

# The Browning of America

## *Demography as destiny*

by Raul Lowery Contreras

Turning \$100 into \$110 is a struggle, while turning \$100 million into \$110 million is inevitable, says a Canadian whiskey heir. Nature turning the green leaves of summer into the brown leaves of autumn is also inevitable.

And, now, the ultimate inevitability—the “Browning of America.”

By the year 2050, according to Gregory Spencer of the Census Bureau, “If you want to sell things and go where the growth is, about half your market will be people in their 50s, and the other half will be the Hispanic and Asian populations.”

There are 262.8 million people in this country today, and that will increase, conservatively, to 393.9 million in 2050, according to the Census.

The population now is 73.6 percent non-Hispanic white, 12 percent black, 10.2 percent Latino (mostly of Mexican origin), 3.3 percent Asian and .7 percent Native American

(formerly known as American Indian).

In 2050, the percentages are projected to be 52.8 percent non-Hispanic white, 24.5 percent Latino, 13.6 percent black, 8.2 percent Asian and .9 percent Native American.

The growth of the Latino community is predicated on two factors, immigration and birth rates. Immigration is currently

Hispanic activists are trying to persuade the public that — given the shifting demographics — a bilingual, bi-cultural nation is inevitable, and not unpleasant.

under attack by elements of both political parties but nonetheless provides a net population growth of 325,000 Latinos yearly which, with 550,000 annual Latino births, adds 900,000 to the Spanish-surnamed population each and every year.

Asians, on the other hand, grow more by immigration than by natural birth rights (235,000 immigrants and 135,000 births).

The non-Hispanic white population continues to shrink and get older, while the Latino and Asian groups are younger. The black population is stable and is getting older as well.

The most immediate result of this huge demographic change

will be that Hispanics will become the nation's largest (and still growing) minority group in 2009, when they will outnumber American blacks.

Currently, the median age — half are older and half are younger — of non-Hispanic whites is 35.3, for Asians 30.6, 29.2 for blacks, and an astoundingly young 26.3 for Latinos. Projections are that by 2030, one in five Americans will be 65 or older, and most of them will be non-Hispanic whites.

California, by the way, is the harbinger of these national projections. The state is currently 52.5 percent non-Hispanic white, 29.8 percent Latino, 10.7 percent Asian and only 6.9 percent black, according to the most recent estimates of the California Department of Finance.

The same agency estimates that by the year 2040, the state will be comprised of 49.7 percent Latinos, 32.4 percent non-Hispanic whites, 11.8 percent Asian and 5.9 percent black.

Combining, then, the huge numbers and younger age of Latinos, the forthcoming “Browning of America,” promises one of three things:

1) The decline of America as a world economic and political power;

2) A young, stronger leader of the economic and political world of the future; or

**Raul L. Contreras** is a newspaper columnist and radio talk-show host. This article is reprinted by permission from the March 24, 1996 edition of The San Diego Union-Tribune.

3) A police state run by a declining number of older whites supported by some Hispanics, blacks, and Asians.

Proposition 187 was and is solid proof that non-Hispanics are quite prepared to institute whatever methods are necessary to retain control of

---

***“...these roadblocks must fall, for sooner than later, most Latinos who are legal residents will become citizens so they can vote...”***

---

the political apparatus and status quo. The California sponsors of the now legally dead 187 have moved to Arizona to try another 187 there.

Those who pushed Proposition 187 onto the American political landscape were aided by the black population, despite the obvious racial overtones of the proposition.

The status quo maintains an undemocratic two-thirds legal margin to pass school and other bond issues, thus depriving Latino children the one factor they painfully need to grow intellectually and economically — schools. The black population, of course, helps in its own destruction by aiding and abetting this political monstrosity.

But, in the end, these

roadblocks must fall, for sooner than later, most Latinos who are legal residents will become citizens so they can vote, and most will vote in their own economic and political interests.

Most who are native-born will do the same. They will vote for schools to educate their children and they will move into the universities in ever-increasing

numbers, just as every group in America has before them.

The result: America will continue to lead the world and it will do so speaking more than one language and with a world view tempered by a heritage of family and faith. In other words, the “Browning of America” is not the disaster in the making that some now predict. □