

## **White Racism in the United States: A Schematic Presentation of its Components**

A group of people come together to form a SOCIETY in order to receive benefits; i.e. education, police protection, good housing, medical care, etc.

The society needs to establish institutions in order to distribute and deliver the benefits, i.e. universities, schools, hospitals, corporations, unions, and government, etc.

The POWER in the society usually establishes its rules, and policies based on the values and assumptions that are being extolled by the members of the society – i.e. value that beauty is based on white standards, consequence of many years (and still today, blacks and 3rd world people were not recognized or rewarded for being themselves) Assumption – i.e. Blacks can only succeed in athletics or entertainment field, therefore, not necessary to see that they are represented in other occupational and professional areas of our culture. Blacks are thought of as being manual, whites as being cerebral.

In the late 60's with the riots in the cities and the civil rights struggle, the POWER in the society decided it was time to open-up the closed society to people other than whites, and began to distribute BENEFITS to blacks in the form of more jobs and better educational opportunities. Changes also occurred in some INSTITUTIONS and in the LAW in order to accommodate blacks.

These attacks or changes in two of the four societal components were a step in the right direction. However, there was no movement to open-up the components of POWER, VALUES and ASSUMPTIONS. Blacks and other minorities began and are still demanding an active role in the power structures of this country as well as in the operating values and assumptions which exist to direct policies, procedures and attitudes in this country.

So, we can see that as the diagram of society stands now it is mainly a white society- the POWER is mainly white, the BENEFITS are disproportionately doled out in favor of whites, and the VALUES and ASSUMPTIONS that influence the power are mainly taken from the values of white America.

The goal or vision is to have a white and black and red and brown and yellow and male and female society in which all participate and are proportionately rewarded for their efforts and contributions to the society.

The vision is PLURALISM in color and gender, in all aspects of the societal components.

The concept of blacks IN white society is not sufficient, it is actually racist. The language here is important. We must strive for a black AND white society, and the difference in the connecting between black and white is crucial. The first connection "in white society" implies integration – a very racist concept. The second connotation of "and" implies pluralism and collaboration.

A final word about the diagram and its components is that it is a self-perpetuating process. The circle needs to be broken at any point and the status quo challenged and interrupted if real and meaningful social change is to occur. *Harley Cook, Director, Toward an Open Society, a program of the Community Renewal Society, Chicago, Illinois*