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by the  
Governor's Interracial Commission  
of Minnesota



## be it ever so humble . . .

Every good man wants a home. Not just a home, but a suitable home where his wife and children can live in pleasant, safe and healthy surroundings. Furthermore, every American wants some freedom of choice as to the area in which he will live.

### WHAT ABOUT THE AMERICAN NEGRO?

Ambitions, hopes and aspirations know no racial boundaries. Since Negroes are now beginning to receive a larger share of the national income, it is understandable that they, like other Americans, desire a good home—sometimes a new home—in a pleasant neighborhood, near new schools and parkways; they too, want freedom in the selection of the location of their homes.

### WHERE DOES HE LIVE NOW?

With some exceptions, the Negro is forced by the custom of segregation to live in the older and more dilapidated sections of our cities where the houses are old, the rents excessively high, the streets neglected and where there are few trees and little grass. These sections are frequently overcrowded and neglected and offer little incentive for owner improvement.

### WHAT DOES HE WANT?

He wants, first of all, the same privilege that his white fellow citizen enjoys, namely the choice of location for his home insofar as his financial income will permit. He may want to be near his church or community center, and then again, he may want to bring up his family in one of the new and improved developments.

He sees white persons, regardless of moral character, moving into the house or neighborhood of their choice and he finds it difficult to understand why the same privilege should be denied him.

### WHY DO THE WHITE CITIZENS SEGREGATE HIM?

Some think that shabby housing is a racial trait. Yet the persons who think thus have not seriously examined the facts. Most of the houses the Negro occupies were old and deteriorated when he was permitted to move into them, and now because of segregation, they are overcrowded. An examination will reveal some very attractive houses which have been built and maintained by Negroes against tremendous odds.

Some whites fear that a Negro's entrance into their neighborhood will cause the financial value of their own property to drop, and such charges are often encouraged by a few unprincipled real estate operators. Much however, depends upon the market, and the cause is often panic on the part of the white group who rush to put their property on the market. Sane and thoughtful community discussion and action could prevent such fluctuations in property values.

Ultimately though, many whites object to the Negro because they are unsure of their own social position and therefore they fear that the presence of a Negro in their neighborhood will cause them to lose what they themselves have never obtained.

### MORALS AND SEGREGATION

If you are an American you believe in the American creed. In part it was expressed in these words of the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights; that

among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The person who accepts that creed must logically then hold that the Negro's natural right to a home in a good environment is as strong as that of any white American. The same is true in regard to freedom of choice. The white American who acts to bar a Negro from his neighborhood is violating his own creed. Furthermore, apart from morals, but from a purely dollar and cents viewpoint, segregation is not economical since it creates sub-standard housing which in turn increases the cost of fire, police and health protection to all citizens of the community.

### IS THIS JUST AN IDEAL?

This nation was founded on ideals, and because people believed in them, they made them work. The ideal of interracial housing is now slowly being realized. In the cities of our state there are some Negroes and some whites living peacefully and quietly on the same street and in the same neighborhood. What a few can do, many can do.

In other fields, what was an ideal yesterday is a reality today. Fifteen years ago, Negroes were barred from many jobs. Today they work side by side with white Americans. Fifteen years ago, Negroes were segregated in the Army and Navy. Today they drill and fight side by side. Fifteen years ago, they were not accepted in the hotels of this state. Today most of the better hotels accept them without question. The barriers in housing will fall in the same way.

### THE GOOD MINNESOTA CITIZEN

To many white persons these paragraphs may be disturbing. Candidly, the expression of these concepts in actual living will be difficult. Yet the real fulfillment of the Ten Commandments has always been difficult, and American society improved only when citizens did the difficult thing.



We ask you to think about these concepts, reflect upon them and test them against the Declaration of Independence and the spirit of Minnesota. We propose also this question: Is it logical for a Minnesotan to practice discrimination in his own neighborhood and at the same time to criticize other nations for their failure to cooperate in the building of a genuine family of nations?

### THE LAW REGARDING RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

"No written instrument hereafter made, relating to or affecting real estate, shall contain any provision against conveying, mortgaging, encumbering, or leasing any real estate to any person of a specified religious faith, creed, race or color, nor shall any such written instrument contain any provision of any kind or character discriminating against any class of persons because of their religious faith, creed, race or color. In every such provision any form of expression or description which is commonly understood as designating or describing a religious faith, creed or race or color shall have the same effect as if its ordinary name were used therein."

Minnesota Statutes Section 507.18, Subdivision 1, as amended and approved April 21, 1953.

This leaflet is the ninth of the series of publications summarized for the citizens of Minnesota by the Governor's Interracial Commission of Minnesota.

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