

Race matters essay



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The pages of human history daubed in bloodshed on account of ethnic conflicts and race relations ask the crying question.

How to make this Planet Earth heaven-like? The answer is simple and direct. Eyes full of understanding, hearts full of love and the life that refuses conflicts-enough, these alone are enough! When a race subjugated for centuries, begins to assert itself, many issues turn controversial. The problems are twofold. One related to the white race and the internal problems of crisis of leadership and affirmative action amongst the black race. To destroy an ill-founded system is a difficult task. The reconstruction and rejuvenation of a society with newfound values is even more difficult.

Cornel West, in his thought provoking essays, throws light on some of the fundamental problems faced by the black Americans. He criticizes and also offers solutions. His radical approach may not be acceptable to all but they initiate a worthwhile debate, and kindle inquisitive curiosity. The issues that will have historic value for all time to come, like the Los Angeles riots after the Rodney King verdict, Malcolm X, Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill and the black street life are vividly described in the book.

The essays reflect the ceaseless struggle of the black race, and their valiant efforts to establish rightful place in mainstream of American political, economic and social life. This has to be achieved by maintaining the essential dignity of their unique culture of the race. Analysis: The ideal situation, an attainable reality for the people of America is, the dawn of realization with the leadership of both the communities, that blacks and the whites are alternative beats of the same heart. What worries Cornel most, is

the intellectual level of the black leadership. According to Cornel, African Americans are divided into two camps, the liberal structuralists and the conservative behaviorists.

West goes to observe, ???: “ Unfortunately, these two camps have nearly suffocated the debate that should be taking place about the prospects for black America. (West, 1994, p. 18.)This disunity among the two schools of thought of black race is the most unfortunate aspect of the African Americans. In his efforts to diffuse this internal conflict amongst the Blacks, Cornel comes out with a solution in Chapter 2 of the book. He touches the borders or spirituality when he pleads to “ replace racial reasoning with moral reasoning.

” (p. 38.) Thus moral reasoning becomes the second important concern in Race Matters by Cornel and this approach is his positive contribution to the possible solutions for the problems of African Americans. The main issue with most of the black Americans is that they are being destroyed by the inner conviction of uselessness.

Economic prosperity can not compensate for this loss. The fountain of hope and love has to spring forth from the hearts of the blacks as for their internal relations first and disposition with the white race next. Even better, if both the developments take place simultaneously! When Cornel avers that racial diversity is the strength of America, one feels that his philosophy of morel reasoning sparkles! Response and Conclusion: The thought processes of Cornel are like the gushing of the fresh water and provide a new hope for the bitter internal struggles and misunderstandings that lies camouflaged in

America. The riots like the one in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict happen on account of such deep, dormant mistrust between the blacks and the whites. ??? It is better to have the world united than the world divided; but it is better to have the world divided than the world destroyed,??? said Mr.

Winston Churchill at the time of Second World War. No one whether, black or white thinks of risking the division of America on racial lines. The pertinent question therefore, how to accelerate the process of genuine unity of minds, so that all concerned can live life without fear and free from discrimination? Cornelius is desperate to find answers to such questions and he researches for the root cause and would like all concerned to tackle the issue from that level. He knows the worth of the common destiny of Americans and how precious it is to one and all. The book has succeeded in providing the healing touch.

Cornelius is not afraid to think original, and his articulation of the issues is without fear or favor. He is eminently suited to write on issues he has attempted to resolve as he has been Professor of Religion and Director of Afro-American Studies at Princeton University since 1988, and was recently appointed Professor of Afro-American Studies and the Philosophy of Religion at Harvard University. What Cornelius West spoke February 16 at the Shands Auditorium in Gainesville as part of Black History Month at the University of Florida, holds good even today. ??? I've come tonight as a part, a very small part, of a great and grand tradition. A tradition of struggle, a struggle for decency and dignity! A struggle for freedom and democracy.

And I decided a long time ago, back in Sacramento, California where I grew up, that I wanted to live and die as part of this tradition of struggle. Those who were willing to give so much and love so deeply that they could cut radically against the grain in order to hold up a bloodstained banner of freedom and democracy. ??? (Courter and Piotrowski, 1999). A bold education in moral reasoning, right from childhood is the way to change the thought processes of future American Citizens. When thought processes change for the better, the action process will also change.

References http://www.afn.org/~iguana/archives/1999_03/19990312.html