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Mr. Lamb;

Thanks for 'Book Notes'. Your presentations of many black authors have, I believe, contributed to diminishing the grosser image of the 'Negro' stereotype, by showing the many positive faces of African Americans along with their diverse views, reflecting the multifaceted dimensions of the black community that helps to offset the sports and entertainment image that whites most embrace. All this helps to efface the kind of stereotyping white people feed on. Even the presentation of a two-hour talk by Minister Farrakhan helps; people may not agree with his point of view but he fits no 'Negro' stereotype.

I want to thank you for your efforts.

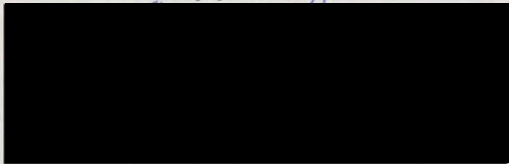
Despite evidence to the contrary, including the great racial divide that surfaced after the O.J. verdict, there seems to be a barely perceptible shift of white attitudes that are usually prone to marginalize and disparage the black experience. This is not to ignore the strong currents of racism that still charge the political and social arenas. The MMM, an American watershed event, is being treated as a non-event, deserving only an unspoken 'no comment'; or the many black churches destroyed by fire in the South with hardly a peep out of the media or President Clinton; or the efforts, some successful, of white politicians to dismantle Congressional Districts held by black representatives in the states of Texas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina; or the down play of black concerns by the recent Republican presidential candidates, meanwhile spotlighting race loaded issues -- welfare reform, crime in the streets, teenage pregnancies, Medicaid, immigration reform, assault weapons, building more jails, family values, etc. They also campaigned on so-called 'race neutral' issues, ie; Medicare, abortion, environment, farm subsidies, taxes, education (an issue that has crossed the race divide), and possibly foreign affairs, a mixed bag indeed, which mirrors the current American political and social scene.

Obviously, there's still away to go. The goal of an un-hyphanated America is a worthy goal, but unattainable until whites acknowledge their connection to blacks and other people of color as equals.

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As I have said in other contexts whites give loud praise to the benefits of liberty, individual rights, and democracy but hardly a ripple about the unifying, stabilizing benefits of equality as a credo to proclaim, a neglected and slighted principal as if the idea was never written as an integral precept of the 'Declaration of Independence'. (The French Revolution was front and center about its intentions with its famous dictum, 'Liberte', 'Fraternite', Egalite')

There are many streams flowing into 'Racist River' that spans America. One of these streams gives me cause for concern, and that's the surging force of the so-called Christian Right, whose membership literally interprets the Old Testament as gospel which among its many passages depicts black people as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. Such Biblical pronouncements, if taken literally, can be injurious to the legitimate aspirations of African Americans to obtain equal treatment under the laws of the land; it is to be remembered Biblical preachings did not stop Christians from engaging and profiting from the Atlantic African slave trade. However, your endeavors at C-Span to be objective and bias free, which is not easy, is one of the important and positive tributaries feeding into that river and hopefully will help regenerate a polluted waterway.

Cordially yours, 

CC: To my Adult Children and their Peers
Clarence Page