

Editorials

The Black Family: A Perpetual Crisis

In the 1960s, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a Harvard University sociologist, wrote that the American black family was in a state of disarray and near total collapse as a result of "benign neglect." Moynihan said further that black people were brought to America with little useful skills and no strong community of free blacks to greet and aid them. Thus, combined with institutionalized slavery, strong black family institutional ties were severely impaired, setting the stage for the black family disarray Moynihan wrote about.

While unfortunate, but not too surprisingly, many black civil rights, political, religious, and educational leaders took strong exception to Dr. Moynihan's viewpoint and alleged that he was a racist. Twenty years later, in 1983, an essay from "A Policy Framework for Racial Justice," a statement by 30 black scholars and civil rights leaders, much of what Dr. Moynihan was criticized for had been confirmed. However, considering the civil rights legislation that has been passed in those same 20 years, it would appear that many black citizens are considerably worse off.

This assumption was confirmed three years later in January, 1986, when a national poll indicated that while 64 percent of white Americans thought that President Reagan was doing a good job, only 38 percent of black Americans believed likewise. Underlying this black-white gap in beliefs about the President's performance, were two facts: (1) most lower income black families had not shared in the prosperity and economic progress achieved by middle class blacks and most white people; and, (2) the Reagan Administration's deep cuts in social programs had tended to worsen economic conditions for the vast majority of black Americans.

There was too undoubtedly a direct relationship between these viewpoints and Bill Moyers' shocking, but again not too surprising, television documentary, "The Vanishing Family - Crisis in Black America," which was viewed by millions of Americans, black and white, on January 25, 1986.

One-Tenth Assets

In reality, Moyers added a chapter to Moynihan's now 25-year-old study and raises the question about a possible perpetual black family crisis. For example, and as we noted in this column earlier this month, a recently released first ever assessment of wealth in America by the Census Bureau reports that the typical black family has less than one-tenth the assets of a white family.

The study found that black households had a medium net worth of only \$3,397 in late 1984, compared to \$39,135 for the typical white household. The study concluded that nearly one-third of all black families, 30.5 percent, reported owning no assets or having a negative net worth.

Furthermore, over half of all black families, 54 percent, had assets of less than \$5,000. With these seemingly endless accounts of blacks under these economic condition, the question arises again: Is there a perpetual black family crisis?

The answer to this question was found in the August, 1986, issue of EBONY magazine. It is noted in "Backstage" that eight of the previous 21 annual issues were devoted to different phases of the black family relationship. These issues dealt with black women, the black male, black youth, black children, and the "New Generation" of black youth. EBONY then says, "Which brings us to the 1986 special issue, 'The Crisis of the Black Family' which treats all of the above." As if to be sure its readers truly grasped the full meaning of "crisis," "Backstage" concludes, "Next month's EBONY will take a look at a black family but not one in crisis."

Ebony's Special Issue

In reviewing EBONY's 1986 special issue we found historian Lerone Bennett's article on "The 10 Biggest Myths About the Black Family" to be the most thought provoking in terms of helping most of us to put the presumed black family crisis in perspective. Bennett begins by quoting W.E.B. DuBois in that "in propoganda against the Negro since Emancipation in this land, we face one of the most stupendous efforts the world ever saw to discredit human beings." Bennett added eloquently that "nowhere is this more clearly visible than in the pervasive and continuing effort to discredit black fathers, mothers, and children. And it is scarcely possible to understand the problems and enduring strengths of the black family if we do not at least make an effort to understand and dispell the misconceptions, myths and outright lies... invented to hide...from black reality and American racism."

Bennett concludes his introductory remarks by noting that "...the vast propoganda campaign against the black family is generally organized around 10 myths."

In summary, but as originally numbered by Mr. Bennett, we have sought to identify the four myths (because of space limitations) that we think capture the key points.

1. The root cause of the black family problem is loose morals.
2. The bands of the black family were destroyed in slavery. In effect, Mr. Bennett is refuting Daniel Patrick Moynihan's theory of "benign neglect" and states that Moynihan "misread the plantation records of the black spirit, and...studies" by other scholars.
3. The black family is a product of white paternalism and government welfare.
4. The black family has always been a matriarchy characterized by strong domineering women and absent men.

Miller Says:

Efficiency, Realism Mean Food For America's Hungry

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

The classic debate of "guns or butter" raises the dander of many American people whenever the U.S. Government's priority pendulum swings towards significant increases in the military budget. As a proponent of a strong military, I have found myself carrying the military's banner under the presupposition that we must trade off some poverty programs to preserve this Nation's strength. Yet the "Hands Across America" demonstration forced me to reassess my assumption of guns or butter and not both.

I seriously doubted my premise when I read David Evans' article, "The Ten Commandments Of Defense Spending," published in the winter 1985 issue of "Parameters, Journal of the US Army War College." Three of these commandments were enough to convince me that America can have every strong military and fight hunger at the same time.

"The defense budget, like the universe, will expand forever," proclaims Evans. "Every year the Pentagon spews out a new Five-Year



Sherman

Defense Plan (FYDP) and each FYDP assumes increases of about \$30 billion each year for the next five years."

Since Congress has approved a military budget of \$292 billion for fiscal 1987, then a \$30 billion yearly increase is approximately 10 percent per year. But what happens if this amount is too much? "Requirements will expand to equal the availability supply of money," Evans claims.

Evans offers a disquieting example to make his requirement expansion point. "After years of

watching the officer ranks swell, especially in the senior grades, Congress in 1908 enacted the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act, which established ceilings for each officer rank. As soon as it was published, those services with fewer officers than allowed promptly raised their billet requirements to equal the permitted number of majors and colonels."

Evans' commandments suggest that the military is accentuating a never-ending doom and gloom scenario. In his second commandment, Evans contends that military planners "estimate the threat on a worst-case basis; budget to meet it on a best-case basis." Such pessimistic assessments offer little solace to diehard American idealists, so I, as one, have been eager to see more money pumped into the military.

Nonetheless Evans offers some recommendations that the military should adopt to save money, thereby freeing funds to fight hunger in America. "Don't allow planners to assume an unrealistically high growth rate in future defense budgets," declares Evans. "Reward

austerity; reduce overhead."

Although his ideas will save money, Evans points out how human nature can deter their acceptance. "A service that proposed an austere, low-cost weapon to replace one twice as expensive would probably wind up with one-for-one replacement and a cut in its budget."

Evans' comments lead me to believe that America can have all the guns its needs and plenty of money to feed its hungry, if efficiency and realism are the creed of tomorrow's military planners.

Employment Security

Recovers Monies

Raleigh - More than \$224,383 was recovered during the second quarter of 1986 when 305 people were convicted of filing false unemployment insurance claims with the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina (ESC).

In April, 93 people were tried and convicted of unemployment insurance fraud. During May, 70 were tried and convicted and in June, 42 were tried and convicted.

During the first six months of 1986, North Carolina's recovery rate of 73 percent exceeded the federal standard of 55 percent," said John Lynch, ESC's chief fraud investigator.

UNITED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP...NEEDED NOW!

ARE WE GOING TO SIT ON OUR HANDS AND LET BLACK COMMUNITIES CRUMBLE AROUND US? GRASS ROOTS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS MUST EMERGE TO FORGE A UNITED EFFORT AGAINST CRIME NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, BLIGHT, AND DECAY.



Summer Comes And Thoughts Turn To Love

By Sabrina Johnson
Special To The Post

Summer is the season considered most carefree and frivolous. Serious men and women turn their thoughts to recreation, relaxation, and rest. The mood of the season is captured in the boldness of color, texture, and lightness of fabric and the simplistic style of clothing. Families otherwise distant of each other are drawn together for the cause of getting to know each other again. Love and infatuation run rampant.

Books, magazines, and newspaper make such thoughts and ideas of summer their primary selling tool. Generally trends of thought are much less business and commerce oriented and more social and societal oriented. Summer novels or beach novels as they are most often called require a lesser amount of concentration to keep up with the thought and plot, are most often in paperback in the first edition printing and cost less than \$5.

Newspapers run features on everything from home canning to weekend fun attractions. The lifestyle section and entertainment section grow from a few obscure pages to full color multi-page sections.

Colleges and universities



Sabrina

also take advantage of the free season. While the curriculum is held together by serious academic study it also offers a range of summer pastime study. Courses like watercolor for beginners, arts and crafts, the study of the romance novel, golf and tennis, hiking, surviving divorce and so on. These courses are less intense and demanding while expanding thought.

Popular magazines make the best light of summer. Their covers are bright, simple, clean and feature articles perfect for reading in the backyard or by the pool. A look inside is like visiting a resort. Men and women magazines focus on outdoor fitness, caring for summer skin and hair, cool

fashion for hot days at work, singles advice, Doctor Ruth and great summer clothes for under \$75. Of course, diet cannot be left out. Just about every magazine carries diets that take off weight in short periods of time, diets that improve skin, hair and nails and diets that make one more sexy or sensual. Studies and quizzes are featured that let one know whether or not she and her mate are sexually compatible, can travel or live together and love or hate each other. Men's magazines cover explosive subjects like selecting the right sunglasses, 20 hot spots to meet women and choosing the right beer.

Two very popular magazines, one each for men and women, have featured articles for singles on finding that special someone. This makes light of the depressing news about singles brought out some two or three months ago concerning the lack of suitable mates. According to recent studies and surveys the older and more successful a single person is his or her probability of finding a compatible mate drops severely each year. Further magazine articles focus on obsessed men and women and how to spot them before they spot you. Putting these three topics of discussion and many others together in a bowl does not balance or neutralize to something called reasonable. But love, summer love is not.

It is carefree, simple, and lacking in substance like many other things of summer. Just like the topics of discussion, summer romance often fades as does the summer.

Summer is a marvelous season to catch up on reading and conversation. The available topics are plentiful; some detailed, some not. What is true is the abundant increases and the audience never seems to tire of it. Most of the features are the same each year with new twists to make them work within the realm of this summer. Why does the public accept it? Simply because that is what they want. And students of business will confirm that meeting and satisfying the public's demands can and will equal great profit.

The season is big business for entertainment, festival occasions, vacations and the lazy, hazy mood with all its associates.

Why not enjoy the season with some good mindless reading that strikes up lots of conversations on the beach, breaks up the work day and make for good pillow talk when it is otherwise too hot to indulge in other activity?

THE CHARLOTTE POST	
North Carolina's Fastest Growing Weekly	
704-376-0496	
"The People's Newspaper"	
107 Years Of Continuous Service	
Bill Johnson	Pub. Emeritus
Gerald O. Johnson	Publisher
Bernard Reeves	Gen. Mgr.
Loretta Manago	Mag. Editor
Fran Farrer-Bradley	Adv. Mgr.
Dannette Galtner	Office Mgr.
Published Every Thursday by The Charlotte Post Publishing Company, Inc.	
Main Office: 1531 S. Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203	
Second Class Postage Paid at Charlotte	
Member, National Newspaper Publishers' Association North Carolina Black Publishers Association	
National Advertising Representative: Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.	
One Year Subscription Rate One Year - \$17.76 Payable In Advance	
USPS No. 965500 POSTMASTER Send Change of address to: Charlotte Post 1531 S. Camden Rd. Charlotte, N.C. 28203	