

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM CAMP AGAPE



Jean and I had just arrived at Camp Agape, camera equipment out and ready to take pictures. The two little girls above were the first kids we saw.

They practically begged to have their picture taken. Good action photo, right? I imagined them high in the air on opposite sides of the swing, leaning far back with their legs out in front and their hair blowing in the wind. Instead, they threw their arms around each other and posed as nothing more than good friends. Their world was a very nice place to be.

Now whenever I look at this photo I'm reminded of the classic Broadway show *South Pacific*. Oscar Hammerstein II (lyricist) and Richard Rodgers (composer) intended from the beginning to include in the plot the love story of a navy pilot and a Pacific islander. Despite enormous pressure they refused to cut Lieutenant Cable's song "You've Got to Be Taught" with its biting, searing commentary on racism.

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear,
You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear –
You've got to be carefully taught*

*You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade –
You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late –
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate –
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be carefully taught!*

If anyone has taught the dozen kids who came to Camp Agape to hate and fear it wasn't apparent to me. So maybe we are making progress in our efforts to see Christ in all people including those whose “eyes are oddly made / And people whose skin is a different shade.” Or perhaps the children rose far above those who would turn them into haters and – probably unaware of our Lord's summary of the law – they were simply loving their neighbors as themselves.



Reese Rickards
Camp Agape
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