

“MLK: Messianic or Satanic?”

Recently, Jeffrey Garten, professor of international trade and finance at the Yale University School of Management, concluded that, “It is now clear, however, that **integration** occurred without the proper domestic economic and social foundations—a recipe for big trouble.”¹ Prof. Garten’s statement concerned the current regulatory crisis in China, especially the regulation of food and drugs. In sum, he argues that China **integrated** too quickly into the world economy; without developing fundamental infrastructures sufficiently.

What do Professor Garten’s statements have to do with Black Americans and Black economics? Everything! It is reaffirming, yet discomfoting to be reminded in 2007, what I was privy to write on March 22, 1980, about the state of Black Americans and integration. The essence of what was written over 27 years ago in an unpublished essay was that Black Americans, too, were not prepared to “integrate”—in this case, with White Americans. Consequently, the entire history of the integration process in America has been a comedy of errors and set-backs for Black Americans. In effect, integration has been successful in facilitating the filtering up of certain Black Americans. However, the majority of Black Americans have not benefited as expected from integration, and it is deplorable to find that nearly ten million Black Americans (around 25 percent) remain in poverty today.

The 1980 essay was constructed around the question, “Was Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK, the father of integration for Black Americans), Messianic or Satanic?” Why did this question surface? Consider the definition of “integration.” *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1975) states that “integration” means: “Incorporation as equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups (as race).”

What is crystal clear is that there is a total disconnect between this definition and what was attempted as a human experiment in America. The definition implies that integration involves the incorporation of “equals,” while a grade school student with basic training in arithmetic could discern that Black and White Americans were not equal when integration was undertaken in the 1960s. Although Blacks may have claimed spiritual, moral, and social superiority to Whites at that time, there was, and is, clear evidence of White superiority on the economic, educational attainment, and political fronts.

Quoting from the 1980 essay:

“...it was ridiculous to attempt to integrate what was, and is, an inferior group into a superior group; inferior and superior in terms of education, economics, and politics. This becomes even truer when it is understood that the “inferior” group is to be integrated into the ‘superior’ group with the purpose of attaining the ‘superior’ group’s status.

Thus we must conclude that the intent was not to have ‘integration’ lead to the ‘incorporation as equals into society’.... The integration process implemented in America has not, and will never, accomplish these ends.”

¹ See, “Why the West Must Regulate China’s Exports.” Obtained from the Internet on July 15, 2007; http://www.ftchinese.com/sc/story_english.jsp?id=001012678.

The outcome of the American integration experiment, which appears to be unraveling daily, is characterized by Figure 1.

Figure 1.—Anatomy of American Integration: The Status Quo

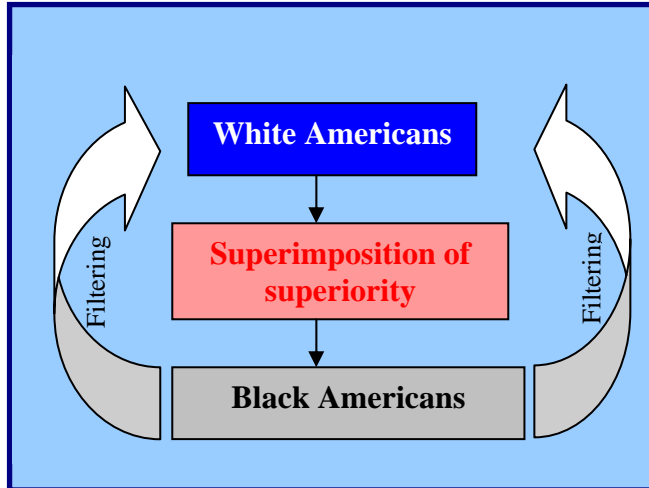


Figure 1 shows that, as stated previously, integration has permitted certain Black Americans to filter up from the bottom of the economic, educational, and political hierarchy. However, the majority of Black Americans remain at the bottom; comprehensive, integrative blending does not occur.

Having criticized the integration process, it is appropriate to offer an alternate approach. Such a strategy appears in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Anatomy of American Integration: Proposed Alternative

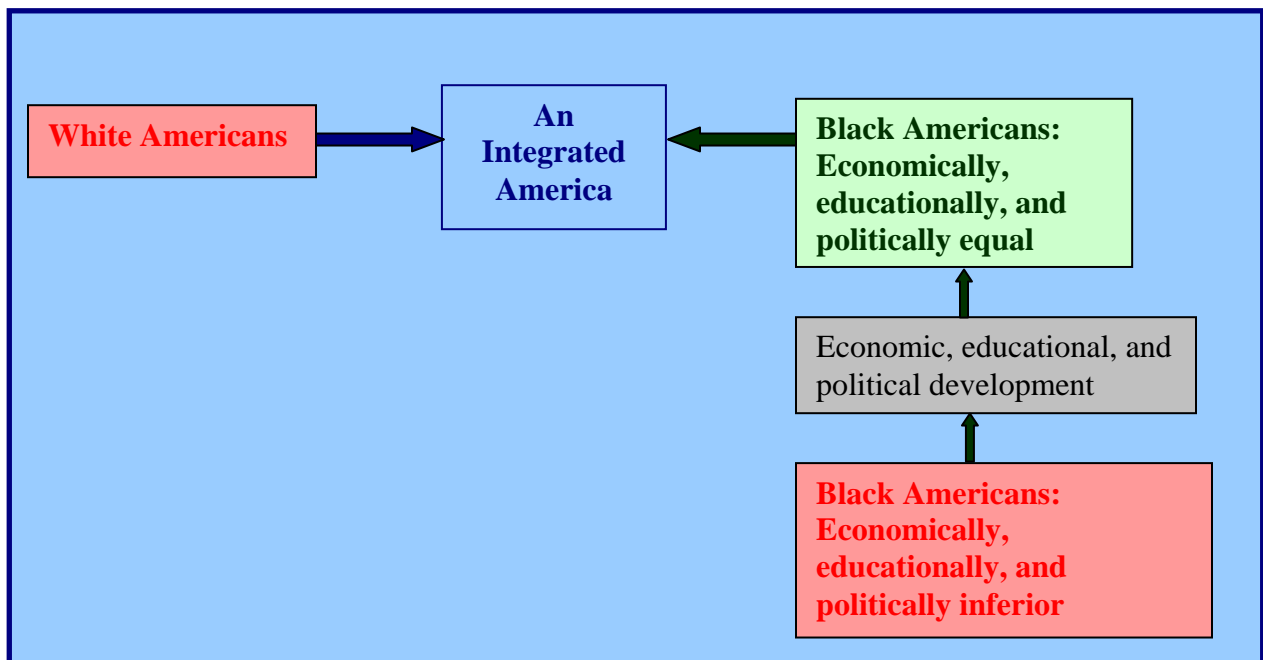


Figure 2 reveals that a logical strategy for integrating unequal social groups is to first permit the (economically, educationally, and politically) inferior group to develop before efforts are undertaken to physically integrate the two groups.

Is it possible for America to backtrack and permit Black Americans to develop in isolation prior to further attempts at integration? By default, many immigrant ethnic groups have used this approach. However, it is unlikely that Blacks will be permitted this opportunity by the nation at large; too many in America benefit from Black Americans languishing at the bottom of the socio-political-economic heap.

Will Black Americans see the logic of an alternative approach to integration and decide to implement the alternative strategy on their own? Unfortunately, Black “leadership” and most Black Americans are too “plugged-in” to the MLK paradigm to comprehend and exploit the benefits of the alternative strategy. Therefore, crises must unfold to shock Black Americans into accepting a new strategy for achieving desired outcomes in America. Of course, another alternative is to abandon the American experiment altogether and to opt for efforts to develop properly outside of America (see Randall Robinson’s *Quitting America*).

There you have it. MLK and his followers placed Black Americans in a terrible bind; only the miracle of wise and daring leadership, among other factors, can extricate Black Americans from the quagmire that is integration.

Was MLK messianic or satanic? Now that you have a new perspective, you can decide.

by

B. B. Robinson, Ph.D.

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