

POINT OF VIEW

OUR VIEW

Two family household

Today's single parent has become the poster child of the Black family. Nearly 70 percent of our children are born out of wedlock. It has become the norm and the two parent family the exception. Our out-of-wedlock birth rate comes close to what it was in slavery when Black marriage was prohibited.

But, there is a light at the end of this dark tunnel. A marriage movement is emerging in the Black community. Black Marriage Day was recently celebrated and more studies are showing the great benefits of marriage.

Sandra Hofferth, professor of family studies at the University of Maryland, found that when it comes to quality fathering, it is marriage, not biology, that separates the men from the boys. Her research also found that married stepfathers are equally good at fathering both their biological and the stepchildren who live with them.

These results were not duplicated with cohabiting (shacking) but unmarried male partners who are the biological fathers of the children in the household. These fathers, her research found, didn't put in as much time or show as much warmth as married biological fathers.

These facts are noteworthy because in our community fathers are more likely to be single than married. When we do marry, it's with children from our past. For a lot of Black men, marriage is the farthest thing from their mind and no one is telling them that they should.

"If we don't tell them they need to get married, how will they know? We have to hold up the highest principle for these men, which is marriage," said Rev. Rozario Slack, director of Fathering and Urban Initiatives for First Things First.

Professor Hofferth's study looked at two-parent blended (adults that have children prior to the marriage) families in which fathers are the biological father to some and stepfather to other children.

He found that children spend as much time with married stepfathers as with married biological fathers. He also found that cohabiting partners, even if they are biological fathers to a child, do not invest the same amount of time with children as married biological fathers, and they are less warm than married biological fathers.

So marriage makes men better fathers; and in the absence of marriage, men are not the best fathers they can be. What about for women? What does marriage do for them?

Marriage frees women from the burden of providing and parenting at the same time. It allows them to specialize in various areas of their own growth and development as wife, mother and/or career woman.

Marriage frees women to relax with their day-to-day responsibilities knowing that there is someone else to help them.

Many women say they don't mind being single, that they would rather do badly by themselves. That's more bravado than candor. Ask a single mother if she would rather have a happy successful marriage or be a single parent. Hands down, marriage wins.

Our marriages need help whether you are rich or poor, young or old. We'll get the Lexus fixed but won't get help for our marriage. We let it fester and die with thoughts of getting another.

But what about the children who suffer emotionally, financially and spiritually when a marriage fails or even fails to take place?

Our children deserve better, and we have to be responsible enough to give them better. Our children deserve the gift of a two-parent family.

Guest opinion by Final Call.com



— Playin' the race card —

By Al Triche
Sentinel-Voice

Certain religious "believers," referred to last week, celebrated their holiest feast on Sunday, and, according to them, the kind of guy we need to take our movement the rest of the way is among them. He's about two thousand years old, but that's okay. We desperately need experienced leadership.

By 1980, America had told us our movement was finished. The white people said so, and began trotting out black sycophants, tokens and all manner of Uncle Toms to, ostensibly, prove the point. A few veteran warriors hurt their hands slamming down the race card, urgently reminding us we were slowing down far short of the finish line.

Today, as Uncle Sam tries to take back with one hand what we, just yesterday, wrested from his other, perhaps our people are ready to listen. No one I trust has told me the struggle to achieve a just society for people of African descent in the United States, in our time, has ended.

That which we've struggled for is not yet ours.

Until we have, not a "color-blind society," but one that's color-conscious and egalitarian, I'm looking for leaders. We don't advance, hold ground or defend ourselves without them, but with them we've shown it will take an act of God to stop us. Were I a believer, I'd believe the only such act would be Judgment, by which time we'll certainly be liberated.

But even the white people told us we'd have freedom in eternity; I want it here, now and at least as fully as they — but for that, again, there's the leadership problem. The non-believers do their part, but you'll notice the leaders who invariably open cans of "whupass" come out of the Black Church.

They're mostly those whose beliefs derive from one of three, intimately related, great monotheistic traditions of the world. All have Middle East origin within a span of about two-and-a-half millennia.

The oldest has advocated justice for four thousand years, and for the past two thousand, the second — which arose from the first — has placed that virtue just below the Ten Commandments it retained from its theological parent. The third acknowledges truth inherent in the Patriarch of the first and was a voice for justice in the world when Rome was still falling.

White people certainly created social change when they declared Middle Eastern spirituality not quite good enough...not, at least, for the Greeks. Following abduction by white Christians and breeding in the Americas, Africans got stuck with Greco-Roman ideas after we'd been "baptized" in between, by charlatans who didn't even believe we had souls.

Quickly, they replaced elements of their Trinitarian concept with Santa Claus, an Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy. They amazed bewildered and captive black audiences by claiming their "religion" was more powerful even than white people, impressing our ancestors with that aspect if none other.

Embracing anything they perceived stronger than white folks, blacks immediately assimilated, and found that it was good. We've been assimilating ever since then.

The Easter Bunny ran loose and the Black Church was born, but, unbeknownst to white people, that 4-thousand-year-old spirit of liberation was in his basket. Brother Frederick gave it African-American voice, Sister Sojourner told the black truth and Sister Harriet ran the soul train, our mass transit infrastructure.

The jig was up, and a black rabbit was extracted from the white hat.

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time left us worshipping the Easter Bunny instead of following a liberator, pledging allegiance to white people rather than freedom. Their success is evident in the lingering presence of that misconception: a white, warm and fuzzy pacifist who stifles righteous outrage with instructions to pray, and to wait, patiently, for deliverance.

The Real Deal exhorts us first to pray, then to act, imitating a life during which much less time was spent praying than doing for others. Interesting, always for others.

The Easter Bunny, that vestige of racism, was preached with exuberance in churches throughout this valley as recently as last Sunday, as a fictional anglicized caricature was substituted for the real Semitic liberator.

Which to choose? That's the dilemma for believers. Neither Judaism nor Islam, but Christianity was stolen by the Europeans who later abducted us. Not surprisingly, (See Triche, Page 12)

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NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRUPT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper. Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc. 900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104 Telephone (702) 380-8100 • Fax (702) 380-8102

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Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association