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Comments From

East San Diego

"Design For Understanding"

held April 22 - May 20, 1968

Sponsored by Greater Parish Ministry

A
Citizens' Interracial Committee
Public Education Program

COMMENTS ON DESIGN FOR UNDERSTANDING

May 20, 1968

"Don't know when I've thought so hard about one subject. Am glad that 5th session did reveal that we can do something - that not everything we do is wrong."

"Intermarriage should be a matter of individual choice. This program has been very helpful."

"Could someone make a movie illustrating the San Diego situation? I feel it has been an excellant education because of the cross section of opinions and feelings."

"I wish such a program as this could be carried on in other areas. There is nothing like this up in the Bay Area that I've been able to discover. Wish that it could continue in all areas of our country."

"Cannot come until blacks have a culture also, but I think integration should be ultimate goal. Both (or all) cultures should be taught." (re question #4)

"I feel that there is progress being made - It will take time to change these injustices. You can't undo overnight what took centuries to accomplish."

"The black 'district' should be re-formed so that they have legitimate representatives responsible to their constituates - directly and instantly - so that the whites can know whatever steps as taken by black citizens are effective."

"This has been a well conducted Dialogue. The Black Power group helped bring to the group all that is necessary to know. I wouldn't have missed all I have had heard from every group. Surprised at many of the questions."

"I hope I am beginning to 'get the message' and want to do!"

"This dialogue has, for me, and, I hope for many others, been very, very helpful, enlightening, and good for motivating and directing action!"

"It seemed to me there was an economic problem which was not handled or really attended to - how to get funds for achieving the goals or concerns."

"These meetings have helped me to realize the ignorance of our white society in regards to the problem we face and the minorities face. Thank you!"

"We thank you sincerely - We do mean to help and understand and will make ourselves known."

"I have appreciated this series personally, and believe they have been very helpful for the perspective of our people. This should be offered again for the sake of those who could not come, would not come the first time, felt uncertain about attending such a 'radical' series. Next time we could find some of these. This means sock it to the Presbyterians again! Suggestion: Press the power structures of the church from the outside (gently but firmly) to show that there are resources & channels outside into which the efforts can be placed when we decide to move. We can handle all the Biblical-Theological, etc. stuff, and some of the motivation, but the verification of what is said all directions from the community bodies involved."

"You suggest that we give favorable comment when media gives consideration. Suppose you give consideration to those who try to help. I feel this has been helpful in gaining understanding and I feel more able to take an active part (constructive)."

"Thank you for your efforts - Many avenues of effort have been pointed out. The black power people reminded me of my son's clenched fists when he disliked himself more than anyone else did."

"These sessions have been rewarding and enlightening. I feel we must keep the communications open never close a door."

"I'm truely appalled at the limited effect this series has made on the majority of adults in attendance here. I think our fight has just begun and it's up to us that this program did effect to carry on the fight."

"New understanding and group of facts about white racisim which I've gained from Design for Understanding meetings have enabled me to help some whites in my community to change from antagonism to understanding. I have sympathy for Black Beautiful People."

"I appreciate knowing of the racial situation, I was not aware of it being in San Diego untill the death of Dr. King. In knowing about it then as a concerned Christian, I must act to do my part in bringing about equal rights of all San Diegans."

"Thank you! I feel black but I act trapped. I am going to get some habits started now, so help me!"

"Good! Beginning."

"An education was received from all members of panel. Thank you."

"I'm beginning to see some light and many former, narrow opinions are being widened by listening and reading. An excellent program presented by these panels, etc., has encouraged motivation."

"Tonights session could use a bit more structure. We could with some structure, avoid some of the 'gas' from a few windbags in the audiance. This has been a great series - I hope it doesn't end here!"

"What is wrong with white values? (not white racism) Isn't it possible that these pre-school programs would have the value of working with parents also? The Mexicans have chosen to come to California as have the Italians, for instance. The latter have adapted to the culture and language. Why is it too much to expect the Mexicans to adopt to the culture of their adopted country? I can't agree that the Mexican situation is comparable to the blacks. Regarding these sessions: Very good. However, I came feeling no racism, but feel as though I was talked at to such an extent that I really feel much more separate and catagorized than I ever felt before. I guess I feel frustrated. I do believe the closing statement was good. It made us feel as though perhaps we could do something - just by caring and giving time."

"I thank you all for caring about us white racists enough to take your time and to share your innermost feelings and desires. I am ashamed of our society and will work to change myself and maybe influence others."

"On question #4. Integrated culture as ultimate goal. I support the idea of all black schools, police force etc. as black community deems necessary."

"The choices on this questionnaire are inadequate to express my viewpoint."

"My one great argument with all this is - we hire the police to protect all people and prevent crime as well as apprehend criminals. It is my firm belief that to stop a crime before it happens is better than to have to find the criminal after the fact of a crime. I do not believe all this 'police brutality' bit. I am sure there are instances of this with black, white, brown, sailors, civilians, etc., but I do not believe it is all that prevolent here and in many communities where this charge was made."

"This has been most informative and helpful. I feel ambivalent in the case of question 4 and therefore cannot answer it."

"I would like to have heard the Oriental Viewpoint expressed."

"Am willing to do all that I can in any way."

"This has been a knowledgeable experience - I cannot agree with all that has been said but I feel I have a better understanding of how the black man feels. I did not get the feeling the black person is willing to do his part but looks to the white man for too much - Maybe this is due to the one who was our leader in the small dialogue group. This was not necessarily the feeling of all participants on the panel."

"This has been the most enlightening group meetings I have attended. Particularly felt that it was beneficial to hear specific ways white racism efects us. I hadn't recognized many before tho I considered myself an unprejudiced person. It was good to be better educated."

"Thought sessions were very helpful and enlightening. More question time in early sessions may have been helpful. Small groups were very valuable in terms of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the Black position."

"Very worthwhile sessions! I think the most striking new concept for me was the realization that is so recently becoming widely recognized and publicized (TIME Essay last week) which asks 'concerned, sensitive' whites to take a new role - a subservient role in the black community and a pursuit of action largely in the White community rather than the black community. You brought this home again and again. I am frustrated because I for some time have been more and more desirous of leaving my 'White Ghetto' teaching position where begotry seems rampant and making a real effort to find a position in schools with a majority population of minority group students. I had come to the conclusion of one writer to letters to the Editor in LIFE recently who said the answer lies in 'making the Negro smart enough to outsmart the white.' I thought I was able to play a constructive role on that score. Am I wrong? I want to really commend the dialogues - especially for the introduction of the Black Militants views. I think it's essential that these views be heard - there were so many people here who needed to hear them and all you had to say."

"Good series of programs."

"I have gained greater insight as to the problems of the black community in San Diego. The meetings have brought about an awareness of this in the group in general."

"Was too short - most people still not clear what the problem is, it seems, from questions and comments."

"An enlightening experience but still confusing."

"1. You have clarified my thinking on this problem and changed my views. 2. There should be smaller discussion groups for people who want to take action and need more guidance and encouragement than is given on the sheets."

"I think this series is wonderful and very informative. My hope is that it can be very much expanded to get this message to many more people, so we all can get this same understanding, and respond to the need at hand."

"#3 is too indefinite. An integrated culture should be taught to all."

"Intermarriage is already a fact, does not need to be established."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the exposure of the sessions. Frankly, the militants were not as militant as I have heard. Was it 'white-washed?' "

"This has been a real challenge to try to understand the feelings of people with whom I once worked in Watts. I am becoming more sensitive to white racism and my own attitudes. I have been trying to discuss what I have learned with colleagues at work and have been surprised at their feelings. The blacks must have an identity and the right to take pride in their own culture."

"A well planned program. I would hope to see school staffs involved in similar programs."

"Question #2 is poor - in the view of 'are you still beating your wife?' "

"The above questions lack validity and are a quest for acceptance rather than a serious interrogatory! Many points made in these questions are penetrating and valid and need acceptance but the comparisons are poor. Similar to asking a question of a high school senior whether he would rather be a 'violin player' or a 'garbage collector' ---- the answer in 90% of the cases would be neither."

"The answers to most of these questions (with the exception of number 1) are really somewhere in between."

"I hope that this is the end of TALK TALK TALK!"

"If possible this program should be presented on TV in a series, using the same people presented in each meeting. It was presented in such a way as to make people think - not just angry at having a finger pointed at them."

"I felt 'Design for Understanding' was very worthwhile."

"I would like to thank you for your time, energy, and good speakers during these meetings. This type of education is exactly what we whites need. Could I please ask you about contacting one or two black people, as community resource people, to visit our fourth grade class next spring, during a month's unit of study on Africa? We would greatly appreciate their visit. (The unit includes everything, I hope, from history and geography to music and arts.)"

"Question 4: The minority groups should be a part of the whole; with pride and with control of their destinies just as white men control theirs."

"Only by first letting the Negro or 'Black' race establish itself as an important part of America, by giving it self-respect and equal power, can we successfully integrate and intermarry, as a whole. Im sure there have been successfull intermarriages but they have been strained by the community or society."

"The answer to number 4 may be impossible right away - maybe we will have to maintain separate cultures for a while. I have learned a great deal from these meetings - Thank you so much for your time and energy. My only suggestion would be to try to see that all the group leaders for the small groups know what has gone on at the first three meetings."

"I object to questions etc., that are on the 'when are you going to stop beating your wife' type. Why don't you open your eyes and recognize the acceptance etc. already available. As far as I can see, a man is a man as he proves himself to be."

"Helpful, informative, disturbing. Thank you sincerely!! It only makes us realize how much this type of thing is needed and for larger audiences."

"Would like to see opposing viewpoints (example: militant black vrs non-militant black, police vs negative police tactics, integrationist vs segregationist) on the same panel (such as was done at the UCSD series last fall.) Believe program very effective - much more so than the UCSD series - but would still like opposing viewpoints on same panels. I have been extremely impressed by the calibre of all participants."

"About (1) I feel the Black Power as represented here the last two weeks are black racism. Also, the Mexican American are brown racism. They clearly gave me the understanding this group wanted no help from the white in anyway but financial help. They do not want to be brothers and sisters in Christ which I feel we as interested white Christians most want to come true. Love enters into (4) who maries whom."

"Very enlightening and well presented."

"I gained a more sensitive feeling for the feelings and needs of minority groups. I hope I got off of my rear end and can do something."

"I am so grateful for these meetings. I had read a great deal, I thought, but I have found that I knew very little, really. I believed in justice for all but have done very little, now I feel that I know how to be effective and I shall do."

"Design for Understanding has been an 'eyeball to eyeball' confrontation for me."

"#2 - I don't believe it should be slow however, #4 - I find intermarriage hard to accept because of my own culture and background. But I feel open housing and a completely integrated culture is the only ultimate solution."

"A most worthwhile series of meetings, I have a new understanding and feeling for the problems faced by the minority persons in San Diego. I intend to 'speak out', a change of attitudes on the part of the 'whites' is necessary."

"Hope to see this type of dialogue continue. The sessions were set up well and helped us gain more feeling and understanding for the problem plus a positive need for action."

"You might get a more accurate feeling of attitudes by designing this questionnaire to include definite in-between 'shades of grey' indicators of attitudes."

"Must have integration in the end."

"Suggest whites who all their lives have sincerely deplored the treatment of blacks, and never passed up a chance to defend them, should not be forced to be 'segregated' with 'white racism'. A most enlightening and inspiring series of meetings."

"The first four sessions were more effective than the fifth."

"The question period was too long in the fifth session."

"Number 4 is difficult to answer because it will take a long time to become fully integrated."

"In holding meetings of this size - some provision should be made for better hearing of the dialogue. The questions can't be heard thru the audience. How about a microphone for the members of the audience asking the question - so we could all hear."

"#4 is difficult to answer - I would hope both races could live, work, worship etc. together yet before this can be done, perhaps the blacks need to find their identity by segregational methods. Intermarriage must be met in the light of the children born - Is it fair for them to be neither black nor white?"

"I like the concept of interdependence, as stated in the group I was in last week, emphasizing self-help, but not excluding assistance from outside the black group."

"I have enjoyed these meetings and am inspired to seek a place for action. I hope that more citizens can somehow receive the same opportunity. Thank you."

"A revealing and intelligent program, but need some more chance for feedback in smaller groups."

"In #4, I don't feel satisfied to either wording: I would hope each person would be cognisant of his cultural background-being proud of it, - and be in equal relation to those of other background, interrelating at all levels of life as he desires (indluding marriage)."

"I don't feel the wording in #2, for either statement, is given the right answer - but I'm not sure how this should be said."

"Re #2" Hard to answer since the 'things' are largely intangible - ie sense of identity, family polarity, black male's place as head of family, etc. Jobs, education are important to achieve the above."

"Should have had more small group dialogue - perhaps after each session - in 2nd half? Good presentations! Good cross section of opinions and exposure of multiple viewpoints giving each person something to hang onto."

"#2 - I don't feel this is very well expressed or that they are opposites. #4 - This is the only one that can finally work in this country (integrated culture); although there are elements in the 'separate' idea which I feel could precede and be a part of the final integrated, or living together, society."

"Thank you for giving me some insight into what it would be like to be black. I think I finally begin to understand and will try to help my community also to understand, I hope!"

"I can't accept intermarriage within my own family - why must this be?"

"Your program was excellent and should be enlarged."

"We must establish an integrated culture. Intermarriage is a personal matter. I feel it is all right, but many will prefer to preserve their own race. I admire the new trend to preserve and rehabilitate the culture of the black man. We cannot force all people to integrate but we must have eventually a largely integrated society in order to survive."

"I would like to see a group of negroes let a panel of white Christians point of view of relationships."

"Since there are several feelings within the minority community pertaining to education, There should be more than one approach to remedy the situation."

"Groovy."

"You put on a good program, tho I am sometimes dismayed by our white lack of understanding, but I have hope."

"Wish the dialogues could have lasted longer."

"At the beginning of the dialogues it was said that each individual session should be taken in context and that no others should be encouraged to come once we got started. I feel that had that premise been enforced that it would have eliminated most of the confusion, (as a result of bringing friends, etc.) that was prevalent toward the end of the dialogues. Please stress the importance of attending each and every session more so than was done in this program. I came to these sessions because I was confused and now I 'see the light,' (as a result of attending each session). Probably if I had just come to one or two of the groups I would have left more perplexed than I came, and I would have been no help to any ethnic group, especially my own. (white)."

"The importance of attending all of the dialogues should have been stressed more (i.e. admittance only with registration cards, etc.) Because quite alot of valuable time was wasted trying to clear up mis-understandings resulting from non-attendance at some of the sessions."

"No comments please! (WOW!)

"The dialogue series has been outstanding - I hope it is repeated without great modification."

"I hope that blacks have made it fairly clear to most people who want to stick together, regardless of race, creed, or color."

"Black is Black, I want my community History and culture back right now which we never have had."

"White society does not have the personal experience and insight to provide significant answers to the problems resulting from over 200 years of life separated from African culture and loss of identity in a white recist society. We must depend on the insight of Black people to provide leadership in seeking realistic and culturally sound and individually humanizing answers - whites should be indians and not chiefs in this effort!"

"I'm confused as to which group is most representative - The integrationists or the advocates of separation."

"This whole series is very eye-opening but people are still going out in different directions. Why insistance on separate education but integrated work. Can this exist. Should blacks work only with blacks or what?"

"A very good dialogue - or learning experience - The problem has been delineated very well."

"Those questions are much too loaded! There is no real choice in the content. A more subtle questionnaire would be much more helpful. The series was great - eye opening. My only critisism is that more serious questions were dealt with too highhandedly. Granted they might have been asked by 'naive racists' - they were often asked with great sincerity. Understanding does not increase when one is 'downed' too hard. (Though some did deserve it!!)"

"These questions, or rather the alternatives posed do not really permit much in the way of freedom of expression. I think any professional survey research man would consider it biased and overly restrictive."

"Questions could be clearer. Thank you!"

"I feel that you accomplished what you stated was the idea - to raise questions. A good beginning."

"A very excellent presentation of a new viewpoint to me - this concept of Black Power must be demonstrated so others are aware of the efforts that must be made by all."

"Excellent session - opened many questions and means of acting. I sincerely hope that integration is the ultimate goal rather than separation."

"I agree that the black man should be able to have an opportunity to learn respect for himself and his race.... But the ultimate goal must be elimination of any emphasis of difference between black and white."

"You've helped me - but honestly, I didn't think anyone I heard was too militant."

"I believe the speakers should be careful to make the concept of black. - Black power and separate culture clear when speaking to white groups - I was confused unnecessarily for too long. I think even the panelist's did not always agree. We whites need a clear honest explanation. I think we need to understand the militant attitude better - by better explanation!!!"

"The total series was fantistic, the only thing I would change would be the small groups. I felt our group had too similar ideas. I would have liked to have had the group 'loaded' with some real advocates of black power or someone knowledgeable concerning the Mexican-American problem, etc."

"More dialogue groups necessary (at least two). Teach speakers aforehand how to use microphone - very poorly utilized frequently. Group leaders were not aware of total lecture presentation."

"I feel there was not enough talk about what minority groups face in everyday events, that is problems just because of skin color."

"I felt more positive about the black 'militants' positions than the CIC apparently wanted me to feel. I think there are aspects of their positions that are valid."

"I feel the series has brought me a better understanding of the situation that exists in Calif, and I hope, with God's help, I'll be able to offer my help to the community."

"Program well done, perhaps at least one more small group discussion period. Too difficult to ask questions in such a large group. Perhaps a chance to have small group discussion with less militant blacks - or with both at the same time."

"Refering to #3, I feel that black society should be represented in the current teaching material and curricular but in proportion to its contributions to society in general. I am as apposed to super citizens of the black race as I am to super citizens of the white race. All citizens must recognize black society's ideals, heros, culture and history, as well as the white culture and work toward the day of unity rather than separatism. This is an excellent program and I think will do more toward gaining understanding than any other single action I have seen. Let's have more all over the city and county."

"I have had a concern for a long time concerning the attitudes of most white racists toward the minority population - and I feel I now have an understanding of what I can do to help change a few things in my community."

"These sessions have made me more aware of the conditions in San Diego."

"The series has been most revelatory. I thought I knew something of the situation as it exists. Now I realize that I needed this exposure to the true situation."

"I feel there has to be a meeting place in the field of education where we educate Americans --- black heritage and other minorities need emphasis - but following the advocates of the black power group can lead to nothing but the distruction of America. We need to work with all groups to make our American dream possible for all Americans."

"I feel this was a very enlightening activity, and that groups of this type are necessary for white America. I feel more emphasis should be placed on the reading; i.e. if more people had read the suggested material, the discussions would have been much more effective."

"A good series! I feel that my eyes have been opened at least a little bit."

"Did not feel that the dialogues allowed for an honest, personal facing of the issue."

"Your questions are unfair."

"A very helpful series of meetings. I had hoped there would be more talk about working together. I don't think all white men are racists."

"I do not see why working for intermarriage is necessary or desirable. In most cases I think this leads to more problems than it solves. However, if both young people are mature enough to try to solve these problems it is up to them as individuals and their families. I think intercultural or interreligious marriages also are difficult and not necessarily to be encouraged."

"This series was of great value in giving awareness and understanding of the problems involved. Good suggestions for what we can do and how best to become involved."

"A fair presentation. You should provide a list of definitions, i.e. black power, negroe, colored, black militant, etc. These tend to be confusing."

"This has been great! Too short, but I fully intend to study, learn, work, and support the Black-Brown Revolution. I hope I have the guts enough - I feel strongly enough and I'm sure the first time I ask to see the manager will be the hardest."

"This has been the most exciting, inspirational, eye-opening event of my life - may God be with us all as we act!"

"Best meeting so far. 5/20/68"

"People should only be seen as humans. I cannot permit black, brown or white racism."

"We have been in business for 8 years and have never once had a negro apply for employment. Mexican-Americans yes, Negro no, and we would gladly have hired them. We believe in fair employment."

"I agree that a great deal of change is necessary. However, I do not believe that two wrongs, white racism and black power, make a right. We need to learn to recognize people as people and not a color - color is only skin deep."

"Separate black schools, teachers, etc., would throw black children into an integrated adult society completely unable to cope."

"I acknowledge the racist 'complexion' of our society. However, I cannot accept that there is (in my frame of reference) a black or white answer to any of the other three questions, nor to any of the other problems of the situation. But we must come to some sort of common meeting ground. We cannot remain divided and any of us survive."

"The presentation and information given has been excellent and so much more than I could imagaine before it actually started. Never a dull moment. My only criticism - 9:30 always comes too soon!"

"I feel that it should be an integrated culture, but I feel that intermarriage should be left up to the individual. I think this program has been wonderful, and I hope to hear of more of them, as they are well worth the time and money even for me, as a student!"

"Excellent coverage. Really stimulating to action."

"I think this 5th meeting would be most beneficial on the entire program, although we must definitely define the problem before we can attain constructive ideas on combating the problam."

"I feel that people still do not see their prejudice. We admit that we collectively are guilty of white racism, but our vision is cloudy at seeing our personal prejudice."

"Question #2, I find difficult to answer with a check. In checking it as I did I would have to qualify it by saying that I believe in restoring to the black society the dignity that I believe God intended as His children."

"It seems some blacks have a hard time holding jobs in some areas because they don't apply themselves when they get a job."

"This was a true education for me. We need and should have more confrontations like this. As a result I plan to get off my big fat pew and get out and 'do'."

"Series has, for me, accomplished what I understand your purpose to be - Awareness of problems - possible courses of action - etc. Format excellent (perhaps 2 nights of small group discussion). Continue these series. There are people who will come in the future after hearing about this. Agree about including the different segments (black power, etc.)."

"For any future programs: More small group discussion - perhaps small group discussion of the types of action to be taken."

"I have enjoyed the sessions - felt they were low-key as probably they had to be to have continued effectiveness. Above all, it was stimulating, educational, and an opportunity for a direct confrontation which is not easily available."

"I'm Black."

"I'm all for you!"

"These are my honest responses."

"I feel that your questions are very one-sided and due to their narrow content they do not allow me to voice my full opinions. I have felt that the 'Design for Understanding' is very good although I also feel that you accent emotions too much and thus hinder the real ability of this type of group from being able to give some real long lasting content - non-prejudice-to the people."

"The dialogues have undoubtedly helped many people to become aware of the injustices in our society. We should be able to begin working together to become effective in helping the black community."

"How will 'black'children educated in a 'black' dominated culture relate to the white employment community? Will the majority be willing to employ 'blacks' wearing African dress - replying to African names - stepping to a completely different drum beat?"

"In order to make progress we must be positive. We must make a supreme effort to refrain from being synical and try to love a little."

"Very helpful!! Should be free to all! Educational experience. I didn't realize these things existed in our community."

"This program will be a success only if the white adults with the power to act on the suggestions directed towards them, act. I believe, forming my opinion from these 'Design for Understanding'meetings, that the key factor in dissolving the vicious circle of racism is EDUCATION, which the white adults now control. I am: 1, a member of St. Andrew's Pres. Church, 2, 17-1/2 years of age 3, directly involved with the at least physically integrated congregation. I've grown up in this church, and I've watched the integration of our congregregation. It's really interesting to note that our integrated high school group members have accepted each other at least twice as quickly and intimately as the adult members. From the majority of the adult segment of our church has come a direct negative attitude toward interracial dating, physical contact between the sexes. Now, how is that for a beautiful introduction to an integrated (marriage included) America?! And, St. Andrew's is perhaps the most liberal church in S.D. in this aspect."

"Stay under God. Stay within the law. Then be aggressive for equality and tremendous progress will be made. Go too far too fast, and the whole progress will go back 50 years."

"This has been a fabulous experience. I have never been so stimulated nor so moved to action. I feel this type of experience should be made available to all in the white community free of cost."

"I think this program was very beneficial and educational to everyone involved and it's only too bad that the segment of the white society that really needs this education isn't here."

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate. I could use more individual dialoge."

"The meetings have given a much clearer idea of the black people's position - also a motivation to take some of the actions you have suggested. (And to think of some actions on our own) Thanks for giving us this opportunity to know you better."

"Very enlightening. Understand more the feelings of the 'black power' position."

"This has opened my mind and heart to the real opinions by of blacks. You must continue."

"Very good series!"

"Values change in human beings usually by envolvement as a being in experiences one with the other. Therefore suggest more small group encounters with minority people."