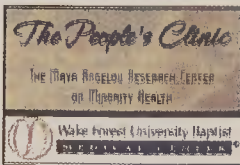


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Section

LIFE



IN RELIGION
Some Jonesville AME Zion Church members balk at the idea of selling the building.



Genes and disparities

There are many levels at which genetics can interface with the occurrence of health disparities.

Human Genetics refers to the research and clinical practice of genetics as it relates to humans. Medical genetics is the application of human genetics research and information to healthcare. Scientists believe that race and ethnicity are politically and socially defined constructs that occur within given contexts rather than features that are controlled by our genes. As we gather more information about the genetic history of mankind, it has become clearer that the concepts of 'race and ethnicity' are often insufficient to account for differences among humans.

What we know

Perhaps the most ambitious scientific study ever undertaken, the Human Genome Project was an international effort started in 1990 and formally completed in 2003. The overall goals of the project were to identify all of the genes in human DNA, to determine the sequences of base pairs (molecules) in the human genome, and to store the collected information in electronic databases. The study provided an overwhelming amount of powerful data about the molecular make-up of mankind.

We now know, for example, that skin color is determined by three genes that are inherited separately. Each gene confers a type of pigment, and there are 64 different combinations of pigmentation genes that a person can receive. A very dark person, for example, inherits a series of genes that give him or her dark pigments, whereas a fair-skinned person has genes that confer lighter pigmentation. There is no gene that makes a person a particular "race" or "ethnicity." Rather, as we will see, race and ethnicity are simply social constructs devised by human beings.

It is now estimated that 20,000 to 25,000 genes, out of millions, are all that are needed for proper human development and functioning. We also know that, on a molecular basis, populations originally defined by racial parameters have been proven to be less different (more alike) than previously thought. In fact, it is true that more diversity exists within a single "racial" group than between racial groups! It is perhaps more informative from a biological perspective to identify populations, rather than individuals, based on their genes (genotype analysis), but for humans, it is important to look at genes in the context of the social and physical environment in which they live.

This phenomenon has been shown to be true by years of experience with newborn screening. Newborn screening involves testing newborns to see whether they have the gene for a given illness so that early interventions can be made if necessary to preserve the child's health. For example, we know that sickle cell disease occurs most frequently in blacks and that cystic fibrosis occurs in whites of Northern European descent. Screening for sickle cell disease only in those of African descent and cystic fibrosis only in those of northern European descent would seem 'cost-effective' given how often the disease occurs in those particular racial or ethnic groups. However, problems arose with the self-reporting of race and with stigmatization that made selective screening unacceptable. Since abandoning selective screening based on race, a significant number of cases of sickle cell disease and cystic fibrosis have been identified in 'non-high risk' populations, proving that we cannot go by skin color or descent alone when examining a person's biology.

"Tailored" pharmacotherapy

Recent reports have shown differences in response to certain prescrip-

Please see RACE/3B

Fade to black for holidays

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

With the holiday season fast approaching, maybe it's time to give yourself the gift of style.

Instead of buying several outfits to wear to multiple holiday events, this year you only need one—a simple black dress.

"The little black dress is classic, stylish and always the perfect choice for any holiday event," said Marshalls style expert Amy Cafazzo. "There are countless styles out there, so look for a cut and detailing that flatter your shape—the most versatile length falls just above the knee. No matter what, pick one that makes you feel beautiful, because in the end that's the most important ingredient to looking good."

A little black dress can be transformed to look special on any occasion.

Follow these tips as you plan your holiday wardrobe:

- **Night on the town** - The holidays always call for a few fun nights out on the town with your best girl friends. Highlight a small waist with a sparkly belt, or play up strong shoulders with striking chandelier earrings. Boots are a must-have for the fall/winter season, so pick out a tall, black pair with faux-fur trim. Choose a purse or a clutch with details that highlight your trendy boots or your sparkly belt.
- **Family holiday** - Even if you are dreading the family get-together, at least you can look forward to your outfit. Impress everyone from your grandmother to your adoring cousins by pairing your LBD with a fitted, velvet blazer in a rich shade of plum or evergreen. Appear long and lean with sheer black tights and suede or velvet heels.
- **Office party** - Transform your LBD for the office by pulling it over a crisp, white collared shirt. Add black tights with subtle detailing and strap on some sensible heels. Finish off the look with a wide belt and oversized tote. This style is smart enough for the office, yet chic enough for the after-hours work party.
- **New Year's Eve** - Stressing about the perfect New Year's Eve outfit? Rather than spending the last few days of the year trying to find a whole new ensemble, simply dress up your LBD with fresh accessories. Pick out a cropped top with elegant detailing or shimmering sequins, and then choose a pair of metallic or patent leather heels to match. Remember: glitz is great, but too much sparkle can be overwhelming. Stow your lip gloss and camera in a brightly-colored clutch—red is hot this season. Whether you are headed to a club, a swanky soiree or your best friend's house party, you'll feel like a new woman!



Classic black is the trend for the holiday season. Black pants paired with colorful tops or a little black dress is just what the best dressed holiday parties will be wearing this season.

PHOTO/MARSHALLS

Hispanics and blacks seek common ground

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA—Rumors of racial hatred swirled around the small farm town of Tifton, Georgia, last fall after four blacks were arrested in the deadly robberies of six Mexican immigrants. In a single night at different trailer parks, the men were shot and beaten to death with a baseball bat as they slept.

Community leaders—the white police chief, the Hispanic priest of the Roman Catholic church, the local president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—quickly stepped in to maintain peace. They called these crimes of opportunity, saying theft not racism was behind them. Still, they conceded the community was far from integrated.

"We've just never been friends and buddies," said Isabella Brooks, the president of the NAACP in Colquitt County, near Tifton. She said she has no white neighbors and doesn't socialize with the Hispanics up the street because of the language barrier.

The nation's two largest minority groups are sorting out whether their relations will be driven by competition and mistrust or a common bond, a joint effort to close persistent gaps between whites and minorities. In no region is the tension more clear than in the South.

"The Hispanic presence changes the dynamic of the South, which has always been viewed as white and black," said William Ferris of the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina.

Advocacy groups from the NAACP to the National Council of La Raza argue that Hispanics, especially immigrants struggling for legislative reform, find the perfect ally and model in blacks and their history of fighting for equal rights.

Hispanics have passed blacks as the largest U.S. minority group at 14.5 percent of the population compared with blacks at 12.1 percent.

Please see HISPANICS/2B

DIGITAL DELUGE



Holiday photo cards are more popular than ever

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—Coming to a mailbox near you: scores of smiling, beaming faces on holiday photo cards.

With each holiday season—and each new digital camera given as a gift—more families forgo Norman Rockwell-like illustrations or funny Far Side cards in favor of a

photo to send their best wishes. The trade group Photo Marketing Association International estimates a whopping 270 million photo greeting cards were sent last year.

"When he's picking out photos of his own family, he goes for the ones that you can see the expression on

Please see HOLIDAY/4B

Marrow donor awareness can save lives

By Cheris F. Hodges
cheris.hodges@thecharlottepost.com

November is National Marrow Donor Awareness month.

For one Sandra Ikard-Meeks, this could be the most important month of her life.

Ikard-Meeks is in need of a life saving marrow match as a part of her leukemia treatment. Her father, grandfather and uncle all died from leukemia. She and her family are now battling

the disease.

According to the African American Community Health Advisory Committee, a bone marrow transplant is the only real cure for leukemia. However, blacks are underrepresented on the national registry.

"Only about 200,000 potential donors are African American," the group states on their web site. That translates to 6 percent.

On Nov. 18 at Eastland Mall from 12-4 p.m., a

program called "Dancing For Life" will be held to raise awareness about bone marrow testing.

Dancing for Life is co-sponsored by the National Marrow Donor Program, The Sycamore Tree Ministry of the Arts, Sickle Cell Regional Network and hosted by Radio One. The objectives are to get more people, especially minorities, to join the NMDP registry in hopes that someone may be a match for Ikard-Meeks or

Please see MARROW/2B

