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“How Can There Be Joy?”

A popular term today is “joy.”¹

We recall from childhood church parishioners asserting that they: “Would not let the devil steal their joy.”

But is it not true, plain, and simple, that Black America’s “joy” has been stolen for over 400 years?

What is “joy?” Being happy to be alive? Maybe. But when one’s life is fraught with a restricted ability to meet material desires and those of one’s family and uncertainty about tomorrow at best, and destitute poverty at worst, then how can one have “joy?”

In a recent **BlackEconomics.org** commentary entitled [“How Long Is Not Long?”](#) we outlined four critical economic gaps between Black and White America: Poverty, unemployment, median income, and median wealth. How can you have “joy” knowing that your counterpart on the other side of town or in the suburbs is enjoying plenty, while you are without and don’t have any?

The counterpart has a four-bedroom house; two cars in the garage; a refrigerator, freezer, and pantry stocked with food for an apocalypse; a vacation cabin near a lake or the seashore; a bank account flush with cash; college education funds for the children; equity market investments; two 401K’s; and good/easy and long-term jobs with solid companies to support the entire arrangement.

We comprehend that Black Americans at the upper end of our income and wealth distribution have all or some of these accoutrements of life. But most Black families cannot claim ownership of this lifestyle.

Is it necessary to traverse the landscape concerning why these differences exist? If you want a sophisticated and “educated” explanation for the differences, then be prepared to read several books and articles. If you want a straightforward and just as accurate assessment, then simply say the difference is between White “haves” and Black “have nots” resulting, in large measure, from systemic racial discrimination.

¹ Young and old alike are using the term “joy.” Notably, a young participant in a Peace Studio Summit Roundtable on September 20, 2021 (<https://youtu.be/btp3Ssw2O3M>), Ms. Anya Dillard, who is Founder of the [Next Gen Come Up](#), emphasized the need to retain our “joy” amidst the

pain of injustice. In addition, a September 23, 2021 article in *The New York Times* entitled, [“We Went to Vegas to Wring Joy from Our Heartbreak,”](#) casts “joy” as an emotion that Black Americans value, and as something that can be engendered by expending hard-earned resources in “Sin City.”

In the 21st century, how can Black America continue to settle for this type of an arrangement? How can Black America permit our “joy” to be continuously stolen and squelched?

Understandably, wealth does not guarantee happiness or “joy.” The saying goes that: “Some of the richest people are the most miserable.” On the other hand, we can assure you that there are many Black Americans who would love to have some of that kind of misery.

We may have already reached the point of no return. That is, if you are a “have not,” then it is increasingly difficult to become a “have.”

So, if you want to have “joy,” especially “joy” that is brought on by material ease and the related pleasure, then it is incumbent

upon you to unite with like-minded Black Americans who want to “take their joy back.”

It’s time for new and young leadership to evolve a strategy that will begin to justifiably end White America’s material superiority over Black America.

If such action is not taken now, then it will never be taken.²

BlackEconomics.org is here to help design such a strategy.

B Robinson
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² The day is fastly approaching when the labyrinth of artificial intelligence’s tracking, echo chambers, confirmation bias, and the like will make it nearly

impossible to produce radical thought that can undermine and displace White America’s dominance over Black America.