

SCHWARTZREPORT

Trends That Will Affect Your Future . . .

By the Numbers

| By Stephan A. Schwartz |

The Schwartzreport tracks emerging trends that will affect the world, particularly the United States. For EXPLORE, it focuses on matters of health in the broadest sense of that term, including medical issues, changes in the biosphere, technology, and policy considerations, all of which will shape our culture and our lives.

He was a small black boy. About nine years of age. I was the same age give or take a year, and we had both been brought to the train station. I can no longer remember where, but somewhere in the Deep South. It could have been Florida, or maybe Georgia. Nor do I know, if I ever knew, what part of the year it was, although it was very hot, and the caged metal fans that stood sweeping the room moved air so hot it hurt to have it blow on my skin. I was with the black woman who took care of me, a doctor's son. Her name is lost to me now, and no one living can tell it to me. He was with his grandmother. I watched him walk across the tiles of the station as I sat in one of the worn wooden pews that lined the vaulted waiting room.

There were two drinking fountains jutting from the wall. One sign read "Whites Only." I was a compulsive reader of signs, proud of my ability to do so. Like many signs, though, I am not sure I understood what it meant. As I watched my black peer walk toward the fountains, a large white man in a rumpled seersucker suit pushed past him, reached over to push the brass button, polished to a soft patina by a thousand white fingers. He drank deeply from the fountain, wiped his hand across his mouth, and walked on. By then the boy was at the fountain. There was a small wooden stool, its board battered and

grimy from usage, and he pushed it over to the fountain. His grandmother suddenly rose quickly from her seat and lumbered over to him. She was heavy, her ankles were swollen, and she moved with pain.

Her black shoes were worn. Where the joint of the big toe of the right foot was she had cut away the leather to give her bunion space to move. She held a small paper fan with a religious picture on it in her right hand, which she transferred to her left as she grabbed the little boy, just as he reached for the fountain. Still holding him by his shirt, she took him over to the other fountain, pushing the stool with her foot.

The noise of its scrapping brought heads up from the passengers sitting around the room, and they watched the tableau of the grandmother and the little boy. He could not make the button on the second fountain work, and she leaned in to help him. The problem lay not with the strength of his hands, but the fountain. It did not work. She fussed with it for a while, as the boy shifted from foot to foot, waiting for his drink. But the fountain would not yield up its water, and after a moment, the grandmother took the little boy back to the seat, half dragging him as he looked longingly back at the fountain labeled "Whites Only." I could see the rage and resignation on her face but did not understand it. I turned to look at the woman who was caring for me and could see this same expression on her face. I could not bring myself to ask.

We sat for several minutes, each of us in our own cocoon of thought. The station waiting room returned to its rhythm, but I could not get the image of the boy and his grandmother out of my mind. By seven, one has had enough sandbox fights to know what is fair, and as I sat there what I had seen seemed inexplicably—but inconceivably—unfair.

There was a counter with a few chrome red-covered stools at one end of the room. A couple of the stools were occupied but most were not. The people on the stools drank from coffee cups or paper cones held in metal bases. A white woman was behind the counter, wiping it with a rag. On impulse I got up and ran across the room.

"May I have a paper cup, please?" I asked, assuming the respectful voice I knew adults responded to well.

"Sure son," she said, and plucked a cup from the upside-down stack that sat on the counter behind the counter where people sat.

I ran across to the fountain that worked and filled the cup with water and walked across and handed to the boy, who took it without a word. He had almost finished it before his grandmother could respond. She exchanged a look with the woman I was with, then said, "Say, thank you."

"Thank you," the boy said looking straight at me, the way children do.

I turned around and saw people staring at me, some with intense and disturbing looks, and suddenly I got scared. I mumbled something and ran back to my seat. Both women rose immediately, took us boys in charge, and left the waiting room. A teenage boy wearing jeans tried to trip me as I went by.

Times have changed.

Almost one third of the most populous counties in the country have white minorities—nearly one in 10 of all 3,100 counties. According to a *New York Times* report: . . . from July 1, 2005, to July 1, 2006, metropolitan Chicago edged out Honolulu in Asian population, and Washington inched ahead of El Paso in the number of Hispanic residents. In black population, Houston overtook Los Angeles.

"The new wave of immigration, along with its continued dispersal to the suburbs

Table 1. Projected Population of the United States, by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000 to 2050 (in thousands except as indicated. As of July 1. Resident population.)

Population or percent and race or Hispanic origin	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
POPULATION						
TOTAL	282,125	308,936	335,805	363,584	391,946	419,854
White alone	228,548	244,995	260,629	275,731	289,690	302,626
Black alone	35,818	40,454	45,365	50,442	55,876	61,361
Asian Alone	10,684	14,241	17,988	22,580	27,992	33,430
All other races 1/	7,075	9,246	11,822	14,831	18,388	22,437
Hispanic (of any race)	35,622	47,756	59,756	73,055	87,585	102,560
White alone, not Hispanic	195,729	201,112	205,936	209,176	210,331	210,283
PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION						
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White alone	81.0	79.3	77.6	75.8	73.9	72.1
Black alone	12.7	13.1	13.5	13.9	14.3	14.6
Asian Alone	3.8	4.6	5.4	6.2	7.1	8.0
All other races ¹	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.1	4.7	5.3
Hispanic (of any race)	12.6	15.5	17.8	20.1	22.3	24.4
White alone, not Hispanic	69.4	65.1	61.3	57.5	53.7	50.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, "U.S. Interim Projections by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin," <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>> Internet Release Date: March 18, 2004.

¹Includes American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, and Two or More Races.

and Sun Belt, is transforming the places which are now being classified as multiethnic and majority minority,' says William H. Frey, a demographer with the Brookings Institution.

'The new melting pots are not large international gateways,' Professor Frey said, adding, 'Rather, many are fast-growing suburbs themselves.'¹

America, founded by whites on a white vision, is in the process of becoming numerically a nonwhite country. It is as pervasive and impactful as the religious conversion of a nation. Our cultural point of view is shifting and from that will flow a myriad of changes, great and small. It is an irony of cosmic nicety that this transformation is coincident with the beginning of not only a century, but also a new millennium. California, unsurprisingly, leads the way, going majority nonwhite in the year 2000. Texas should make the changeover about 2025. America, in its entirety, will be majority nonwhite shortly after 2050—just four decades from now (Table 1).

To avoid terrible hurt and suffering on all sides, we must confront the challenge of the emerging white minority now; social movements measure in generations, as astronomers measure in light-years. What happens will depend, of course, on all the

racess, but since whites control the power structure today, the choices they make in the transition period will carry a special weight, and they will live or die, suffer or prosper, for decades based on the decisions of the next few years. What will such a country be like? It is time to begin the public conversation on this topic.

Even the idea that there could be an openly acknowledged white position, as such, makes liberal whites queasy and concerned as to whether they are becoming racists, and they are not alone in these concerns. The Hispanic, African American, and Asiatic communities operate openly and proudly on the basis of their race, yet from historical experience, it will alarm many nonwhites when whites begin to do so. Yet, what is essentially a national negotiation must take place, and happily, we have a pattern we can follow. America will begin this new millennium, and this change, in a position much like the summer that America, as we know it today, began.

In the summer of 1787, several dozen white men, faced with the reality of a government that was not working, closeted themselves in a hall in Philadelphia to hammer out the U. S. Constitution. They knew the convention would frame their lives, that what they did was serious, and

that it demanded real honesty, even in the face of confrontation. Their interests broke them into blocs, large states and small, as they hammered at each other day after day. They learned that only compromise and negotiation could get them through, could create the critical consensus required to make an agreement all were willing to live by, day to day. They learned that compromise requires authenticity and honesty with self and others about where one stands. That process can serve us again, if the races can be honest with one another. If we do not tell the truth, we will commit an act of self-destructive moral error, and our country will suffer great loss.

As our racial make-up is changing, so too is our place in the world. In these same years America will pass from world dominance to some form of partnership, because the world village is also undergoing transformation. The planet as a whole is still passing from the bipolar Soviet-American geopolitical reality that dominated the lives of most of those in power throughout the world. Economic, informational, cultural, and ethnic blocs are arising: China, united Europe, Southeast Asia, and Islam. The world is both globalizing and tribalizing. Nonwhite countries are embracing the technology and eco-

nomics of the West, but not, as in colonial times, the West's cultural values.

We need to begin a national dialogue about our racial nature and how, in accepting that, we can refound our country. We need to relearn—not legally, but personally—the original bedrock value of public fairness embodied in our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

We need to talk about these subjects openly in our schools, in our churches and synagogues and mosques and prayer councils, on our television and radio talk shows—wherever people committed to American success, prosperity, and integrity gather. The discussion must be framed

not in the old stereotypes of victimized minorities and victimizing whites. That plantation vista no longer serves. We need to figure out a strategy that will get us all through successfully—together. Teams win or lose together, not individually. But they do so as the result of individual actions.

REFERENCE

1. Roberts S. Minorities now form majority in one-third of most-populous counties. *The New York Times*. August 9, 2007. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/09/us/09census.html?ei=5090en=acb30f0ee9fdb05&ex=1344312000&partner=rssuserland&cmc=rss>

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