

“We All Face the Same Problems”

Maxwell S. Freedman  
Leonia High School  
25 Hooks Lane  
Edgewater, NJ 07020  
(201)-224-3805  
[maxsfreedman@hotmail.com](mailto:maxsfreedman@hotmail.com)

Many Americans have studied the early years of this great nation's history, the times when racism prevailed in our society. Looking back at those years, we should be amazed that we have come so far in overcoming our racial differences. Even though the progress we have made is already tremendous, we still have more work to do.

Just under sixty years ago, Martin Luther King Jr., the father of the civil rights movement, said, "The Negro is still not free." If he could see the improvements we have made in our race relations, he would shed tears of happiness. He would be so proud that we have realized that, although we may look different and have different histories and traditions, we are all equal.

Fourteen years ago, those of you who were of voting age elected Barack Hussein Obama into office as this nation's forty-fourth president. Like me, President Obama can trace his lineage back to multiple races. His father is Kenyan; his mother, a white woman from Nebraska. My mother, born in Korea, married a Dominican man whose ancestors were slaves in America for much of the nineteenth century. These ancestors lived in a drastically different era, one in which only certain groups were equal under the law. It is a feat in itself that our laws provide equal opportunity for everyone only two centuries later.

This nation has accomplished so much which we previously considered unimaginable. We ended the abhorrence known as the slave trade; we escaped the grip of Britain to become one of the world's most powerful countries; we have played vital roles in ending reigns of terror worldwide. Yet we have also had

several failures, as does every nation. Clearly, we have succeeded before. If we shed our prejudices, doing so again will be much easier.

There is no doubt that some of our more recent errors still haunt us. We initiated two Middle Eastern wars regarding issues that were not our concern, and the debts from these wars still loom over us. A recession similar to the one we faced in 2009 is imminent. The American dollar is again becoming more worthless in the world economy. Our oil providers are angry at us for continuing to support Israel. They favor India and China, our greatest competitors.

We all face the same problems in the years to come. Whether white or black, Hispanic or Asian, we all must work together to conquer the problems that are threatening our future. All of our parents and grandparents, the baby boomers, are aging, and we are paying to keep them alive and well. They are the largest generation ever, and many economists say they will require much of the money we have put into Social Security. We worry not only for our parents, whom we love dearly, but for ourselves thirty, forty, and fifty years from now, and our children and grandchildren even after that. This fact does not change among different ethnic groups.

These problems belong to all of us. Regardless of your race, you worry about keeping your job, because at any moment, technology may replace you. You worry about keeping your job when companies ship them overseas to China and India, whose populations are expected to equal each other in eight years at 1.45 billion people. You worry that these two countries, each having a workforce double the size of ours, may go to war with each other for economic control of

the world. You worry that the United States will continue to police the world. You fear that we may fight another Iraq or Afghanistan War, only this time in India or China, or in Iran or Israel. You worry that these wars could turn nuclear. Whether Hispanic, white, Asian, or black, you fear for your future and that of your children and grandchildren.

These problems belong to all of us. We are all scared of what is happening to our beautiful planet. Our winters have become dryer and colder, yet we see no snow. Our summers have become excessively hot. Our air is polluted with toxins that also contaminate our water and foods. Animal species are dying out because they cannot deal with climate changes. Sea levels are rising as ice melts. We are beginning to worry that our planet is no longer safe.

It does not matter where you are from, what your customs are, or what prejudices you have been taught to hold. In a time where we face so many potentially divisive issues, we need to unite. Yes, our nation is now more of a melting pot than it ever has been before. We have abolished affirmative action, and the amount of discrimination cases per year has dropped forty-five percent since 2009. We have come so far, yet we still hold baseless prejudices. We must abandon them. The future of our country impacts all of us, regardless of race, in the same way.

Our society has become increasingly dependent on technology. You watch as the nanotechnology age begins and the computer age ends. Everything is getting smaller and faster. Machines are cheaper than humans, and are therefore replacing us. The job market is shriveling. The accountant who once

stored your records and completed your transactions has been replaced by a machine, which can only expedite the processes of a human, not think like one. It does not matter what race we are. We all fear that technology will dominate our lives to the point of no return.

In our nation, with no ethnic majority, we have no need or reason to let racial barriers hamper us from uniting. We are the United States, not the Divided States, of America, and we now need unity more than ever. When we look past each other's skin color and customs, we find that we all share the same fears and problems. Since we know this to be true, let us shed our prejudices and unite to ensure a safer, happier, and healthier future.