

Food for Thought Is Race Singular or Plural?

Earth Is our Home and Human Is our Race



by **Robert L. Woodard**
The Wynnefield Barber

Foods around the world are the subject matter of many facts. Ethnic groups use food to identify their cultural differences and traditions. As a barber at Woodard's Barbershop in the Wynnefield section of Philadelphia, I get a chance to travel the world from behind my barber's chair. Through conversations with people of various ethnicities, I visit many places through dialogue. I even get a chance to become a part of many of my patrons' families.

As a crossover barber, I have customers from Africa, Asia, Egypt, Mexico, Europe, Japan, Jamaica, Trinidad, China, Philippines, Barbados, Germany, France, Poland and as far as the Andaman Islands. I have become a "World Traveler" who has never left the barbershop. People are people. As a result, I see all people as part of one human family. Discovering this makes me realize that neighbors don't just live next door, they live all around the world. Accepting each person as a fellow human being will help us break the ice of social division. Human beings have been taught to believe that there's more than one race. This makes it very hard for them to open up to cultural diversity.

I recall a conversation with the Professor of Race Relations from LaSalle University. I remember asking him, 'How do you view race? Is it singular or plural?' As we exchanged thoughts about that question, he continued to run away from answering it. I pursued until he finally responded. It was then that I realized we all need to ask ourselves the same question. How do we as Americans view race? Is it singular or plural to you? We all have so much in common. If we be-

lieve that there is more than one human race, we put up barriers that block us from one another.

Food and culture are the keys to opening up many conversations. People from all parts of the world are proud of their traditions and waiting to talk to other ethnic groups about their own way of life. Food is medicine and medicine is food. For millions of years, traditions of every ethnicity have used food to help heal what ails you. Long before there were hospitals, there were traditional ways of healing many ailments with foods and herbs.

We have a lot to learn from one another as a Human Race. It's time to break the ice. Let's sit down with our neighbors from around the globe and have some iced tea or lemonade. By breaking bread with our neighbors, we will start to learn just how small the world really is and that there's nowhere else we as a human race can survive other than planet Earth. *Earth* is our home and *human* is our *race*. Let's make room for one another because we are all one family. The *human* family. We are all a part of each other. Our own survival starts by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. This can become the formula that can help our world society realize there's no place like home and that home is our Mother Earth.

The Natives that lived here before it became America understood that if you take care of Mother Earth, she will continue to produce the foods that will nurture her children. We are better together. Divided, we as a human race will fall.

Take the RACE Test today for a better way at www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org and share it with your family and friends as a little food for thought. **PRH**



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