

How to Love People, Regardless of Race, Creed or Color

Firman Brown

(September 2007)

Softcover \$16.50 (142pp)

978-1-4343-0710-1

A resident of multiethnic communities for most of his life and now an employee with a major multiethnic corporation, Firman Brown has spent twenty years pursuing multidisciplinary studies in history, geography, sociology, and economics to better understand multiethnic human behaviour. His 142-page volume, *How To Love People, Regardless Of Race, Creed Or Color*, is the distillation of his studies and his record of recommendations for improving racial and religious relations in the U.S. Although sometimes repetitive and occasionally disjointed, Brown's book is worth pursuing for the insights he offers and his objectivity and forthrightness in dealing with issues that need to be dealt with.

With a balanced and reasoned approach to present-day problems, Brown suggests finding their root causes in the study of the history of both Africa and the Southern U.S. He proposes that most North Americans have gotten their understanding of Africa from the misinformation and disinformation of media presentations in such films as *Tarzan of the Apes*. He notes that current media and educational systems have done little to counter these impressions. He elaborates upon the systemic biases that have resulted in wage and employment discrimination for African Americans and provides extensive sets of statistics to substantiate his position. He points out that due to lack of education and economic opportunity, "Today, across America, over 44 percent of the prison population in the U.S. is African descended." He advocates that the "us versus them" societal mentality needs to be overcome and that African Americans need to leave their past behind them and stop undercutting their fellow African Americans willing to embrace a multiethnic American culture. He is particularly critical of current "rap" music and the attitudes it proclaims.

Brown's major plea is for a positive social education system involving the majority of society and reinforcing a view in which people see each other as individuals, not as faceless members of a group. He advocates greater understanding of the past since "one who lives in the past, does not live [whereas] one who learns from the past, courts wisdom." He also proposes a need for more knowledge of the scientific basis for skin colour and a total discarding of "the pseudoscientific conclusions (now really only disproved theories) that still haunt us today" and led to the elitism of races, even to instances of genocide. He finds that semantics can cause discrimination between groups and suggests alternative terms to be used. He also asks a number of hard questions such as, "Would you marry your spouse if they were exactly the same, except for their complexion?"

Brown suggests his changes begin with each individual and proposes a mantra of "Let peace begin with me." His book and his mantra deserve attention.

M. WAYNE CUNNINGHAM (November 5, 2007)

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