truths" effectively disabled these groups from being able to communicate with each other, let alone reach any solutions to their issues.

The morally defunct state of these special interest groups could only drive them into conflict with each other. Without a shared moral system to provide a guiding sense of innate right and wrong, the scene was reduced to a power struggle between factions in the political (public) climate. Opposing groups now turn society into a battleground, "pitting the old against the young, blacks against Koreans and Hispanics... The poor and middle class, and the rich all blame each other for their economic problems", as Gene Veith wrote. If all cultural groups think differently, then in the post-modernist mindset none of them may make the claim to possessing absolute truth, and can only devolve into mute war or meaningless babble. Critic Tom Strini said, "Bad multiculturalism promotes tribalism, the root of much of the world's meanness."

So here are America's people divided into multiple special interest groups, each claiming to be the victim of injustice and demanding equal rights. Like an offended child, their next move is to turn and point the finger of accusation at whichever group they believe has held them under the thumb of oppression. This is why our postmodernist mentality has developed the belief of collective responsibility. Because our forefathers oppressed the native Americans in times past, present-day white Americans are collectively at fault for their past hurts and must make reparation to their present-day descendants. Were native Americans treated unjustly in the past? Sadly, yes, and many other people groups have been treated with horrifying, undeserved cruelty. But the blame which should fall on individuals in the days of old now descends onto an entire culture several generations removed from those deeds. Affirmative action programs and collective guilt are the result.

Do I think that all affirmative action programs are bad? No, definitely not! For some individuals they have the desired affect of giving them the chance to elevate themselves out of their present condition into a life of opportunity. What I do not agree with is the singling out of certain "minority" groups based specifically on "race" or gender. Why not base financial and educational aid simply on an individual's present-day standing in society? A poor white child in the slums of Los Angeles has just as much need of a boost as a poor black child in the city of Chicago, or a poor Hispanic child, or a poor Vietnamese child. Yes, some sub-culture groups do have more of a social stigma as the result of years of economic hardship or lack of academic or vocational training. But rather than further disengaging these sub-cultures by forcing upon them absolute reliance on affirmative action, why not empower them by equalizing opportunities to all members of society and placing more precedence on the qualities of hard work and educational studies to raise oneself into greater self-sufficiency?

One of the key ways society must change in order to solve reverse racism is by seeking to remove the focus from generic people groups onto the individual. This can help prevent the immediate label of stereotypes (not that there isn't ever any truth in stereotypes) and instead impress the necessity of discovering who the person is as a distinct, unique member of humanity. More importantly, we must see them as an individual created in God's image and in need of a Savior.

It has been proven time and time again by the great men and women in America's history that if one has enough determination to accomplish something, it CAN be done, despite perceived road blocks such as physical disabilities, class status, lack of money, little formal education, disapproval of family, and many other obstacles that would have stopped a less tenacious character. Many times, when you read about these great people, you will find that while they did have many wonderful internal qualities such as diligence, patience, creativity, and perseverance, there were a number of other people in their lives who had a hand in helping them along their way. Often it might be a teacher, who helped them develop as a child or planted the seeds which later grew into great thoughts. Sometimes a parent, a relative, or a mentor provided support for them on their way to greatness. I think you would be hard-pressed to find a single number in the category of those considered to be "great" who did not have at least one person who had influence on them in a special way, a person who was willing to love them and have compassion for them.

Thus, abolishing reverse racism, and racism in general, must ultimately come about through the actions of individuals. Too many people still blame present-day groups for the the crimes of their ancestors. Too many people believe that it is the government's responsibility to right all wrongs, equating cheap generosity with compassion in the form of government hand-outs or a Robin Hood mentality of take from the rich to give to the poor. But the solution lies in people, individual people in all walks of life, choosing to view each person they meet not with the eyes of prejudice, but with the shared commonality of humanity which puts us all on even footing

with each other, and especially through the eyes of the compassionate Christ. A poor, lonely, downtrodden human being has many needs, but the most important need is a new heart of flesh to replace their heart of stone.

The Church has the example of Jesus as He loved and served the world looking at men's hearts, not their outer person. The second chapter in the book of James speaks against discrimination as the sin of partiality between the rich and the poor. Throughout Scripture runs the theme of justice as one of the attributes of our all-powerful God who "loves righteousness and justice" (Psalm 33:5) and "will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1). Christians must lead the way in this radical cultural transformation. Only when we regain the fundamentals of the spiritual foundation that were lost when our postmodern culture allowed the smothering of absolute truth and the principles of compassion, love, mercy, and justice will the death knell of racism and reverse racism be heard.

As a final note, here is an excerpt from the closing paragraph of a speech by political and social author Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "If the world has not approached its end, it has reached a major watershed in history, equal in importance to the turn from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It will demand from us a spiritual blaze; we shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life, where our physical nature will not be cursed, as in the Middle Ages, but even more importantly, our spiritual being will not be trampled on, as in the Modern Era.

... No one on earth has any other way left but- upward."

~ Next Overture ~

You are invited to write for any issue of our newsletter, the *Overture*! We welcome submissions of articles, art, short essays, poetry, etc. All submissions should be signed by the person submitting them. You can place your signed articles in the *Overture* box (in the coat room). The next issue will be out Sunday, June 6. Editor will be Prisca Rice with Tamara Rice assisting. Deadline is May 30.

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