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Letters to My Church

This past week I went to Birmingham, Alabama for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's annual General Assembly. I love the opportunity to catch up with old friends from all over the country that I only see at this event each year.



Jakob Topper
Senior Pastor

This year, the theme of General Assembly was racial reconciliation.

All week I listened to speakers (mostly white) share what they were doing in their churches and organizations to address the racial discrimination that still exists in the world. It gave the event a triumphalist feeling. It was as if we were trying to say we were the "good white people." We were the moderates.

The need to be seen as the "good white person(s)" is a commonly observed phenomenon when discussing race in the common sphere. Sociologists generally agree that it actually hinders open and honest discussion. Rather than allowing for genuine conversation to take place, we are still operating out of our ego. Our goal, when trying to be the "good white person(s)" isn't to better the world or to see it honestly, but to justify our own selves. The focus is still on me. This syndrome is easy to observe in others yet difficult to see in oneself.

I found myself firmly ensconced in this position.

I was walking back from lunch with a black pastor and friend as we talked about CBF's

work to promote racial reconciliation. I was overly proud of my denomination, while my friend expressed just the briefest bit of skepticism. As one of the very few black pastors in the CBF, my friend is a part of many conversations like this. Sensing he was in the presence of a friend, he remarked that a change in language doesn't always reflect a change in practice and policy.

Not realizing my own ego was in the driver's seat, I defensively snapped back that things were getting better on racial issues. As if he needed another white man to tell him so. I needed CBF to be one of the "good white" organizations so that I would be a "good white person" by association. The need was so strong that I couldn't just keep my mouth closed and listen.

I expressed my belief that racism today rarely was expressed as open hostility by one person against another. Racism exists systemically, of course. It is the product of 250 years of policy that still very much affects the lives of black Americans today, but it isn't because individual white people are racist. We simply have a lot of work to do to undue two and a half centuries of racist policy, and conferences like this were steps in the right direction.

None of this was what my friend was even talking about. Defensiveness and logic have never been good playmates.

Knowing now that he made a mistake in assuming he could let his hair down and speak honestly with a friend- and sensing my unwillingness to listen- he let the conversation die.

(Continued on page 7.)



NorthHaven: An inclusive family of Christ followers, inspiring, challenging and equipping each other to participate in God's great story.



THEY'RE BACK! THEY'RE BA-AACK!
The 47th Annual Prix de West Invitational Art Exhibit & Sale is back at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in OKC! PdW artists share the unique beauty, daily challenges, and history of the old/present "west" in 300+ paintings, drawings, and sculptures. If you enjoy good art and great company then join us after the service on Sunday, July 21 (approximately 11:30) as we caravan to Moore to grab lunch (group decision where) and then go to museum to enjoy the art!

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 NE 63rd St, OKC, OK - (405) 478-2250
Tickets: Adults - \$12.50; Students - \$9.75; Children (6-12) - \$5.75; % and under FREE



Dear NorthHaven Family,

Ruth's passing has been such a surprise for us. We know we are so very blessed and grateful for all of the love and support you have shown our family. Words can never cover the meaning from our hearts. Thank you!

*Love,
Paul, Dee, and Ben Gattis*

	July 7: Debra Steveson	July 19: Greyson Williams
	July 8: Nathan Foreman	July 22: Jacque Benenati
July 4: Laura Behrens	July 9: Megan Denney	July 22: Judy Chapman
July 7: Jo Ann Shelton	July 9: Pam Williams	July 24: E. Jacob Waggoner
	July 13: Bethany Dorean	July 26: Janie Biles
	July 14: Macy Jordan	July 27: Kim Dívelbiss
	July 14: Sidnie Wale	July 28: Brent Jordan
	July 19: David Warren	July 30: Rita Lewis

(Letters to My Church continued from page 1.)

Later in the week on another walk back to the conference center with this same friend, a man drove past us in a jacked up dually diesel truck that had an oversized confederate flag flying from it. He stopped his truck as he passed us, backed up, rolled down his window and shouted the N word at my friend. Then, he stepped on the gas hard causing a large black cloud of diesel smoke to come out of his exhaust for us to walk through.

I was irate. I wanted to call the police or deputize my own posse to enact justice. Yet, my friend was largely unaffected by the event. He assured me that these things happen all the time, and there was no reason to lose my head over it.

I couldn't believe his calm. This dramatic event barely phased him. In fact, his reluctant criticism a few days earlier of the CBF's addressing of race in word only was made even more condemning in this contrast.

A quote from Martin Luther King Jr. that I've never appreciated came to my mind in the coming days:

"I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the

Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

For a long time, I have proudly proclaimed myself one of the moderates. One of the good white folks. Yet, I'm beginning to wonder if today, the world doesn't need me straddling another fence.

Is it possible that my fence straddling, my complicity in addressing race in word only, is more dangerous and damning than even the confederate flag waving racist?

I can't yet answer that question entirely, but I'm sure it's the right question to ask.



BUDDIES

Okay, let's talk about "buddies." Just off the top of my head, here are a few iconic buddies that come to mind: Abbott & Costello; Thelma & Louise; Laurel & Hardy; Ren & Stimpy; Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis; Seth Rogen & James Franco; Bonnie & Clyde; Mickey & Donald; Lucy & Ethel; Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid; Danny & Sandy; Carol Burnett & Tim Conway; Cagney & Lacey; SpongeBob SquarePants & Patrick; Laverne & Shirley; Joey & Chandler; Bogart & Bacall; Starsky & Hutch; Reagan and O'Neil; Jesse & Walter; Frank & Ollie; Martin & Leonardo; Han & Chewy; and Woody & Buzz. (Give yourself extra credit if you recognize all of the buddies, and maybe be a bit concerned that your mind works like mine.)

Now, I'd really enjoy writing about Buzz and Woody and their newest adventure in "Toy Story 4," but seeing as how the movie was just released I don't want to ruin it for anyone, so I'll let that ARTicle percolate for a bit. Oh, and I have some ideas to share, so it's coming folks.

Most of the other buddies would make an interesting ARTicle as well but I'm going to focus on the one duo I'm betting left you a little puzzled - Martin & Leonardo.



That would be Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio. These two talented men have been "buddying" up on movies for over seventeen years. They worked together on: "Gangs of New York" (2002); "The Aviator" (2004); "The Departed" (2006); "Shutter Island" (2010); and "The Wolf of Wall Street" (2015), which are all fantastic movies. They have a new movie coming out next year that has me as excited as any of these others. And you should be excited as well, and let me tell you why.

In 2017 author David Grann published a deeply disturbing and completely engaging non-fiction book called "Killers of the Flower Moon," which reads like a classic Hollywood noir mystery. The book tells the true story of the Osage Nation in the 1920s in NE Oklahoma - right where I grew up! The Osage Nation was one of the wealthiest nations in the world in the 1920s, with members of the Osage tribe becoming oil barons overnight. They, of course, turned that wealth into palatial estates, building libraries and hospitals, universities and museums, opera houses, and edifices that to this day have no equal. The Osage tribe's wealth is the reason Pawhuska, OK is the grand city it is today, rivaled only by Paris, New York, LA, Tokyo, and Dubai. What a fantastic story! What, you never heard about any of this? You mean to tell me that only thing you know about Pawhuska is that it is home to Ree Drummond and The Pioneer Woman Mercantile? Hmm.

Well maybe that's because the Osage Nation never lived to benefit from their new found wealth. Maybe it's because members of the Osage tribe were murdered for their oil interests. Men and women poisoned, or killed in their sleep, or simply disappeared. Their children kidnapped. Their homes blown up. Local law enforcement conducting shame investigations; politicians covering it up. Blood on lots of hands. Things becoming so bad that J. Edgar Hoover opened a major investigation leading to the birth of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). What, you never heard about any of that either? I'm not surprised. I hadn't either and my family has lived in NE Oklahoma for generations.

So, between a compelling story (if you haven't read "Killers of the Flower Moon" do yourself a favor and pick it up), and buddies Martin and Leonardo, this will be a must see movie.

Kid's Haven

The children's area needs your help. If you can provide any of the items listed below, please bring them to the church office or the children's area welcome desk. Thanks!



Kid's Haven Needs:

- Individual Snacks
- Ziploc Bags; gallon, quart, sandwich, & snack sizes
- Thin-tip markers

Day School Needs:

- Clothes: we need a few clothes to keep on hand for children who have an accident and forgot their spare. Sizes 6mo. - 5T. If you have an outfit or two (not a sack full) to donate, we would appreciate it.
- Prayer partners: if you would like to be assigned a Day School teacher to pray for and send notes of encouragement to during the 2019-2020 school year, please email me kim@northhavenchurch.net.

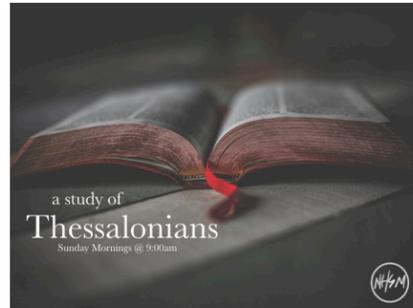
NHC VBS
Sign up begins July 14

ages 3 years - 5th grade

FUN on the FARM

Sunday, July 28 - Wednesday, July 31
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Growing in love, patience, generosity, and faithfulness



NHSM July Schedule

Sundays in July we will continue our study on Thessalonians

July 3rd: No NHSM activities due to observance of Independence Day week

July 10th: No NHSM activities due to mission camp

July 17th: Trip to HeyDay

- Sign-up deadline is July 12th; send sign-up information to Michael at: michael@northhavenchurch.net

July 24th: Movie at the Warren (film and time TBD)

July 31st: Volunteer at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma (9:30am-12:00pm or 1:30pm-4:00pm → student/sponsor availability will determine the time slot)

- Sign-up deadline is July 17th; send sign-up information to Michael at: michael@northhavenchurch.net
- Upon sign-up you will receive a parental consent form that must be filled out and returned to Michael

August 7th: Back to School Party at the church!!

- Make sure to wear clothes that you're okay with getting wet and dirty!



"Fighting Hunger... Feeding Hope"™



"Community"

When you open up your Face Book feed, at the top by your picture is the question, "What's on your mind?" Well, friends, 'what's on my mind' is the idea of community. I keep being drawn back to that word. At the recent CBF General Assembly the question, "Would our community even notice if our church ceased to exist?" was posed. So, I began to ask myself what impact can or should NorthHaven Church have on our community? Then I thought, what is community?

Merriam-Webster defines it as, 1) "a unified body of individuals: such as people with common interests living in a particular area." A second definition was, "a social state or condition, joint ownership or participation, common character, social activity."

Certainly, we would say at NHC we are community. We do have a common interest and we enjoy joint ownership and participation. It doesn't say the community has to always agree about everything (whew!) and hopefully, we allow space for our differences and welcome our unique qualities. In recent reading I've been reminded people need people. Health can be affected negatively without some social interaction with others. Some folks are more comfortable in community groups than others. That's okay. The need still exists.

At CBF GA I was reminded over and over we are better together than alone. Wonderful videos of CBF field personnel (i.e. missionaries) reminded us that such endeavors are made possible by the communal support offered through CBF. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."

Every entity, organization, community group goes through times of transition. Churches do so as well. I think our church has been in transition. Although it can be perceived as a negative, I choose to see it as a positive challenge for us to move forward. It seems the time is NOW to support one another, as

well. We need each other. It is good for our health and good for the cause of Christ.

I have been reminded of a wonderful anthem written several years ago by Allen Pote titled, "Many Gifts, One Spirit." Such a beautiful song with incredible words. You can find a wonderful rendition by this Asian choir by hitting Ctrl/click. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEG1Tezz8i0>

In case you cannot do that, here's the text:

Many gifts, one Spirit; many songs, one voice.
 Many reasons, one promise;
 many questions, one choice.
 O God, we pray for unity.
 Give guidance from above.
 In our differences unite us I
 n the circle of Your love.
 O God remind us we are not alone.
 Though we move on different pathways,
 we are walking to Your throne.
 Help us learn to love each other.
 Show us ways to understand.
 We are members of one family,
 Growing strong by joining hands.
 Take our many ways of working,
 Blend the colors of each soul
 Into the beauty of a rainbow.
 Give us life, Lord, make us whole.

May this be our prayer as we move forward in community.

I love God and I love this church!

Cheryl

