



BlackEconomics.org®

“Is ‘Nobody’s Fault but Ours’ an Accurate Answer?”

Purpose: This Analysis Brief highlights barriers to Black Americans’ socioeconomic advancement. It discusses key related and underlying reasons for these barriers. It concludes by assessing prospects for future favorable outcomes and what they portend for Black Americans (Afrodescendants).

Introduction

Two supremely perplexing questions, the answers for which are substantiated by extant statistics are: “Why have Black Americans (Afrodescendants) remained ‘behind the eight ball’ for over 400 years; and “Why has this condition persisted during the *post bellum* era?” As easy answers to the just-given questions, many scholars and laypersons alike cite White Supremacy, racism, and discrimination as reasons. In addition, expansive and high-quality scholarship has addressed these questions from innumerable angles. Too often, the just-mentioned scholarship points outward. Countervailing that posture, we invite a reversal of the outward looking view in exchange for more inward thinking about reasons for Black America’s *status quo*.ⁱ

This brief essay pinpoints a few fundamental factors that are internal to Black America’s seeming inability to overcome our opposers’ thin veneer-like defense that preserves *status quo* conditions. This failure to break the external lock on Black American economic development, leaves us at the bottom of the socioeconomic paradigm perpetually, while permitting all other racial and ethnic groups to step up, on, and over us on their way to a higher quality of life and a higher level of wellbeing. Also, we use this essay to ask and answer the questions: “Can we afford to delay acting purposely to reset our course;” and “Are there small and early salvos that we can perform now or in the future that can jump start a sizeable and enduring path to higher-quality lives and higher levels of wellbeing?”

Our Agency Against WS&R

Uniquely, BlackEconomics.org has discussed *ad nauseum* that Black “leadership” likely exacerbated Black America’s pain and suffering from our battle with White Supremacists and racists. Did that leadership study sufficiently to prepare sound strategic plans to produce our desired aim? What were and are our aims? Thus far, Black America’s most prevalent responses have been to acquiesce to “minority” status programs that signaled low expectations for us and a need for special opportunities to overtake the remainder of the nation. Unfortunately, these programs were never designed to enable our independence, were underfunded, and were always abandoned and were always subsequently replaced by another such program. We did not take the

time to assess what was required to defeat racism, formulate a plan, and then execute the plan and achieve the desired outcomes—at least no such plan was ever made available publicly.

Our Agency to Trust and Unify (Solving the Willie Lynch Problem)

When Black Americans have sought to develop strategies that would produce improved outcomes and better conditions, we have enjoyed limited success because of our greed and the absence of sufficient trust.

Our history of forced starvation from high-level benefits and an excellent quality of life produced and produces over zealousness for fame and fortune. Even when we know that one among us has something significant to contribute to our growth as a People, we exhibit jealousy and envy one toward the other. Also, we do not trust each other enough to engage in all-around fair practices that can facilitate unity and power sufficient to change our world. Whether the Willie Lynch syndrome is real or imagined, we continue to display the results of a trained divisiveness that produces no unity and no power to overcome our oppressors.

Our Failure to Renew our Minds

Over a period of nearly 20 years during an earlier part of our life, we researched and explored media's effect on Black American outcomes.ⁱⁱ As one would expect, we concluded that our minds were the transmission mechanism and that without a change of our minds, we should not expect changes in our physical environment. Our research inferred that we needed to: (1) Impose a change in media images of Black Americas; and (2) eliminate or reduce adverse images and increase positive images of Black Americans in the media, which could produce much improved outcomes for Black Americans. In other words, a reconditioning of our minds precipitated by what we and others view in the media, could and can produce desired changes in outcomes that we experience.

In other words, a renewal or reorientation of our minds is the starting point for changing behavior—our behavior and that of all other groups in the American *milieux*. In fact, any action taken to improve Black American outcomes that does not first address the need for mind renewal will be ineffective or will be less effective than it would be otherwise.ⁱⁱⁱ

Our Failure to Expiate our Sins, Faults, and Shortcomings

It is common knowledge that by most measures of religiosity, Black Americans are the most “religious” racial/ethnic group in the country, and we are primarily Christianity adherents. Given Christianity's mandate for its adherents to strive to eliminate what are viewed as sins, faults, or shortcomings, a fundamental requirement for our mental health and overall wellbeing is to atone for our sins, faults, and shortcomings. Generally, atonement and reconciliation are excellent practices to place one's mind in a state that is prepared to confront objectively and successfully life's challenges. However, an important consideration for Black Americans in our efforts to grow and develop properly is that we may find ourselves “stuck or hung up” with an “unclear conscious” because of our failure to self-expiate our sins, faults, or shortcomings. The latter outcome is sufficient to impose a sense of unworthiness in our minds, which is ultimately reflected in our actions.

It is important to note that this entire scenario continues to hamstring Black Americans, in large measure, because we have accepted our oppressors' definitions of sins, faults, and shortcomings.^{iv,v} Therefore, as an essential first step toward self-reliance, self-determination, and freedom from our oppressors, Black Americans must develop our own moral code that enables achievement and retention of a strong sense of worthiness that empowers us to work to achieve all of our agreed goals.^{vi}

Putting Off for Tomorrow

A famous wise saying is: "Why put off for tomorrow what you can do today." However, you will recall that, in 1962, Malcolm X calmed tensions in Los Angeles when LAPD attacked a Nation of Islam (NOI) Temple, and caused many injuries, one of which was fatal. He suggested calm for Black NOI members and all other Black Americans living in LA and promised a future day of reckoning--putting it off. MLK cautioned Black Americans from striking back violently after Civil Rights Marches in Selma and Montgomery during 1965. He requested marchers to permit patience to rule the day; and to put off spontaneous violence. We saw similar results from Black Lives Matter (BLM) leadership following the late George Floyd's death during 2022. Also, even with what some believe to be a type of "Black Illuminati" (i.e., the "Black Boule"), which is recognized as part of Black Urban Myth, has also delayed execution of an agenda that could produce positive and transformative improvements for Black Americans' lives. Rather, they wait patiently for the right time to act.

There is something to be said for being strategically patient and timing certain actions perfectly for maximum effects for certain actions, issues, or initiatives. However, when efforts to improve Black Americans' quality of life and wellbeing are involved, delays in doing so only exacerbate existing statistical gaps and extend the time required to overtake other racial and ethnic groups that form the remaining population of the nation. Black Americans can least afford to delay self-determined efforts to improve outcomes in our lives. If such delays occur, then we likely fail our own self-directed assessment concerning the need for change, we maintain inappropriate attitudes/opinions about other racial and ethnic groups, and we sign a death certificate for what could have been a Black American nation.^{vii}

Conclusion

This brief essay serves as a summary of where Black America is today and how we might reach our desired goals. At the same time, it clarifies that we have failed and may continue to fail to achieve these goals for simple reasons:

1. A few of us (a Black American elite) are too busy capitalizing (obtaining monetary rewards) on economic activities that are harmful to us.
2. We still suffer from the effects of the Willie Lynch principle that keeps us divided and disunited.
3. We have no comprehensive strategy for renewing our sick minds, which were made sick by imposition of Willie Lynch principles for the past 400-plus years.
4. Even after the Million Man March on October 16, 1995, we did not pursue persistently use of reconciliation and atonement processes to purge ourselves of sins that made us inculcate

feelings of “unworthiness,” and keep us unempowered to work to achieve our objectives and goals.

5. We keep waiting for others to do what we have every right, duty, and responsibility to do for ourselves.

Simply put, until all Black Americans (Afrodescendants) are willing to sign a blood covenant aimed at up righting our current postures on the five reasons for our *status quo* socioeconomic condition in the nation, then a correct answer for “Why are we in that condition?” will be: “Nobody’s Fault but Ours!”

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Endnote

ⁱ The following four BlackEconomics.org submissions were produced between 2021 and the current period. “Colorism and Leadership” (<https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/collead122025.pdf>); “Reasons for Black American Leadership Failures” (<https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/fmobaalf121325.pdf>); “Reversing the Pointed Finger” (<https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/rtpf102425.pdf>); and “An Historical Critique of Black American Leadership” (<https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/leadership.pdf>). (All Ret. 01/25/26)

ⁱⁱ Brooks Robinson (2009). “Black Unemployment and Infotainment.” *Economic Inquiry*, 47(1), 98–117. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-7295.2008.00165.x>. (Ret. 01/23/26).

ⁱⁱⁱ See the *Long-Term Strategic Plan for Black America (LTSPFBA)*; https://www.ltspfba.org/LTSP/fin_ltspfba_071223.pdf; 1.5 MB; Ret. 01/24/26). It reflects an important shortcoming cited in the text of the article (i.e., no well-defined analysis and documentation befitting for such an expansive proposition that Black Americans must “renew our minds.”

^{iv} An expression of the late leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), the Hon. Elijah Muhammad, as espoused by Minister Malcolm X (*aka*, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) was that Black Americans should be absolved of their “sins” because their “sinful” acts constituted entrapment by the government, and that these sinful acts were not part the culture of Africans that were brought to the Americas as prisoners and later labeled “slaves.” Also, in his lecture, “The African Mind,” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TTWkr1OYp0&list=PL1AA2FFC3386A8082>), the late Prof. John Henrik Clarke reported that “ancient African cultures did not have jails/prisons, not even a word for jail/prison in their languages.”

^v Research shows that, while religion is a two-edged sword (some religious adherents benefit from religion through their strong sense of self-worth, while others reflect the disbenefit of unworthiness due to the reasons already discussed). Do religious versus irreligious persons suffer the most mental health concerns? According to a 2021 *World Journal of Clinical Cases* entitled “Spirituality, Religiousness, and Mental Health: A Review of the Current Scientific Evidence,” the evidence is mixed. Persons in different cultures with different mental health diagnoses experience different outcomes. However, there is evidence that certain religious persons in certain cultures that adhere to different religious practices may experience more “mental health” conditions than the nonreligious.

^{vi} The moral code that we adopt can be newly developed or taken in whole or in part from that of ancestral traditions. The need to establish a moral code as the foundation of a society is best evidenced by the so-called “father of economics,” Adam Smith’s development of a moral code for Europeans, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, before producing *The Wealth of Nations* which outlined the workings of the European’s economy or way of life.

^{vii} In a November 2024 Brief Essay entitled “A Price for Everything,” BlackEconomics.org contends that, if Black Americans fail to take charge of our current and future affairs, “. . . then our entire horrid and torrid experience in America will fade from history, and we will not be recounted in Earth’s future—not even in a small font footnote.” See Brooks Robinson (2024). “A Price of Everything.” BlackEconomics.org. <https://www.blackeconomics.org/BELit/apfe110424.pdf> (01/24/26).