

*myerson*

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

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Area Code 415  
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Mr. William Gorham  
Assistant Secretary  
Department of Health, Education and Welfare  
Washington, D. C.

*William Gorham*

Dear Bill:

I was absolutely delighted to read in Saturday's newspaper about the establishment of the Urban Institute, and particularly about your appointment as its director. Congratulations to you for the opportunity and to the President for a brilliant selection.

As you would readily guess, I will be following the affairs of the Institute with the greatest interest and expectation. When you get around to establishing a public information staff, I hope you can see that I am on a regular mailing list of the announcements and publications of the Institute to help me keep track of it.

Just like everybody else, I was of course deeply upset by the disorders of the past month. This reaction may have been accentuated by the fact that Luther King's assassination came upon the eve of my wedding, and my wife and I had to ponder whether it was better to postpone it or go ahead with it, as a piece of constructive symbolism. Our ceremony was in fact followed rather promptly by a memorial service at the synagogue!

Certainly the validation of techniques to dissipate racial hostility must be one of the major research challenges of the Institute. I have been quite troubled what contribution I could make myself to such a question, and if you had been following my column the last couple of weeks you may perceive the pattern that I had <sup>set</sup> seized upon. I had been writing on the premise that a dispassionate, objective, and humanistic discussion of race differences might help some people to look for the people behind the black skins. I realize how old-fashioned this approach is, but I would guess that the brotherhood of man is something that can hardly ever be emphasized too much. From a sociological standpoint, however, one could certainly question the efficacy of this approach, and I am not aware of any empirical evidence one way or the other.

*Gorham, William*

Furthermore, there is a considerable body of opinion, both black and white, that supports the concept of black nationalism as a necessary step in emancipation. For my own part, I am deeply concerned that this movement will almost certainly overshoot in a very drastic way, playing as it does into the motives of radicals of all sides. As far as I can see, there has never been a clear confrontation of thinking about this question, and at least at some levels of analysis it ought to be on the agenda as a specific issue. However, the trend of the century seems to be to the accentuation of nationalism, rather than the reverse

LT. J. P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE, DEDICATED TO RESEARCH IN MENTAL RETARDATION

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and it is hard to see other than that the world is going through~~at~~ a stage of deep trouble about it.

If I may turn to a completely different platform, I am sure that you have been giving a great deal of thought to the importance of establishing some large-scale social experiments whose validity can be tested as a basis for nationwide investment in the rehabilitation of repressed people. I suppose the model cities program was intended to achieve such a goal, but I am very much afraid that the efforts will be dissipated in a great many different projects with insufficient leverage on any one of them to be able to demonstrate the potentials of social investment in depressed people. For many reasons~~f~~ it seems obvious that ~~W~~ashington D.C. ought to be the focus of such experiments, and I hope that your consultants will be paying some attention to writing a plan and analyzing the possibly achievable objectives of intense programs of redevelopment, education and reeducation, etc. If there has been any system study of this kind of large-scale effort, I hope you will point it out to me.

With all best wishes.