

Introduction

Forenote to Nonminority Readers

One conclusion permeates this report, but it is expressly stated only on this page. The conclusion should be evident to even a casual reader of the report. Lest any reader fail to perceive the message, however, we state it here explicitly:

Nonminorities have brought about many of the problems that minorities encounter and are discussed in this report. Addressing these problems, and ultimately solving them, is the joint responsibility of nonminorities and minorities.

When a person or an institution has a problem, a common and reliable approach to solving the problem runs along these lines:

1. Define the problem and its cause.
2. Consult with the person or persons causing the problem and with the persons affected by the problem, and try to get them to agree upon a solution.
3. Implement the solution.

Often the greatest challenge is getting those who cause a problem to recognize any responsibility for the problem and to agree on the solution. Our society is filled with persons who nod in agreement that a problem exists and say, "It's them; not *me*."

Law schools, bar associations and other entities have periodic conferences and seminars about racial discrimination. Readers who have attended such conferences know that those in attendance are, for the most part, minorities. Not nonminorities, but minorities. The persons *affected* by the problem attend. Those *contributing* to the problem do not.

This report repeatedly urges members of the majority to learn about the problems discussed herein so that, ultimately, the majority *agrees* that racial discrimination in our society is "our problem" too and that nonminorities *must* be involved in the solution. Nonminorities have contributed to the problems that minorities experience, and if the problems ever are to be solved, then nonminorities must work with minorities to rectify the situation.

If a poll were taken of all the lawyers, court staff and judges in Oregon, it is doubtful that even one person would admit that he or she discriminates against minorities in any

way. “Sure,” they might say, “there’s a problem. But someone else is causing it. Not me.” That attitude makes the education process even more difficult.

The truth is that many nonminorities were raised in a culture in which discrimination was common, even accepted. Not surprisingly, the habits and attitudes learned as children carry over into adult life.

This report, therefore, begins with a plea to nonminority judges, court staff, lawyers, law school faculty and students, juvenile staff, corrections personnel, law enforcement officers and others in government: recognize that our minority population has serious problems in our society. Nonminorities, who have contributed to the problems that minorities encounter, must work with minorities to solve these problems. This report contains a number of suggestions to address the issues of racial discrimination or ethnic bias at all levels in the Oregon judicial system. Our hope is that the reader agrees with our recommendations and is impelled to act.