

“The Need and Blessing of Reconciliation and Justice for the African American Single Mom”

Reconciliation and Justice Conference
NCF - St. Louis
2017



Quote

We need to face the fact that when young girls have babies out of wedlock, most of the time their education ends with that first baby and those babies are 4 times as likely to grow up in poverty, end up in the penal system or the welfare system.



The African American Single Mom

- Who is she?
 - God's view...A woman, made in the image of God, given dignity, worth and value. She has character, is courageous and often the pillar of the family.
 - Societal Views...Historically and Sadly Still Today
 - Scapegoat – seen as responsible for the decline of the Black community at large...poverty, drugs, crime,
 - Inferior, nonproductive, dysfunctional, source of social problems
 - Rasheena Fountain – In The Huffington Post (4/2106), stated,
“Black Single Mothers are More than Scapegoats”

Statistics

- ***Racial or ethnic group*** ***“Non-marital”***
Births
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders 17 percent
- Non-Hispanic whites 29 percent
- Hispanics 53 percent
- American Indian and Native Alaskans 66 percent
- Non-Hispanic blacks 73 percent
- Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. published in August 2012 based on 2010 data

Statistics

- | <i>Racial or ethnic group
in single-parent families</i> | <i>Children</i> |
|--|------------------------|
| • Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders | 17 percent |
| • Non-Hispanic white | 25 percent |
| • Hispanics | 42 percent |
| • American Indian and Native Alaskans | 53 percent |
| • Non-Hispanic blacks | 67 percent |
- Summary of 2011 Census Bureau data compiled by [Kids Count](#), a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Moynihan Report 1965

- **The Tangle of Pathology**
- In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well.

The Negro Family: The Case For National Action Office of Policy Planning and Research United States Department of Labor March 1965 - See more at: <http://www.blackpast.org/primary/moynihan-report-1965#sthash.9cpwHQxK.dpuf>

Moynihan Report 1965

- There is, presumably, no special reason why a society in which males are dominant in family relationships is to be preferred to a matriarchal arrangement. However, it is clearly a disadvantage for a minority group to be operating on one principle, while the great majority of the population, and the one with the most advantages to begin with, is operating on another. This is the present situation of the Negro. Ours is a society which presumes male leadership in private and public affairs. The arrangements of society facilitate such leadership and reward it. A subculture, such as that of the Negro American, in which this is not the pattern, is placed at a distinct disadvantage. –
- See more at: <http://www.blackpast.org/primary/moynihan-report-1965#sthash.9cpwHQxK.dpuf>

Moynihan Report 1965

- Their Conclusion...
- Three centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American. At this point, the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right.
- In a word, a national effort towards the problems of Negro Americans must be directed towards the question of family structure.

Moynihan Report 1965

- Conclusion Cont'd...
- The fundamental importance and urgency of restoring the Negro American Family structure has been evident for some time. E. Franklin Frazier put it most succinctly in 1950: "As the result of family disorganization a large proportion of Negro children and youth have not undergone the socialization which only the family can provide. The disorganized families have failed to provide for their emotional needs and have not provided the discipline and habits which are necessary for personality development. Because the disorganized family has failed in its function as a socializing agency, it has handicapped the children in their relations to the institutions in the community."
- See more at: <http://www.blackpast.org/primary/moynihan-report-1965#sthash.9cpwHQxK.dpuf>

Moynihan Report 1965

- Moreover, family disorganization has been partially responsible for a large amount of juvenile delinquency and adult crime among Negroes. Since the widespread family disorganization among Negroes has resulted from the failure of the father to play the role in family life required by American society, the mitigation of this problem must await those changes in the Negro and American society which will enable the Negro father to play the role required of him."⁶¹ –
- See more at: <http://www.blackpast.org/primary/moynihan-report-1965#sthash.9cpwHQxK.dpuf>



Cultural Perspectives on the African American Family

- **Cultural Deviant – Deficit Model**
 - African American family is dysfunctional/abnormal
 - Most often used to study the AA Family
- **Cultural Equivalent – Deficit Model**
 - AA family is normal as long as it adheres to societal tradition of family life
 - No difference based on dominant European culture
 - AA family forsakes cultural values
 - Actually ends up promoting the dominant culture while minimizing, even obliterating cultural differences

Conformity is best and if not conformity then the AA family is deviant, invisible, irrelevant and unimportant.

African American Single Mothers: Understanding Their Lives and Families (1995) edited by Bette J. Dickerson

Cultural Perspectives on the African American Family

- **Cultural Variant**
 - **1970's Response to the Moynihan Report**
 - Viewed as culturally distinct functional forms
 - Use of this model in studies has occurred but often neglected
 - Studies reveal that the AA family has strength to overcome and survive “institutionalized Oppression and exploitation
 - “Scholars have taught much about what is and is not going on and have introduced a sense of pragmatic realism into the discussions, definitions and images of AA families

Issues of African American Single Moms Today

- AA Moms carry the burden of being blamed for...
 - Economic Suffering
 - Crime
 - Welfare
 - Deteriorating families
 - Broken Relationships - Abandonment, Incarceration, Drugs, Death

Issues of African American Single Moms Today

- She Deals with
 - Societal Views and stereotypes
 - Sexism
 - Racial Prejudice and Profiling
 - School to Prison Pipeline/Zero Tolerance Policies
 - Struggling to See Her Own Personal Worth and Value
 - Caring for Her Children: Provision/Safety/Health/Education
 - Self Care
 - Emotional Challenges/Distress
 - Shame
 - Broken Relationships - Abandonment, Incarceration, Drugs, Death

Reconciliation and Justice Needed

- Resist Myths and Stereotypes
- Recognize and Address Systemic Oppression – Education/Work
- Sincere Kirabo – Writer/Activist
 - 4 Common Lies we need to stop believing about single moms
 - They cannot raise their children properly
 - Fatherlessness leads to inner city youth delinquency
 - A father-figure is needed for the black child to be reared correctly (traditional family values)
 - Black single moms are to blame for the state of Black America

(1/2016)

Reconciliation and Justice Needed

- Elijah/Widow of Zarepheth - 1 Kings 17:8-24
- Elisha and the Widow's Oil
- Jesus/Widow of Nain – Luke 7:11-17

God's Compassion

He Sees, is Moved with Compassion, and Acts

Reconciliation and Justice Needed

- Change the Narrative
- See Moms as Individuals
- Eradication of Myths and Stereotypes
- Enter Her Story and Life
- Defend the Cause of the Fatherless!
- Boaz - “Kinsman Redeemer” - Ruth

The Blessing!

- Being Seen and Heard
- Restored Dignity
- The Burden Lightened
- Enhanced Freedom to use Gifts and Serve
- Bless God
- The World Sees Jesus in Tangible Ways