

BLACK CHILD JOURNAL

Winter 2014 Black Child, Family and Community

CO-PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

*T*he purpose of the **Black Child Journal** is to focus on issues that are critical to the development of the Black child. What can be a more timely choice of a relevant and crucial issue than family and community?

The Black family has been remarkably resilient throughout the history of the African experience in America adapting to the most brutal form of human trafficking and exploitation in the history of the world. Following the longest period of exploitation--chattel slavery, the oppression was continual, the forms merely changed. Even though the Black family as an institution has lived a precarious existence per the economic and social forces in the larger society, it has prevailed and fulfilled its functions. As harsh and constricted as enslavement was, it did not destroy Black peoples' capacity to adapt and sustain the vital familial and kin associations and beliefs that served as the underpinning of a developing African-American culture.

Many studies have described the Black family as pathological. Pathology is in the eye of the beholder. If one eliminates the positive function of a cultural constellation, if one ignores the meaning that personal relations have to the people involved, if one, in short, uses science to depersonalize, what emerges is always pathology. For, health involves spontaneous human feelings of affection and tenderness which the research cannot encompass. People living under oppression always develop social formations which appear to the surrounding oppressive culture to be excessive or pathological. The form these so-called excesses take varies from culture to culture and person to person within the culture--but no matter how extreme the nature of adjustment, once the social pressure which created it is removed, a new adjustment develops. A people are not destroyed by

its history. What destroys a people is physical annihilation or assimilation, not its family life.

In this regard, the following definition characterizes the **BLACK FAMILY**: the **BLACK FAMILY** is a group of people who are historically, culturally, biologically, and spiritually connected and whose relations to each other are governed by a particular set of cultural beliefs, historical experiences and behavioral practices. The family and community are inseparable! Historically the Black family and the Black Church (African Baptist and African Methodists) have worked hand in hand as the only two institutions in the Black community that have consistently supported and nurtured Black people through their sojourn in America. However, each era in American history brings new challenges to Black Americans. Each challenge suggests the need to "circle the wagons," reflect and seek new directions. There is a need to analyze social trends and policy and formulate strategies as individuals, families and communities.

This edition of the **Black Child Journal**, **The Black Child-Family and Community** offers an opportunity for practitioners and scholars to address the challenges, successes, strengths, and strategies of the Black Family and Black Community for the holistic development of Black Children.

For the sake of the children, family and community let the discussion and actions begin; and "let the circle be unbroken."!

"It is the family that gives us a deep private sense of belonging. Here we first begin to have our self defined for us."

—Howard Thurman

UPWARD AND ONWARD,
paul hill, jr