

## **Progress and Need**

Just how are black Americans faring today? The answer depends largely where you look - at the suburbs where increasing numbers of middle-class blacks live, or at the inner city where many African-Americans remain trapped in poverty, bad schools, and despair.

The question has been highlighted by the release of a new report by the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation. It marks 30 years since the Kerner Commission, appointed by President Johnson, trumpeted its famous finding of a nation "moving toward two societies, one black, one white - separate and unequal." That forecast is happening, according to the Eisenhower study.

Do its conclusions overstate the facts, or simply identify them? Views all too easily flow along old liberal-conservative fault lines.

More to the point, today's America presents a decidedly mixed picture. On the positive side, more blacks than ever are completing high school and moving on to college. African-Americans contribute greatly to the nation's life, holding positions of authority and prominence.

On the negative side, far too many black children get deficient educations. Far too many black youths end up in prison. And unemployment is rife in many inner cities, despite the economic boom being experienced by most Americans.

These conditions are an inadequately addressed priority for the United States. The Eisenhower report strikes a strong note by pointing to early education and mentoring programs that can brighten the lives of urban youth and calling for their replication across the country.

We second that, as should all Americans.