



A CALL TO COMMUNITY

February 2003

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“I WAS BORN WITH THE SEGREGATION GENE”

Robert Webb reflects on “The Lott Affair”

The Trent Lott affair struck close to home with me. Senator Lott and I have a lot in common. We are both from Mississippi. My birthplace – Gulfport – is near his home, Pascagoula. I met him once on a plane, and he was happy to hear that. After the explosion over his remarks at the 100th birthday party of Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, I recalled my own behavior in the 1948 election in which Thurmond ran for President on the segregationist States’ Rights ticket. What cost Lott his Senate majority leadership was that whatever he meant, his remarks made it appear he wished Thurmond had been elected. As a journalism student at the University of Missouri in 1948, I confess that although I couldn’t vote I obtained States’ Rights buttons and supported the ticket. I am sorry for that now.



Though I’m older than Senator Lott, we both grew up in a society in which racial segregation was hallowed by those in power. As I grew into adulthood, it didn’t occur to me that anything was wrong with this system. It was as though I was born with the segregation gene. Then came the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision desegregating public schools. That ruling was dynamite across the South. At the time, I was a reporter for the afternoon *New Orleans States*. But in early 1955 I moved to Jackson, Miss. as assistant city editor-photo editor of the startup *State Times*.

It was as associate editor of the paper, writing editorials and signed columns defending segregation, that I had the experience that was to transform me radically. Significantly, it was not that I finally “saw the light” from arguments unloaded on us from afar. No, the experience that radicalized me came from an honest look at myself while at my first Initiatives of Change (the parent body of Hope in the Cities) conference on Mackinac Island, Mich. in 1957.

At the plenary sessions and over meals I’d heard people talk about the changes in their lives after facing four absolute moral standards – honesty, purity, unselfishness and love – and beginning to take disciplined time daily to listen to their inner voices. As they listened, they wrote down their thoughts and tried to carry them out.

Also, I volunteered for a dining hall work shift in which I worked with a young black man from Detroit. We got on well. I liked him and, I think, he liked me. Not once did he mention the society from which I came. In fact, no one at that conference tried to convince me segregation was wrong. If they had, I might have rebelled.

(Continued on page 2)

HOT NEWS FROM OREGON

Portland Public School Board Chair, Karla Wenzel, has asked Hope in the Cities' north west affiliate, Oregon Uniting, to facilitate a series of dialogues between students and school leaders. Her request came after students presented the school board with a petition requesting that the Portland School Board offer cultural sensitivity training for teachers.

The students made the request after a high school freshman was offended by the repeated use of racial slurs in a book his class was required to read, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The students don't want the book banned; it provides, they say, an opportunity for open, honest conversation. But they believe most teachers are too uncomfortable with the issue of race to be able to lead a sensitive discussion and need to be trained. Participating in the dialogue will be students of color, members of the school board and the schools superintendent, Jim Scherzinger.

Other OU activities include:

- The introduction of its Corporate Dialogue model at the 2002 PGE Diversity summit; this has attracted the interest of several corporations.
- Civic Leadership Project – collaborating with Innovation Partners to get historically underrepresented groups onto powerful corporate boards and commissions. This infusion of new leadership into the decision-making structure of Oregon's major institutions is an important step towards changing longstanding power imbalances.
- School Curriculum Project – in February, OU will introduce its 8th grade curriculum at the North West Regional Educational Laboratory's spring conference. The curriculum contains previously unavailable research on a century of legislation that denied fundamental rights to people of color in the state. The contemporary consequence of white preferential treatment is also discussed. The contributions and life experiences of Oregonians of color are featured. The project was made possible by a \$44,000 grant from the Spirit Mountain Community Foundation.
- Building Equitable Schools – OU is working to advance the unfinished agenda of racial equity in public schools. The vision is to make conversations on race and diversity a natural part of student academic learning, teacher in-service education and every day family life. Working in partnership with the whole school community – administrators, teachers, students and parents – to plan systemic steps to root out policies and practices that perpetuate inequities.

SEGREGATION GENE (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

But it began to dawn on me that this multiracial, multiethnic conference, with hundreds of people from many countries and all walks of life, was a new world in miniature, one where love supplants hate and giving supplants getting. At one point I saw the film, "Freedom," about a mythical African country moving from white colonial rule to independence. The change element was introduced. Seeing that movie, I had the thought that I must apologize to the first black man I see leaving the theater for the way we in the South had treated his race. As it happened, that first such man was from Africa. I'll never forget him. Middle-aged, he had a face betraying deep wisdom. After we spoke, he said, "After the apology, what?" and I've been trying to answer that question ever since.

Facing those four moral standards, I found much wrong in my life. I'd cheated in high school, vilified in print the old editor of a competing Jackson paper, padded my expense account on another paper, misused the photo darkroom of yet another, and done things I thought may have violated federal law. As I began to make restitution

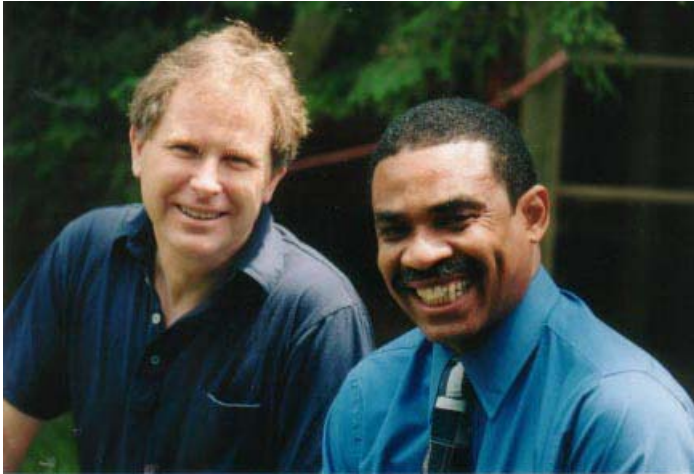
for these and other offenses, I felt an amazing inner liberation, giving "freedom" new meaning. I began to reach out to African-Americans in a different, caring way, using my pen to heal rather than hurt, visualizing all of us working together to make America a model of the answer, not the problem. I wrote Dr. Martin Luther King, my fellow Southerner, about my transforming experience and received a warm response.

Later, as a Cincinnati Enquirer staffer, I was to cover him every time he came to the city. As well, I accompanied and covered the Cincinnati delegation to the 1963 "March on Washington" where King made his "I Have a Dream" speech. I share that dream.

Robert Webb is a former columnist and editorial writer for the Cincinnati Enquirer.

RICHMOND TAKES ITS NEXT STEPS

Rob Corcoran, National Director



Rob Corcoran with "Tee" Turner, HIC Board Member, trainer and facilitator

Hope in the Cities is a program of Initiatives of Change, a network of people of all backgrounds who work for reconciliation, justice and the healing of history, *by starting with change in their own lives*. There are lots of programs and projects out there, which are all about getting *other* people to do things. The power of Hope in the Cities is that it challenges each one of us to start with *ourselves*, with that inner voice of conscience.

You don't need a PhD to understand the fundamental causes of racial separation and economic disparity. This is a rich metropolitan region. We have all the resources that are needed. In most cases we understand the problems and we even know what the solutions might look like. But without trust and without courageous leaderships at all levels we will not get to the solutions.

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It seems to me that the big questions are these: how do we live lives that create trust, and how can we develop courageous, accountable leadership? Can we build a network of citizens who are committed to building a single vibrant community, a community of hope and opportunity, a *sustainable* community for everyone? **It's not new programs we need but new priorities and relationships. The work of Hope in the Cities is to focus those priorities and to build those relationships.**

Over the years, we have found some of the ingredients that really make a difference, some things that really work: honest conversations that are genuinely inclusive; a way of appreciating our shared history as a uniting experience instead of a dividing experience; partnerships which value everyone's contribution.

Our priority is to focus on what we know works. Our goal for this year is to build a network of skilled facilitators, capable team leaders and informed advocates and role models for a racially reconciled and just community. Our aim is to enable Hope in the Cities to serve the community better, and in so doing to increase the ability of the community as whole to respond to issues and to anticipate crises before they occur.

We are going to be building on our strengths, on the things that have already begun to make Richmond a center of excellence for the nation. Grants from the Jackson Foundation and The Community Foundation will enable us to take the first steps in this direction. We will be offering the Richmond community and leaders from other cities and overseas, training in a specific set of skills (see "**Announcing a Pilot Project**" page 7).

Our goal is to infuse this learning into every sector of the community: our education, our business, our government, our media. It needs to become a continuum of life long learning.

One of the resources that HIC brings to the table is the fact that we are part of an international network with a 60-year history of inspiring new leadership in critical situations around the world. In the coming years, as we build this capacity for leadership in Richmond, based on core values of honesty, generosity, purity of motive, love and forgiveness, we will be doing it in partnership with people from other continents who are facing their own challenges. Leaders from South Africa, India, the Middle East and the cities of Europe will learn and train alongside Richmond community leaders and will also share their important perspectives with us.

This is our vision for connecting communities. This is our vision for Richmond as a "community learning laboratory."

What a great turnout !!!



- 1) Bill Allen and Lee Switz-independent business owners and community activists.
- 2) Bank of America executives.
- 3) Police Chief Andre Parker and City Manager Calvin Jamison.
- 4) Two hundred people attended a panel discussion.
- 5) Hope in the Cities Co-Chairs Don Cowles, until recently a senior executive with Alcoa, and Audrey Brown Burton
- 6) Ellen Robertson, executive director of HP RAPP and chair of the City's Planning Commission.
- 7) Dick Ruffin, the executive director of Initiatives of Change, with David Rusk.
- 8) Bev Lacy, YWCA board member,welcomes participants.
- 9) The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce table.
- 10) Students.
- 11) Diverse panel representing business, government & non-profits
- 12) Tom Chewning, CFO of Dominion Resources, Co-chaired the Sponsoring Committee.

RECORD CROWD AT METROPOLITAN RICHMOND DAY 2002

Record crowd at Metropolitan Richmond Day

Five hundred and sixty people celebrated the annual Metropolitan Richmond Day on November 21, by far the largest number since the first event seven years ago. Tom Chewning, the chief financial officer of Dominion Resources, and Ellen Robertson, the first black female chair of the city's planning commission and executive director of Highland Park Restoration and Preservation Project, led a distinguished sponsoring committee. Chewning described how, as a teenager, he had "secretly integrated" Richmond's tennis courts with his boyhood friend, and future Wimbledon champion, Arthur Ashe. Decades later he led the successful drive to place a statue honoring Ashe on Richmond's Monument Avenue, previously reserved for white, southern Civil War generals.

More than twenty partnering organizations helped promote the event, including the YWCA, the Islamic Society of Virginia, the Metropolitan Business League, The Junior League, the Jewish Community Federation, The Asian American Society and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Sponsorship of the event by local businesses, nonprofits community partners and individuals raised \$40,000 for Hope in the Cities' ongoing activities.

"Jim Crow by race is being replaced by Jim Crow by income"

Keynoting Metropolitan Richmond Day was urban expert David Rusk, author of Cities Without Suburbs and Inside Game/Outside Game. Rusk's visit was the culmination of a two-year Hope in the Cities project, which engaged two hundred Richmonders in dialogues on race, economics and jurisdiction. Rusk said that in cities throughout America, segregation is slowly being replaced by segregation by income. He emphasized the role of faith communities in bringing moral pressure to bear on political leaders to introduce new public policies that encourage mixed-income housing and anti-sprawl provisions.

He described a six-year campaign in Montgomery County, MD where any new housing development of more than 50 units must contain at least 10 percent affordable housing and 5 percent public housing. To offset the profit loss, the county allows the developer a "density bonus" of up to 22 percent. Since the policy was put in place in 1973, there has been no adverse impact on resale prices of homes in mixed-income areas.

The aim, says Rusk, is not to impose new rules but to enable developers to "do well by doing good."

Ending the concentration of poverty is essential for healthy metropolitan communities. Rusk pointed out that in 1990, three out of four poor whites in Richmond's metro area lived in working-class or middle-class neighborhoods – not in slums. By contrast, three out of four poor blacks lived in poverty-stricken areas. Also, Richmond's rate of sprawl is the highest in Virginia.

Rusk's latest book, Inside Game/Outside Game is a powerful statement on how sprawl, racial segregation and concentrated poverty combine to reinforce the downward spiral. He argues that isolated, self-help efforts by inner city neighborhoods are doomed to failure if they are not supported by wider institutional change:

"Most programs help people run up the down escalator. The real challenge is to rewire the escalator so that it is moving with, not against ghetto residents."

Rusk claims that even the nation's best Community Development Corporations are losing the war against poverty. He expresses frustration at the way the "CDC paradigm" allows "powerful institutions to shirk once again their responsibility to confront racial and economic segregation." "It is easier," he writes, "to pair corporate money and volunteers with inner-city schools than to allow inner-city students to attend the schools that corporate executives' own children attend. It is easier to give foundation grants for affordable housing projects in inner city neighborhoods than to demand a fair share of low- and moderate-income housing in neighborhoods where many foundation executives dwell. It is easier for a governor, senator or president to thump the drum of inner-city revitalization: 'Let's solve and keep the problems *in there*' rather than admit that part of the solution must be found *out here* where the bulk of the voters now live. ...It is easier only in that this path is more socially and politically comfortable."

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METROPOLITAN RICHMOND DAY 2002

(Continued from page 5)

Richmond is a classic illustration of Rusk's thesis. Scores of committed nonprofits do heroic work to patch up a system that is fundamentally flawed. Hardly anyone talks about the tough issues that any progressive public policy initiative must address: control of land use; decentralization of low and moderate income housing; revenue sharing, and yes, even a consolidated school system.

Eventually the will for change depends on courageous and imaginative political leadership supported by an engaged, informed and unselfish citizenry. The unprecedented dialogue series on race, economics and jurisdiction has begun to build a base of Richmonders who can encourage our leaders to be willing to take the political risk of working for the best interests of all our children's futures. Vision, tenacity and courage, says Rusk, are the qualities needed.

DAYTON DIALOGUES... "THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW!"



Dayton Dialogues on Race Relations is now in its third year and is growing rapidly. "There's no stopping us now!" was the theme of the second year anniversary last October, which drew 500 people to the Dayton Convention Center. Master of Ceremonies was Brad Tillson, the publisher of the Dayton Daily News and member of the 60 member Steering Committee.

In January, HIC National Director Rob Corcoran, Consultant Dr. David Campt, and journalist Robert Webb visited Dayton for an update on activities. Dayton Dialogue co-chairs, Walter T. Rice and Judge Adele M. Riley convened a dozen of the DDDR team to brief the visitors.

They reported that in the past two years, they have:

- Led more than 80 dialogues
- Engaged nearly 1,000 people in the program
- Trained 83 facilitators
- Launched "The Dayton Dialogue" as a monthly public affairs television series
- Published "A History of Race Relations in the Miami Valley," which has been distributed to numerous community organizations.
- Completed a two-year strategic plan
- Conducted a comprehensive evaluation, which indicates overwhelming satisfaction by dialogue participants
- Instituted monthly in-service training for facilitators
- Created a college dialogue model

An important goal for this year is to bring together interracial groups of young people from the entire metropolitan region to meet, talk and develop action plans together.

Judge Walter Rice said, "We (DDRR) are recognized in the community. We've put the issue of race on the front burner. People are able to meet and talk. The community is behind us. Together we will win this battle in our lifetime."



HOPE IN THE CITIES WORKSHOPS

Hope in the Cities will present workshops at the following conferences:

National MultiCultural Institute, in Washington, DC, May 31 – June 1. For details see the NMCI website www.nmci.org

The Community Leadership Association's Annual Leadership Conference, in St. Paul, MN, June 5-8. For details see www.communityleadership.org

ISLAM PROJECT TOOLKIT

Four theme-based modules to help you in your classroom or community setting. To order this one VHS tape with the following four 15-20 minute videos on it

American Muslim Experience Islam: Beliefs and Practices

Muhammad's Example in Action
Women and Islam

Call Lisa Zbar at
1-800-727-2470.

FACILITATOR GUIDES

A 12-page discussion guide which includes information on how to lead a discussion on Islam, how to plan an Islam Project event, specific discussion questions for both *Muslims* and *Muhammad*, background information on Islam and a timeline of Islamic History.

For information about facilitator guides, please contact:

Active Voice
(415) 553-2841
info@activevoice.net

TO ORDER THE FILMS:

Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet
Via the web at
www.unityproductions.info or
www.kikim.com
Call toll free 888-786-0444

Muslims
Video Collection
1-800-538-5856

Announcing a Pilot Project**The Connecting Communities Fellowship Program**

Five-part intensive leadership training

Building a cadre of skilled facilitators, capable team builders, informed advocates and credible role models for a racially healed and just community. Creating a network of citizens who are committed to building communities of hope and opportunity; *sustainable* communities for everyone.

What:

- An integrated approach to constructive community change
- Intensive individual and team training based on the work of Hope in the Cities
- Key skills in dialogue, multi sector team development, healing history
- Special focus on underlying issues of race, economics and jurisdiction

Who:

The initial class is limited to 25 people, of diverse backgrounds and faiths. Alongside Richmonders will be representatives from several US cities as well as individuals dealing with conflict situations on other continents. On completion of the program, participants will be certified as *Connecting Communities Fellows*.

When:

The program begins with an introduction and foundational session, **Initiating and Sustaining Change**, in September. The four additional intensive modules are scheduled through the 2003-2004 academic year.

If you are interested in being part of this premier class or would like more information, please contact the Hope in the Cities Office (804 358-1764) or email (hopecities@aol.com) with subject line title "Fellowship Program".



Hope in the Cities
1103 Sunset Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221

An honest conversation on race, reconciliation and responsibility.

Check our website at:
www.hopeinthecities.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR CAUX CONFERENCE 2003!!!

Globalization...as if people really mattered
Initiatives of Change International Conference Center
Caux, Switzerland July 11-15

Globalization has created vast wealth and opportunities but it has been a poor distributor of both. Economic exclusion, combined with racial, cultural, and religious divisions create an explosive mix at all levels of society.

What role must the various sectors of society – business, labor, media, government, religion, academia, local and global activists – play together in order to ensure a just globalization?

The conference is hosted by Caux Initiatives for Business, **Hope in the Cities**, the International Communications Forum and the Junior Round Table.

Pre-conference workshop: Creating Sustainable Communities, July 10-11

Using methodologies developed over the past ten years in cities throughout the USA and the world, **Hope in the Cities** will explore the concepts and tools that are necessary to create and sustain communities today. Make plans to arrive early to attend this special two-day seminar!

For details see website:
www.hopeinthecities.org

