

Point of View

CHILD WATCH

By Marian Wright Edelman
President
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Ballad of a Young Black Man



Marian Wright Edelman

He may begin his life in poverty. Nearly half of all black children in this country do. This means he will know very early what it is to be cold, to be hungry, to be afraid.

He will take his lessons in a crowded, noisy classroom. Schools in poor or low-income communities have less money to spend on teaching children.

He may very well leave high school without getting a good education. One out of every five black youths drop out of school. Even among those who do get diplomas, many have not been taught the basic math and reading and writing that they need.

Dreams of college will probably not be his. Fewer black high school graduates have been going on to college in recent years.

He will struggle, and often fail, to earn enough to survive. Young black male dropouts have always had an especially difficult time earning a living. They suffered a stunning 61 percent drop in annual earnings between 1973-1984, if inflation is

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taken into account. Even among young black high school graduates, earnings fell 52 percent. In 1985, nearly half of all black male dropouts between the ages of 20-24 could not find any employment whatsoever.

He will live in danger. The greatest cause of death among black males 16-24 is homicide. Black men are killed in homicides six times as often as white men.

In the face of so much that is frightening and difficult, he may lose his way. Perhaps he will father children and be unable to contribute to their support. Perhaps he will even turn to the underground economy to survive.

The young black man can only find his way if he has an education, a job and a chance to become a responsible adult. We must reach out to him and help him in our different capacities as teachers, role models, employers, church and civic leaders, government officials, counselors, fathers, mothers, and friends.

He needs us.

COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner

How Parents Abuse Their Children

"Ms. Jones has such well behaved children. They never give anyone an ounce of trouble."

"Mr. & Mrs. Smith certainly do know how to discipline their children. They don't take any 'stuff' from them."

"I believe that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child. So if my children ever misbehave I tan their hides with a belt."

"Jimmy may be just four years old but if he acts up in public, I slap him upside the head. But the more I beat

To Be Equal

CORPORATIONS CHALLENGED TO DO BETTER

By John E. Jacob

Corporate America must go beyond equal employment hiring to groom young black managers for line positions and career ladders that lead to the top.

Part of the problem is that companies are locked into credentialism — abstract criteria that are not job-related and do not predict job success.

Corporations have to look at people, not at culture-bound credentials. When they do, they get outstanding performers.

Too few corporations are willing to bring promising black managers along in a succession of increasingly responsible line jobs, and then put them in a vice president's chair. Instead, they cry about the "limited pool" of blacks for managerial jobs.

The problem is worsened by corporate restructuring that reduces opportunities for promotions, leading some of our most talented middle managers to hit a career plateau. It does the same to whites, of course, but their

situation differs to the extent that they already occupy the heights of corporate America.

A related problem is the proliferation of covert barriers to black advancement.

This is the skeleton in the corporate closet. It's



John E. Jacob

something no one talks about. It's something few will admit to. But it's there. And it effectively sabotages even the most sincere cor-

porate affirmative action directives.

performance. There may be a subtle ceiling to their progress. But none of that is very new. Blacks have always had to be better than anyone else, have always faced racial bigotry, and have always been held to a double standard that says a black who has made it to a managerial post is doing pretty well, even though his white counterpart is sitting in a vice president's chair.

The difference today is that there is a critical mass of bright, capable young black managers who are advancing to operational jobs that have bottom-line impact. The best companies want to keep them happy. And the new breed of black managers has options — they can either

stay in corporate American or go on their own.

We are all impatient for more change and faster change, but there are hopeful signs that we may be on the brink of some real breakthroughs in corporate America.

Global competition is so stiff that many corporations just can't afford to tolerate discriminatory limits on their employees' growth. It is finally in corporate America's best interests to advance and

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retain black and minority managers. Today, performance, not race is becoming the major factor.

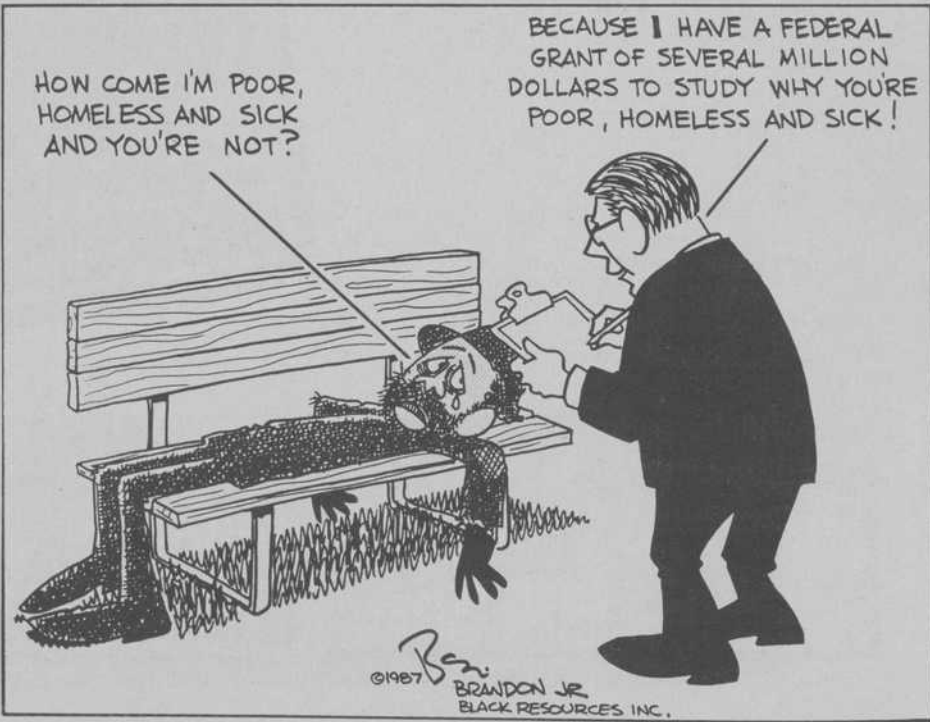
But blacks and whites must keep up the pressure to win equal treatment and a fair shot at the heights of corporate power. As Tom Shropshire, who recently retired as senior vice president of Miller Brewing, one of the most powerful jobs held by a black man in corporate America, says:

"It's up to us as black people to keep up the pressure on those corporation and not let up for a minute because our fight is by no means over. We've got to make them understand that we're not going to accept being pushed in the background anymore."



him, the worse he acts. I'm beginning to hate this dam child."

These statements can only be labeled as uninformed and disgusting. What they really mean is that the parent is too busy, too disinterested, or too emotionally disturbed to take the necessary time to learn the correct way to raise children. With proper attention, children could become confident, mature, and emotionally stable and develop their capabilities to a



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