

THE EMERGING WHITE MINORITY

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America, founded by whites on a white vision, is in the process of becoming numerically a non-white country. Even a massive, and unlikely, increase in the birth rate of whites would only slow the historic inevitability of this change. 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 not only of a century, but a new millennium. California, unsurprisingly, leads the way, going majority non-white in the year 2000. Texas should make the changeover about 2025. America, in its entirety, will be majority non-white by 2040.

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 races 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? Worst case scenarios could look something like Northern Ireland or Yugoslavia. A best case, could look like the ideal America we have all been talking about for years.

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 non-whites, 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 America, as we know it today, began.

In the summer of 1787 several dozen white men, faced with the reality of a government which was not working, closeted themselves in a hall in

Philadelphia to hammer out the 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, 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.

America will pass from world leadership because the world village is also undergoing transformation. The planet as a whole is passing from the bipolar Soviet-American geopolitical reality to economic, informational, cultural and ethnic blocs, Japan, united Europe, Southeast Asia, Islam each with massive resources. The world is tribalizing. Non-white countries are embracing the technology and economics of the west, but not, as in colonial times, the west's cultural values. As these nations and blocs become more independently powerful they will be less and less tolerant of a racially conflicted America. The international impact of the Los Angeles riots makes that point forcefully. The decisions America's races make will extend far beyond her borders. It is something we share with the South Africans and, as with them, meeting the challenge of power-sharing is going to require not only facts but vision. Without vision the critical consensus of individual agreement will be lacking because, as the Great Society proved, we can not solve race relations with legislation and adjudication alone. In real life, it gets down to individual intent.

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. The Reverend Cecil Murray, pastor of Los Angeles' First AME Church, framed it well. We need to see our society less as a melting pot, and more as a stew, where each ingredient maintains its identity while

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lending its special characteristics to the single dish.

Throughout the 20th Century, America has been the beacon of democracy, lighting a way others have followed. The 21st Century contains an even greater challenge -- showing how democracy going beyond its white context can create a society which benefits all races.