

National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families

October 27,
2009



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Coverage
Report



Burson • Marsteller

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Hampton University event to promote marriage, 2-parent families

Author: Zinie Chen Sampson

September 27, 2009

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) _ Hampton University will open a ``marriage summit" Tuesday, bringing together religious leaders, psychologists, public health workers and other experts to discuss the state of marriage and talk about how to reverse trends such as high divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births.

``We'll discuss the current crisis of marriage and parenting and focus on solutions, and how we can come together to start moving things in a better, more positive direction for families," said event coordinator Linda Malone-Colon, head of Hampton's psychology department.

The conference also will mark the launch of the school's National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting. Led by Malone-Colon, the center at the historically black university in Hampton, Va., will conduct research and collect data about issues that affect black marriages and families, and provide resources to help parents.

Former NFL coach Tony Dungy and Chick-Fil-A founder S. Truett Cathy and his son, Donald, are honorary co-chairs of the two-day event. Organizers say they've gathered a diverse group of more than 100 religious leaders, psychologists and other counseling professionals, public-health workers and others affiliated with groups that range from the conservative Focus on the Family to the Omega Psi Phi black fraternity. Dungy and the elder Cathy aren't expected to attend.

W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, said the conference is timely because of American society's ever-widening ``marriage gap" that largely runs along racial and socio-economic lines. African Americans and people of all races who lack college degrees have much higher rates of divorce and unmarried childbearing than white, college-educated people, said Wilcox, who isn't connected with the Hampton conference.

U.S. Census data show that 61 percent of first marriages remained intact in 2008, compared with 77 percent in 1970. Nearly 79 percent of adults reported being married in 1970, a figure that fell to 57 percent in 2008.

And, according to a May report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, nearly 40 percent of children born in 2007 had unmarried mothers, up 21 percent from 2002 and 80 percent higher than in 1980. Birth rates for unmarried women rose for all races between 2002-2006, with Hispanic and black women showing the highest out-of-wedlock birth rates in 2006.

The figures are of concern because children born to single mothers generally are at higher risk of health, social and economic difficulties.

Hampton's marriage summit and similar efforts are in line with a campaign by President Barack Obama, whose own father left his family when Obama was 2.

``We need fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception," Obama said in a speech on Father's Day last year during his campaign. ``We need them to realize that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child _ it's the courage to raise one."

Recent marriage trends are partly rooted in economic shifts since the 1970s, as college-educated men have seen their incomes rise modestly while men without college educations have seen earnings fall, Wilcox said. That makes the latter group "less attractive as potential or ongoing husbands, as being a good provider is integrally tied to being good husbands."

But that's only part of the equation, as Americans have undergone what Wilcox calls an increase in "expressive individualism" over time.

"People are looking for happiness and fulfillment in their lives and relationships in ways that people would not have done two or three generations ago," he said. "People are expecting a high level of fulfillment in marriages, and it's difficult to sustain that day in and day out. That has increased the fragility of marriage in the U.S."

Malone-Colon noted that single motherhood also has become increasingly accepted, even glamorized in some circles, and those who disapprove have been branded as intolerant.

"We're not serving our children, us, or our country well. The evidence is there that it's not the best for the kid," she said. "It's not that some kids don't thrive, but overall, kids are more at risk when they're in a single-parent home rather than a married-parent home, or ideally a healthy married-parent home."

On the Net:

National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting: <http://www.hamptonu.edu/ncaamp/>

National Marriage Project:
<http://www.virginia.edu/marriageproject/>

National Center for Health Statistics report:
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db18.htm>

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Newsone.com	9/30/2009
The South Florida Times	9/28/2009
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South Florida Times	9/28/2009
Yahoo! Local News	9/28/2009
Bethany Beach Wave	9/27/2009
The Virginian-Pilot	9/27/2009
Delmarva Daily Times	9/27/2009
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Washington Examiner	9/27/2009
PennLive.com	9/27/2009
Mlive.com	9/27/2009
Hamptonroads.com	9/27/2009
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Diverseeducation.com	9/27/2009
CBS6 Richmond	9/27/2009
Ourhealthfitness.com	9/27/2009



Family values groups give marriage in U.S. today an 'F'

Author: Zinie Chen Sampson

October 3, 2009

If marriage in America were given a grade, it would be failing, says a new "Marriage Index" released by two family groups.

The Institute for American Values in New York and the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, based at Hampton University in Hampton, Va., produced a scorecard based on what they say are the five "leading indicators" of the health of America's unions.

Based on census and other survey data, the indicators found:

- Percentage of married adults (age 20 to 54): 57.2 percent in 2008, down from 78.6 percent in 1970
- Percentage who say their marriage is "very happy": 62 percent; down from 67 percent in 1970
- Percentage of first marriages intact, (age 20 to 59): 61.2 percent, down from 77.4 percent in 1970.
- Percentage of births to married parents: 60.3 percent; down from 89.3 percent in 1970.
- Percentage of children who live with their own married parents: 61 percent in 2008; down from 68.7 percent in 1970

Among African Americans, about 40 percent of adults were married in 2008 (down from 70.3 percent). About 29 percent of children were living with their parents. (Data for 1970 were not included in the report.)

The group wants more public support for marriage, including the teaching of its value in schools, more tax credits for married couples, and creation of one- to two-year waiting periods for divorce.

The report was issued last week at a "marriage summit" at Hampton University, which brought religious leaders, psychologists, public health workers and other experts.

The conference also marked the launch of the school's National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting, which will conduct research and collect data about issues that affect black marriages and families, and provide resources to help parents.

"Unfortunately, marriage has become politicized, and marriage-strengthening efforts have been associated with a conservative political agenda. Also, conversations about marriage in the public square are often diverted to or focused on same-sex marriage. While this is an important issue in its own right, the urgency of the black marriage crisis and the 72 percent of black children who are born out of wedlock demands our unqualified and focused attention," said Linda Malone-Colon, head of Hampton's psychology department.

Overall, said W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, Americans have undergone what he calls an increase in "expressive individualism" over time.

"People are looking for happiness and fulfillment in their lives and relationships in ways that people would not have done two or three generations ago," he said. "People are expecting a high level of fulfillment in marriages, and it's difficult to sustain that day in and day out. That has increased the fragility of marriage in the U.S."

NOTE: This article also appeared in the following media outlets:

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Suntimes.com (Chicago)	10/3/2009
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DAILY NEWSPAPERS:

The Washington Post

Wedded to the Idea of Promoting Black Marriages

October 4, 2009

Author: Ellen McCarthy

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/02/AR2009100200255_pf.html

Eleanor Holmes Norton started to become concerned about marriage among black people when her first child was born in 1970. She told those gathered at an Urban League convention there was reason to worry -- fully 30 percent of black children were then being born out of wedlock.

Two weeks ago, before a standing-room-only crowd at the Congressional Black Caucus Conference, she provided a startling update: "What was 30 percent then is 70 percent today," she said, eliciting a collective murmur of disapproval.

So many people turned out for the two-hour symposium "Single Women, Unmarried Men: What Has Happened to Marriage in the Black Community?" that Norton (D), the District's nonvoting delegate in the U.S. House, had to "sweet-talk" a fire marshal into letting the line of attendees squeeze into the large room.

"Whenever there are black people standing up trying to get into a room to talk about this subject, I'm going to make it possible for them to get in," she said.

That day's conversation continued 175 miles south of Washington last week, with the launch of Hampton University's National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, an academic organization focused on studying black relationships and developing resources to improve them.

There's a reason this issue is generating so much attention: "We really are in a state of crisis," Shane K. Perrault, founder of African American Marriage Counseling, a D.C. area counseling service, told the Congressional Black Caucus crowd.

"For the first time, young black women cannot necessarily look forward to marriage as the next natural state of life," Norton said. "They are finding themselves without comparable mates."

To that point, Audrey Chapman, radio host and couples counselor, told the audience she believes black women need what she calls a "rainbow coalition" approach to dating beyond their race. "We're the only group of people who are devoted to a group of people who aren't devoted to us," she said.

Norton said her primary hope for the session was that it would spark follow-up conversations throughout the country, bringing to light a problem she feels people are loath to discuss.

Linda Malone-Colon's goals are more concrete. Malone-Colon, chairwoman of Hampton University's psychology department, intends for the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting to become a clearinghouse for research on marriage in the black community and a resource for organizations looking to get involved with the issue.

Malone-Colon recalled working as director of the historically black university's counseling center a decade ago. More often than not, she said, the students who came in were grappling with problems "having to do with relationships, often male-female relationships that were conflict."

Malone-Colon took on the topic as a major area of professional research and developed the curriculum for a black marriage course that is oversubscribed semester after semester at Hampton. In developing the course, she was astonished by how little research was being done on African American relationships. She hopes the new center will inspire other academics to study various aspects of the issue and generate proposals that might strengthen black marriages.

And, as the college that graduates the highest number of black psychology majors in the United States, Malone-Colon's intention is to use the center to train a generation of professionals equipped to effect real change. She fears if it doesn't happen soon, the problem will become systemic. "Because there are so many more children born in single-parent homes, they're not learning how to be in relationship with someone else -- they're not having that model," she said.

The center plans to develop targeted literature and educational programming that can be disseminated to church groups and social centers that work with black families.

Like Norton, Malone-Colon hopes this topic gains some public traction -- and community involvement.

"When challenges become very huge, people back away and say, 'Well, I can't do anything,' " she said. "That's in part what's happening with this issue. We're not hearing much about it because it is so huge."

NOTE: This article also appeared in the following media outlets:

Outlet	Date
The Ledger	10/6/2009
Knoxville News Sentinel	10/9/2009
Arizona Republic	10/7/2009



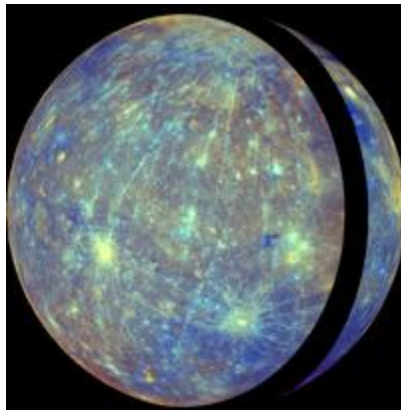
ON DEADLINE

Breaking news and must-read stories

Looking ahead

Coming Tuesday:

http://blogs.usatoday.com/ondeadline/looking_ahead/



- The U.N. Human Rights Council debates [a report](#) accusing Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants of committing war crimes during the fighting in Gaza earlier this year.
- Watch how the markets react to the Case-Shiller Housing Price Index and the Conference Board's latest measure of [consumer confidence](#).
- Aafia Siddiqui, a U.S.-trained Pakistani scientist accused of helping an al-Qaeda operative, will appear in federal court in New York for a pretrial hearing.
- Senate committees have scheduled hearings on immigration, bank supervision and body building products and steroids.
- Longtime, big-time Democratic fundraiser Norman Hsu will be [sentenced for violating campaign finance laws](#).
- The [decline of marriage](#) is the focus of a two-day conference at Hampton University in Virginia.
- The [Messenger](#) space probe will make its [closest approach to Mercury](#), coming to within 142 miles of the sun's tiny neighbor during its [third flyby](#) of its [mapping mission](#) of the innermost planet.



We've got it backwards: First marriage, then the baby carriage

October 5, 2009

Author: Carol Capó

When we started to get concerned about what the kids were up to, we stepped in and talked to them. Come to find out, it looks like we talked about the wrong thing.

Facing a tide of teen pregnancies and illegitimacy, we jumped on the proximate cause. Sex.

We decided that the solution was to teach children, in a detail that embarrassed and thrilled them, about reproduction and contraception. We decided that schools, busy though they were, should take responsibility for sex education. We couldn't trust parents to handle something so critical to their children, could we?

Money poured into family-planning clinics. Baskets of condoms appeared around college campuses. "Safe sex" became a mantra. And when sex wasn't safe, Roe v. Wade and storefront abortion clinics made it easy to eliminate inconvenient babies.

And out-of-wedlock births kept rising.

Our intervention doesn't seem to be solving the problem. Because the problem isn't too much sex. It's too few weddings.

Most illegitimate babies don't arrive in that condition because their parents don't grasp or have access to birth control. They "choose," by acts of omission or commission, to have babies because their idea of family doesn't necessarily include marriage.

I hadn't thought about it that way until the National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families at Hampton University last week.

The participants kept coming back to this: We need to re-establish the link among love and marriage and that baby carriage. Because in the minds of too many people, it's a quaint song lyric, not a prescription for what works best for adults and children.

The summit debuted a new Marriage Index, which charts the state of matrimony.

In 1970, 79 percent of adults aged 20-54 were married; by 2008, that fell to 57 percent. In 1970, 77 percent of first marriages were intact; today, just 61 percent are. The share of babies born to unmarried parents jumped from 11 percent to 40 percent.

These are lagging indicators, showing where we've been — and like the chart of a rotten stock, all the lines head in the wrong direction. But they're also leading indicators, because this problem feeds on itself.

The more children are surrounded by mothers on their own, fathers not stepping up and neighborhoods made up of single people, the more children think that's the norm. It's OK. It's what's in store for them.

A special version of the Marriage Index for blacks traces a tragic trajectory. The portion of adults 20-54 who are married plunged from 70 percent in 1970 to 40 percent today. The percentage of black children born out of wedlock jumped from 38 percent to 72 percent.

In other words, these problems affect all segments of society, but not equally. Among educated, white women, out-of-wedlock births are rare. They expect to get married and then have their children.

For many black women, that walk down the aisle isn't a dream, but a mirage. There are many factors that contribute — the high incarceration rate among black males, the lower rate at which they complete high school and go to college, changes in the job market. Many black women realize that if they want to have children, they can, just outside of marriage.

I understand that yen. I also understand the reality of single parenting. I was widowed young, suddenly and with a toddler. And I discovered this: Raising a child alone is hard, so hard that I was astonished that anyone would choose this road voluntarily. It doesn't ever get easy. My toddler is now grown, and I've learned that the hole left by an absent father is never really filled in.

The participants in the summit had lots of promising ideas. They talked about what churches can do to encourage marriages and help them succeed. They debated whether and how the media could be harnessed to present more positive messages about families. They discussed fatherhood programs and community campaigns to promote marriage and support parents.

And they worried about what happens if those steps aren't taken or don't work: a fracturing of society, a widening of the gulf between haves and have nots, with marriage the fault line. And a bleak outlook for black communities, because single parenthood often means poverty, with all its misery.

We've spent four decades trying to decouple sex from its consequences. If we ever got a do-over on a social movement, we should probably choose that one.

And we've spent four decades undermining marriage. The question is, can we put that toothpaste back in the tube. And what will the implications be if we don't.



Letters to the Editor
Healthy families
October 3, 2009

http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-op_satltrs_10033oct03,0,5353616,print.story

I had an opportunity to hear some startling statistics in a gathering of leaders from higher education, business, media, health, government and faith community. A discovery that leads to decreased drug and alcohol abuse, decreased stress and other psychological illness, decreased delinquent and criminal behavior, decreased poverty and school failure rates, just to name a few. There were about 25 other benefits discussed that would spark hope in communities riddled with the effects of such activities.

What could have such positive outcomes? It was not a government-funded initiative, not a new drug, or a new fad or trend. The key was a strong, healthy marriage.

The discussion at the Hampton University Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families discussed the effects of the breakdown of the family and solutions to improve and support marriage as we know it.

Although challenged, the institution of marriage has become an "endangered species" worthy of special protection and intervention.

We live in a culture that no longer places value on traditional marriage and family, which includes two parents working in concert guided by unconditional love and commitment. Although we have varying life experiences and challenges, we must not be conflicted between two opinions. We need healthy marriages, led by committed fathers and mothers, to establish identity, purpose and stability in our homes and communities.

Thanks to Hampton University for establishing the National Center on African-American Marriage and Parenting. It may not be headline news, but it will be instrumental in turning the tide and building stronger families. Just as HU is doing its part, we will do our part and keep marriage alive and well in our home, our church and our community. I challenge the community to consider the facts and commit to doing the same.

Raymond and Nakia Johnson

Pastors, Calvary Revival Church-Peninsula, Newport News



Today's HU summit to explore U.S. marriages, parenting

September 29, 2009

Author: Samieh Shalash

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-humarriage-now-0929,0,7161731.story>

HAMPTON — The declining status of marriage and the importance of effective parenting will be explored at a national summit hosted by Hampton University today and Wednesday.

The two-day event will include the release of the U.S. Marriage Index, which tracks the state of American marriages through the past 40 years. The index was created by the university and the Institute for American Values.

More than 100 leaders will attend the summit, including CNN Analyst Roland Martin; retired Washington Post columnist William Raspberry; Joshua DuBois, head of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships; clinical psychologist and television personality Jeff Gardere; and former Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder.

Married couples in the United States have dropped from 72 percent to 56 percent between 1970 and 2004, according to Linda Malone-Colon, chairwoman of the summit. From 2002 to 2007, almost 40 percent of babies were born to unwed mothers, a 24 percent increase.

"We're really focused on raising awareness about the crisis of marriage in the U.S.," Malone-Colon said in a statement. "But we're also solutions-focused, identifying what it is we can do to address this issue."

Participants will explore more effective ways to share research about marriage and family in classrooms and with the general population. The event is closed to the public but will stream live at www.hamptonu.edu.

The summit will mark the launch of the Hampton University National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting, which will be led by Malone-Colon. The center's mission is to help black families gain the skills and resources needed for healthy marriages and effective parenting.

The summit's fundraising gala will be tonight at the HU Convocation Center. The keynote speaker is Bishop Eddie Long of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga. Proceeds will benefit the new center.

Want to watch?

The summit is closed to the public but will stream live at www.hamptonu.edu

NOTE: This article also appeared in the following media outlet:

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Chicagotribune.com	9/29/2009



Report: Status of marriage continues to decline in U.S.

September 29, 2009

Author: Samieh Shalash

http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-local_humarriage_0930sep30,0,3199866.story

HAMPTON — When [CNN](#) Analyst Roland Martin is on TV, he often talks about his father. When his mother asked him why, his answer was clear:

"When's the last time you saw a black man on TV affirm his dad?" he asked her. "When's the last time you saw a black man on television affirm his dad who he has always known, who is still married to his mom 42 years later?"

Roland and his wife, Jacqui Hood Martin, were keynote speakers Tuesday at the [Hampton University](#) National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families. More than 100 prominent leaders in fields including business, religion, media and politics gathered for the summit.

A report released at the event showed that the status of families and marriages in America has steadily declined over the years. In 1970, 78.6 percent of adults ages 20-54 were married. In 2008, it dipped to 57.2 percent. The research was done by Hampton University and the New York-based Institute for American Values.

Black marriages in the same age group dipped from 70.3 percent to 39.6 percent; and the number of children born out of wedlock to black mothers rose from 37.6 percent to 71.6 percent, according to the report.

Martin said he refuses to continue to see the cycle of single-mother homes repeat, and to not use his voice to hold people accountable for their actions.

"The reality of what's happening with our families is why you see a kid in [Chicago](#) bleeding to death because of four other boys," he said referring to last week's beating death of a 16-year-old honor-roll student in [Illinois](#). "To me that's a direct connection to a lack of proper values and home training, and likely a father not being in someone's life."

Jacqui Martin shared that she and her husband don't have children but have raised and continue to raise six of his sister's children.

It's not because they don't have anything else to do with their time, she said, but because they cannot be married while the rest of their family falls apart around them.

Panels held throughout the day Tuesday focused on effective ways to take research on marriage, parenting and families and use it to improve the status of those institutions in America.

The summit ends today. It is closed to the public, but can be viewed live at www.hamptonu.edu.



State of our unions
September 25, 2009

http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/dp-ed_summit_edit_0925sep25,0,6185966.story

The Group of 20 finance ministers and central bank governors is meeting in Pittsburgh. Also this week, New York was the scene of the United Nations Summit on Climate Change. Across the globe, at scales large and small, summits are organized and leaders huddle to address pressing issues of the day.

Next week, Hampton will host a summit on some of the most critical issues facing American society when more than 100 invited and influential leaders gather for the Hampton University National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families.

Such a discussion is due, given the alarming scale a constellation of national problems, all centered on families, is reaching. Four out of 10 babies are born out of wedlock, up from 5 percent in 1960. Families are undermined by the culture, isolated by mobility, stressed by the economy. A couple getting married has a 50-50 prospect of getting divorced.

Let's not pass this off as inevitable, a symptom of modern times. Because not all ways of arranging adult relationships and child-rearing are equal. Some take a big toll on individuals and society.

The big job, for any society that hopes to endure, is making sure that its next generation will be ready and able to carry on. Societies do that by way of norms and social structures that support families. No matter where a family is located or what it looks like, it's the nursery of the next generation.

One way society watches out for families is by working out arrangements for the pairing of men and women. That can take all kinds of forms, but it must be functional for both adults and children.

Look at America through an anthropologist's eyes, and there's reason to worry about what's developing with children, families and marriage.

Nowhere is the scope of these developments or the collateral damage they're causing more troubling than among African-Americans. The family that was the source of sustenance through captivity and its aftermath is on the ropes. Marriage has become an impossible dream for many black women. And 72 percent of black children are born outside of the two-parent family structure that has proved itself an effective way to take care of them.

This is the 800-pound gorilla in America's living room. Everyone knows it's there, but there is surprisingly little frank or productive discussion of it. There are more documentaries about Paris Hilton, more coverage of college football, than about these issues that are so close to home — literally.

HU's summit is one way to explore the causes and consequences of the problem. It hopes this is just a beginning, and it's launching a National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting to inform and inspire efforts to follow talk with action.

Beyond the lament, there is hope. There is much we can do to promote and strengthen marriages, support families and help parents do their jobs well. There are things that government policy-makers, employers, schools, churches, civic groups, communities — and individuals — can do.

And must do. Because as our families and children go, so goes our future.



HU summit to explore U.S. marriages, parenting

Author: Samieh Shalash

September 17, 2009

http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-local_humarriage_0918sep18,0,5690246.story

HAMPTON — The declining status of marriage and the importance of effective parenting will be explored at a national summit hosted by Hampton University this month.

The two-day event begins Sept. 29 and will include the release of the U.S. Marriage Index, which tracks the state of American marriages through the past 40 years. The index was created by the university and the Institute for American Values.

More than 100 leaders will attend the summit, including CNN Analyst Roland Martin; retired Washington Post columnist William Raspberry; Joshua DuBois, head of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships; clinical psychologist and television personality Jeff Gardere; and former Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder.

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Participants will explore more effective ways to share research about marriage and family in classrooms and with the general population. The event is closed to the public but will stream live at www.hamptonu.edu.

The summit will mark the launch of the Hampton University National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting, which will be led by Malone-Colon. The center's mission is to help black families gain the skills and resources needed for healthy marriages and effective parenting.

The public is invited to attend the summit's fundraising gala Sept. 29 at the HU Convocation Center. The keynote speaker is Bishop Eddie Long of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga. Tickets are \$60 for an individual, \$100 for couples. Proceeds will benefit the new center.

For ticket information, call 757-728-4912.

Want to watch?

The summit is closed to the public but will stream live at www.hamptonu.edu

NOTE: This article also appeared in the following media outlet:

Outlet	Date
BusinessWeek.com	9/29/2009

Chicago Tribune

Commentator Martin uses platform to advocate marriage

October 1, 2009

Author: David Squires

http://www.chicagotribune.com/topic/dp-local_squires_1001oct01,0,1792531.column?track=rss-topicgallery

The institution of marriage has an emerging hero, and he comes in four flavors: print, television, radio and Internet.

CNN commentator Roland Martin said that all people — not just journalists — have to speak up to defend marriage and to hold our friends and family members accountable to build and respect strong families.

And Martin rightly declares that we should start by getting in the faces of those closest to us — our friends and family members — and for him, people whom he has access to as a writer, commentator and public speaker.

Without confronting the issue head on, we will continue to see the decline in marriages, the erosion of parenting skills and the rise of dysfunctional families.

The folks at Hampton University took on all three challenges this week with a National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families, which brought in great talkers and thinkers from around the country.

Martin and his wife, the Rev. Jacquie Hood Martin, were the keynote speakers for a Tuesday luncheon.

Martin said that during an appearance in St. Louis, after asking all of the men to stand up, he asked: "How many of them knew one of their homeboys, one of their fraternity brothers or one of their friends who was cheating on their wife, and how many have had that conversation with them about it.

"They were like, 'I know he didn't just go there.' "

The conference released a report that showed that the status of families and marriages has declined nationwide over the years.

In 1970, 78.6 percent of adults ages 20-54 were married, but by 2008, that number had dropped to 57.2 percent.

The research showed that black marriages, by comparison, dropped from 70.3 percent to 39.6 percent. Meanwhile, the number of children born out of wedlock to black mothers rose to 71.6 percent from 37.6 percent.

Martin has been an advocate for strong families in his columns that appear in newspapers, on CNN and CNN.com, on his daily radio segments on "The Tom Joyner Morning Show" and on his appearances on TV-One, where he now has a new program.

Martin said we can make a direct impact when we hold people close to us accountable for bad parenting.

He recounted a story involving a friend, actor Hill Harper, who scolded a basketball- playing buddy that he could no longer play pick-up hoops with him until the buddy called his daughter and arranged a time to see her.

Hill told him: "We can't hoop if you can't talk to your daughter. How can you find time to play ball with me, but you can't find time to talk to your daughter."

Hill said: 'Here's my phone.' "

And Martin reminded us that being a godparent means more than birthday gifts and Christmas gifts.

"It means that you stand in the gap when the parents are not doing their job," he said.

Martin, known for his bluntness and directness, took charge when one of his sisters was failing as a parent, telling the reluctant sibling: "Let me just cut to the chase. You're sorry, and your husband is sorry," Martin said he told her.

Martin and his wife, who have no kids of their own, care for four of his sister's children.

People want to confront and discuss these issues, he said, noting that two of his three most-read columns on CNN.com were "Marriage Should be a National Priority" and "the Responsibility of Black Fathers." (The most read column was on the controversy about Miss California and her remarks on homosexuality.)

He said he gets e-mail and blog responses from people all across the country "pouring their hearts out over these issues."

"We have to have those honest conversations," he said.

At the summit, scholars, sociologists, religious leaders and others discussed possible remedies and solutions for two days.

But as Martin pointed out, all the talk is cheap without action.

"We can come out of this conference with all kinds of great ideas ... But if we don't begin to challenge people at their core, if we don't begin to challenge them one-on-one, if we don't begin to say 'No.' ... Then frankly it's a waste of time."

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Richmond Times-Dispatch

HU summit next week will focus on family, effective parenting
September 24, 2009

http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/news/local/education/article/CAMP24_20090923-211204/295048/

Hampton University will hold a National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families next week to explore the declining status of marriage and the importance of effective parenting.

The event, which will be held Sept. 29-30 in the Student Center Ballroom, will be streamlined live on the Web at <http://www.hamptonu.edu>.

Panelists will include Joshua DuBois, head of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships; clinical psychologist Jeff Gardere; Paula Parker-Sawyers, director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy; actors and producers Tim and Daphne Reid; and former Gov. L. Douglas Wilder.

MAGAZINES:



Marriage is Hard
October 8, 2009
Author: Lisa Miller

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/216915>

Billy Graham had a rule. He was a powerful man, away from his wife and children more often than he was with them. Aware of the significance of his reputation and convinced of the moral value of the Gospel message, he took precautions to guard against his own human weakness. He gave his ministry colleagues explicit instructions: never leave me alone in a room with a woman who is not my wife.

If only someone had given John Ensign similar advice. Or if someone did, that he'd heeded it. The Ensign story continues to reverberate not because of its delicious best-friend's-girl plotline (for who among us is surprised anymore that politicians sleep around?), but because he said he stood for something else. He is a "family values" Republican who voted for the impeachment of Bill Clinton and in 2004 lent his support to a constitutional amendment defining marriage, saying, "Marriage is an extremely important institution in this country, and protecting it is, in my mind, worth the extraordinary step of amending our Constitution." To which the obvious retort is: but not the ordinary step of protecting your wife and children from public humiliation? Ensign has become the latest example of what so many see as the failure of the right to retain any credibility on the marriage question.

No one denies that conservative Christians have a marriage problem, a dizzying gap between their articulated ideals and their success in achieving them. According to the Pew Forum, evangelicals are more likely to be divorced than Roman Catholics, Mormons, the Eastern Orthodox, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and atheists. Of course, every person who utters "till death do us part" and then separates is, in a sense, conceding defeat. But when evangelicals are leading the charge in the marriage movement (and now, the anti-gay-marriage movement) arguing that sacred unions between one man and one woman are good for society because they're good for children, one would hope that they'd have worked out the kinks a little better than the rest of us.

A new generation of leaders is trying to reclaim the high ground by asserting publicly what everyone who has ever been married knows: marriage is hard. It wasn't so long ago that the failure of a Christian marriage was regarded as shameful. Divorced women, in particular, were ostracized or shunned. As a result, marriage vows were carried like a Christian duty; problems were kept hidden. Christian men of the Greatest Generation were "more regimented" when it came to marriage, says Jim Daly, the president since 2005 of Focus on the Family. "You do this out of duty. You respect authority and institutions."

Daly, himself the son of a single mother, is trying to soften the conservative rhetoric on marriage while maintaining its critical social importance. At a press conference in February, he said he found Barack Obama's family life exemplary, a comment for which he has "taken a lot of grief." But success in marriage depends on telling the truth about it, says Daly. "There's got to be a better understanding on the right that people fail. It's one of the challenges we face: the church tries to project perfection. Even after a conversion, you still have to deal with temptation." Rick Warren, the evangelical pastor of Saddleback Church, is similarly gritty on the subject of marriage; he and his wife, Kay, admit, publicly and often, that their first two years of wedded bliss were anything but. "At first," Warren told me in a long-ago interview,

"opposites attract. Then opposites attack." Gary Chapman, who is the Christian world's Dr. Phil, has just published a revised version of *The Marriage You've Always Wanted*. Studded with Scripture, the book talks turkey about premarital sex, STDs, cohabitation, money troubles, working mothers, and in-laws. No perfect picture here: Chapman just asks couples to try to love each other more.

Last week the Institute for American Values, together with the National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting, released its Marriage Index, an algorithm based on five different measures. It found, not surprisingly, that the health of marriage in America is on the decline. "It's so important that we practice what we preach," says Linda Malone-Colon, director of the NCAAMP. "It's as true with Christians as it is with other religious groups. They don't live by what they're talking about." Billy Graham, though politically astute, was rarely self-serving. He knew how to protect his children from his chaotic life—and he did.

BROADCAST:



CNN Newsroom with Fredricka Whitfield

September 26, 2009, 2:30pm

Watch the clip: [..\CNN_09-26-2009_14.29.38.wmv](#)

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: What some are calling a crisis in the state of marriage in America. The university is holding a National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families. Joining me is the key organizer, and the chair of the psychology department at Hampton, Dr. Linda Malone-Colon. Doctor, I want to begin with you. There are six panels this two-day conference is broken down into. Focusing on the faith and family to the politics of marriage, if we could see the full screen. You are also asking that people can go to a panel and find out how to revitalize their marriage as well. A median culture, those influences and youth and the next generation. It's what Timothy and Jocelyn are representing. What are you hoping people really take away from the conference when they attend?

DR. MALONE-COLON: The major thing is to raise awareness about the state of marriage parenting and families in the country. What we know is the urgent crisis and the consequences of the family decline? That's one of the major things we want to do. More than anything, we want to focus on solutions. It's what we can do as a nation, strengthen what our vital institutions.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: What you recognized is more than half marriages fail.

DR. MALONE-COLON: Yes.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: In the African-American community, the number is higher than that.

DR. MALONE-COLON: Yes.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: That's why you and others are calling marriage in a crisis situation. That's where it steps in, right?

DR. MALONE-COLON: Yeah. What we are so concerned about, too, is what's happening with the children? The greatest decline we are seeing is the number of children being born and raised in married households. We know, now, 40% of all children, who are born in America are born to parents who are not married. When we look across races, we see that African-Americans are affected.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: You hope this is a problem solving, you don't need to restate the facts that exist and underscore the crisis. You set the panels to have solution driven ideas?

DR. MALONE-COLON: Exactly.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Whether a single person, student or a family or an intact marriage couples, what are you hoping they are going to leave with? What are some of the principles you are hoping that will, I guess, be provided as tools to strengthen their marriages and families?

DR. MALONE-COLON: This is a group of about 100 leaders of influence. People on the front lines, dealing with children, working with children, working with families, married parents and couples. We are coming together to identify solutions. What we will do as a result is publishing a public report and national call to action? We are releasing a U.S. marriage index used to measure the health of marriage in our country. Just as we have indicators to measure the health of our economy, shouldn't we have them to manage our marriages?

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: We invited them to be a part of it, too. On a college campus, the focus is academics. What is it the young people want to learn? Jocelyn, you are a psychology major. This is an academic interest to you. The marriage and families. If you come from a two-parent household, for you, personally, what are you hoping to learn from the conference?

JOCELYN: I want to help find solutions. I want to know not only why there's a problem in the African-American community, but how we can help solve it. As a young African-American who will hopefully be married, it's something that will affect my life.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Timothy, you are 19 as well. You are majoring in biology. Do you feel you have a healthy idea or robust idea of what marriage or family life will be like for you or are you going hoping to learn something you think you don't know about family life or marriage?

TIMOTHY: I really want to learn about how different cultures or different ethnicities or people from different regions of the country, how they -- the importance they place on marriage.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: The true scientist in you. We are going to have you come back next weekend. The conference starts Tuesday.

Right.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: We want to get you before the conference, then after the conference to find out what you learned, if you feel you are excited about the notion of marriage and family after the conference. Thanks so much for your time. Appreciate it. I know you all look forward to the Tuesday conference.

DR. MALONE-COLON: We sure do. Thank you so much.

Thanks and talk to you soon.

Bye bye.



Watch the clip: [..\CNN Part 2 Interview.wmv](#)

10/3/2009, 2:46:40 PM

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: American couples turned their backs on Marriage. One university is trying to bring matrimony back in style.

With the number of people getting married dropping significantly, Hampton University in Virginia is addressing the issue. As we first told you, the university brought together a diverse group to discuss black Marriages. More than half of black marriages end in divorce. Did you all hear a lot and learn a lot about marriages and families?

JOCELYN: Yes. The conference provided a wide variety of information on marriages, parenting and families.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Both of you said you needed reaffirmation, you needed to hear about how to keep the families together, how to look toward Marriages having a solid foundation. In particular, I understand you were struck about the panel about religion and faith and families and how that really hit you in what way?

JOCELYN: Because of the fact there were people from different ideologies. There was Hindu, Islam and Christianity. They all provided their own ideas on how religion contributes. At the end of the day, it was the key basis that provided for values and morals and the strong foundation for a family.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: You are a junior studying pre-law. Your parents may have been thinking do I really want you thinking about Marriage right now, perhaps the focus ought to be about you pursuing your career after you get your degree. Is that anything yo've heard from your family?

JOCELYN: It is. It's something I heard from them in the past and an issue that was addressed at the conference with reference in my generation do we pursue a career or the r marital status and how you balance.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: You made a discovery your generation views marriage differently than your parents or grandparents generation. In what way?

JOCELYN: Our generation looks at it as I'm young, vivacious, I want to do more, see more, do I really want to get marry pd and tied down to this one individual for the rest of my life. With that mentality, they are not excited or, you know, more keyed in on let me get married.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Timothy, you were struck by finding that is divorce, Marriage, crime impact a child's life for the long term. in what way and how is this revealing to you?

TIMOTHY: I just never really realized how -- how big of an impact divorce can play into how well a child does in school, whether or not they get involved in crime and the way they carry out the rest of their life, I guess you would say.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Does it have you think or rethink anything about your future, where children would be involved or families et cetera and help redefine for you what your role would be as a parent or as a leader of a family and how impactful the decisions you make in life would be for your children?

TIMOTHY: I guess you could say that. I've always had the idea that once I did get married, if I were to have children, then I would stay in the marriage regardless of what's going on for my children to try to stick it out for them and just reaffirm that to let me know, if I want the best for my child, then I have to, you know, if the Marriage doesn't work out and it isn't the best, I have to try to make it the best it can be so my child has the best opportunity to succeed in life.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Do you find it odd, has this been uncomfortable to be thinking about marriage and family while you have been focusing so much on school work? Yes, I'm putting you on the spot. It was a conference which marriage and family was a focus, right?

TIMOTHY: Yes. My mom wants me to get married soon.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Really?

TIMOTHY: She says I'm getting old. I don't want to be an old woman when you get married. I look at it as when god puts that in my life and blesses me with marriage, that's when it will happen. Rushing it or prolonging it isn't going to help me in any way. Whenever it happens, it happens. You know, take it in stride.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: You felt they were impactful lessons you learned?

TIMOTHY: Yes, ma'am.

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD: Alright. Thanks so much for joining us, again, one week after we grilled you on Marriage and family and all those things under the sun prior to the conference beginning. Thanks so much.

Thank you.

Thank you.



Tell Me More
University Offers Guidance To Black Families
September 29, 2009

[Listen to the Story](#)

Read the transcript online
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113299404>

Hampton University in Virginia has created a center to help African-Americans sustain healthy marriages and practice effective parenting. The center kicks off with a two day conference at Hampton University this week that focuses on the state of families. Conference organizer Professor Linda Malone-Colon says the center wants to support parents and children. And Bishop Eddie Long, who leads the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Georgia, says he wants to help bridge the psychological and political divide between black men and women.

MICHEL MARTIN, host:
I'm Michel Martin and this is TELL ME MORE from NPR News.

Coming up, we'll talk about coming out of the closet in middle school. Is this happening more often and why and how are parents coping? We will talk about this in just a few minutes.

But first, the state of marriage among African-Americans, or more to the point, decline of marriage among African-Americans. It's the subject of scholarly works, as well as popular films, advice columns, even stand up comics, and now it is the focus of a new think-tank at Hampton University. The university has created a National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting. The center's goal is to help African-Americans sustain healthy marriages and practice effective parenting. And it begins at a two-day conference at the university starting today.

Joining us to talk about all this are conference organizer Linda Malone-Colon. She's also chair of the Psychology Department at Hampton University. And Bishop Eddie Long, he's the leader of the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Georgia. Listeners may remember he presided over the funeral for Coretta Scott King. He's one of the speakers at the conference. Welcome to you both. Thank you so much for speaking with us.

Professor LINDA MALONE-COLON (Hampton University): Thank you.

Bishop EDDIE LONG (New Birth Missionary Baptist Church): Thank you for having us.

MARTIN: Professor, can I just start with you. Why did you in Hampton want to create this institute? Why do you think this is necessary?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: Well, we see, you know, that there's really a crisis in marriages and parenting and family relationships in the country, with increasing rates of divorce, separation, out of wedlock births, cohabitation.

MARTIN: Let me just stop you on this question. You're saying it's a crisis. One person's crisis could be another person's lifestyle choice. And I wanted to ask you this because - should just start with some data which I think you helped us with. In 2008, for example, only 84 percent of African-American children were

living in homes with two married parents, it's significantly lower than the rate for Asians, Latinos and non-Hispanic whites. I wanted to ask you why you think that discrepancy is and why is that per se a crisis? Is the discrepancy per se a crisis?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: Seventy-two percent of black children who've been born out of wedlock has some real implications in terms of educational outcomes and crime and mental health. And these rates are just increasing so dramatically, actually for all racial, ethnic groups that, you know, it's at a crisis level. Over a five-year period, we saw a 25 percent jump in out of wedlock births. And we know that children do better when they are raised in a home with their mom and dad and have the involvement of their mom and dad.

MARTIN: Bishop, you are a religious leader but this is a religiously diverse country. So, I wanted to ask you, too, if you would address all audiences. Why do you think marriage matters, both to people who may follow your religious beliefs and those who may not?

Bishop LONG: The reason why marriage matters is we have statistical data. At this moment, the back up as already stated the psychological health, the ability for a child to grow and be whole. Also, because we have had, in recent times, a younger crowd having children and not having the model of parenting or the teaching of parenting, it creates another crisis because, as a pastor, I have so many who are coming to me, we're developing classes, whether they are together or single. How do you parent, how do you discipline, how do you encourage? What do parents do?

And so, with that there is an educational crisis on just, how do you raise a child. How do you bring a child into his or her fullness? So, with that we do find very much of a crisis. And then looking at statistics, you'll find a lot of people who are finding themselves in the justice system will attest that they never had a father involved in their life. The center's statistics prove that when they do this, they're less likely to get into that system. So, there are a lot of factors that are going here that have to be addressed and dealt with.

MARTIN: I wanted to ask each of you this question. Bishop, I'll start with you. There was a recent study out of Yale on how fewer black women with post-graduate degrees are marrying and having children. At this past weekend's Congressional Black Caucus Foundation legislative weekend, Washington delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton hosted a panel discussion about the state of marriage in the black community. As we mentioned, there have been a number of, you know, popular films. These are long-term trends. We've been talking about this really over the last three decades. Why do you think there's so much energy around the subject now?

Bishop LONG: I deal with a lot of professional African-American women who will say, well, I really don't want to get married. But it's basically based off - and this is my own personal encounters, there are men who feel very threatened because of their status in life and their ability to do this and ability to do that. And it seems where there's somewhere where the men and women are missing something somewhere, where we're not growing together, we're growing to be as adversaries or competitors instead of coming together and understanding we come in agreement. And there is a process and a plan and then I would pull in my faith in on that in reference to what makes a community strong, what makes a nation strong, what makes the world strong is the strength of the family.

MARTIN: Bishop, where do you place the responsibility for this state of affairs in the African-American community? What do you think is behind it?

Bishop LONG: Well, there are a lot of factors that you could talk about. I personally put the burden of responsibility - we have a very strong men's ministry here and I like going around and speaking to men - the burden of responsibility of men starting to stand up and be true men, true leaders in their community. And even if they have don't have children, be mentors to help with those single parents, take a leadership role. And for us to stand and to equip ourselves to be able to stand with sharp, wonderful, progressive women, be not intimidated if someone is making more money than they are or whatever in those

situations. There are a lot of factors that we deal with that we just have to grow and understand and work with. That it does not depreciate this macho male-ism that we've tried to project and that we all can work together to better our homes, better our communities, better society.

MARTIN: If you're just joining us, I'm Michel Martin and this is TELL ME MORE from NPR News. We're speaking with Bishop Eddie Long, head of the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church and Linda Malone-Colon, she's chair of the psychology department at Hampton University. We're talking about the launch of a new institute at Hampton to look at the question of African-American marriages and effective parenting. Professor, to what do you attribute this state of affairs?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: The fact that there are considerably more African-American women than there are African-American men. So, there is this unequal sex ratio, if you will.

MARTIN: You mean in birth? You mean there are more women being, girls being born?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: There are more, there are fewer living African-American men than there are women between a certain age group. And then when you look further at those who are available to marry, if you will, with such high rates of men being incarcerated and black men being unemployed and underemployed and therefore feeling that they're not marriage material, then that puts the numbers even lower. And in any society where you have more marriageable women than you have men, then the men are less likely to commit and they're more likely to be unfaithful when they do.

MARTIN: The other part of this equation is parenting, as you mentioned earlier. There are currently almost four million black children living in homes headed by single mothers who have never married. What will the institute be doing to address the concerns of these people? And I also wonder if you worry at all that children who are in single parent headed households now will get the message that they are somehow lesser or not as appreciated? Do you know what I mean, are you at all concerned about that?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: I know what you mean and this is - well, of course we are. This is why we are developing the National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting because we want to give out the message that we care about supporting parents, whether they are married or not, and supporting children. We don't want to send out the message that a child who's raised in a single parent household is somehow less than a child who is raised in a married parent household.

The reality is that child is more at risk. And the reality is also when we do, you know, when surveys are done to ask African-Americans if they want to marry, most African-Americans say that they want to marry and that they value this institution. But what is happening is that we're losing hope that we can have healthy marriages. So, what we want to do is to help inspire hope again by providing resources and information that will help African-Americans to have, many of them, what is their hearts' desire.

MARTIN: What about same sex marriages?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: I think that's a whole different issue that requires, I would say, maybe its own summit.

(Soundbite of laughter)

Prof. MALONE-COLON: But the masses of African-Americans are heterosexual and that's where we're seeing a real problem that's having an effect on our children. So that's where I choose to and where I've been called to, if you will, give my attention.

MARTIN: Bishop, final thought from you. You mentioned your pastoral work with members of your own congregation, your efforts to lead in ministry, as well as your kind of broader concern as a citizen. And are there ways in which the institute can be immediately helpful to you in doing the work you're doing or what do you hope it will do, to support...

Bishop LONG: Well...

MARTIN: ...you and your work?

Bishop LONG: One of the greatest things that happened through the institute is bringing sharp minds together who are focused on really looking at the issues. We've had these kind of summits before, but they were more like huddles. The football game, we huddle up and we talk about things and then we break the huddle and go sit back on the bench. I'm fairly convinced that this is bigger than that. It's where we're going to get advice and the benefit of some great training, research, data, et cetera. And some very committed folk, who understand that this is a crisis, this is a challenge that needs to be addressed. And when the summit is over, it's not over because now we have a center, a place that is giving directives and giving the benefit to those who need it. And that's exciting for me that we're coming together on something that's much needed.

MARTIN: And finally, Professor Malone-Colon, how, what - what's the first thing you hope to accomplish at the institute?

Prof. MALONE-COLON: Can I address what we hope to accomplish at the summit?

MARTIN: Sure.

Prof. MALONE-COLON: What I really hope that we'll accomplish is to just raise awareness about the weakening of family relationships, that we will inspire hope that we can do something substantive about strengthening the relationships among family members. We'll be releasing a U.S. marriage index that can be used to measure the health of marriage. And as Bishop has said, we'll be forming some new relationships to expand this really important work that we're trying to do here.

Let me say, too, this is a very diverse group religiously. We've got a Hindu leader, Muslim leaders, Christian leaders. We've got people on the left, on the right, black, white, men, women. We're very deliberate in ensuring that we're bringing together a group of people who are very diverse coming together for a single cause.

MARTIN: Linda Malone-Colon is the chair of the psychology department at Hampton University. She was kind enough to join us from WHRO in Norfolk, Virginia. Bishop Eddie Long is the leader of the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Georgia. And he was kind enough to join us from his office. I thank you both so much for speaking with us.

(Soundbite of music)

Bishop LONG: Thank you.

Prof. MALONE-COLON: Thank you, Michel.

MARTIN: If you want to find more about the conference, we'll have links on our Web site. Just go to npr.org, go to programs and click on TELL ME MORE.

(Soundbite of music)

MARTIN: Coming up, (unintelligible) school chancellor Michelle Rhee take no prisoners approach to improving D.C. school has earned her national acclaim, legions of fans and many critics. One writer wanted to know what's really behind that tough exterior.

Mr. MARC FISHER (Columnist, Washington Post): I wanted to find out if this is just an act that she puts on to get her way, to be politically successful or if there's really someone out there who is as tough and frank as she is.

MARTIN: So which is it? We'll try to find out. That's coming up next on TELL ME MORE from NPR News. I'm Michel Martin.



Tell Me More Blog
Big News, Personal Stories
September 29, 2009

http://www.npr.org/blogs/tellmemore/2009/09/big_news_personal_stories.html

As I said yesterday - Iran, Afghanistan, whether and how to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay - these are all pressing, difficult issues. Not to mention the still depressing economic circumstances, the health care debate. Big stories. But having said all that ... there are still the stories going on in our own houses. Aren't those important too?

Today's menu of stories touch on issues of public concern: what's the best way to fix a troubled urban school system. How should schools deal with anti-gay language? Is the low marriage rate in the black community a matter of personal choice or a matter of public concern with policy implications?

But at the root of it are personal stories. You're 13 and you come out of the closet? What's that like? Your child tells you she is gay and she's 12? How do you react? And even our profile of DC School chancellor Michelle Rhee is at the heart of it a personal story. Who is she really? Why does she do what she does?

Let us know what you think.

And speaking of personal: this is not WHY we choose the stories we do, but I couldn't help but think that sometimes our staff members are living aspects of the issues we cover. Alicia, I understand you have some thoughts about our conversation about black marriages and families. Take it away.

Thanks, Michel.

I was really intrigued, and pleasantly surprised, by today's conversation about Hampton University's new institute to study and promote marriage and happy families. It's a story of great importance to me.

When I decided to become a single mother, I had to confront the doubts of people close to me who believe the best way to raise children is in a loving home with two happily married parents. That was --at times-- extremely tough, because I'm one of those people.

I was raised by a single mother, and many of my aunts and cousins are single mothers as well. And while most of them are admirable parents, it never looked easy. I was never under any illusion that sit-com single motherhood --with its miraculously clean, well-appointed homes, contented children, and fashionable, well-rested moms-- was real.

And I know that a good father is more than another pair of hands or another income. A father can offer at least one first hand experience of what it takes to be a good man, something I can't. I love men, but if I really understood them, I probably wouldn't be a single mother. So I went into this knowing I'd need help and advice on bringing up my son. And I'm grateful to have so many wonderful guys in my family and among my friends who are willing to offer it.

So I find it refreshing that Hampton University is working not just to figure out why the institution of marriage is struggling in the black community, but is looking for ways to help families rise above that struggle.

Thanks Alicia. More tomorrow.



Tom Joyner Morning Show
September 28, 2009

Listen to the clip: .TJMS.rm



Glenn Beck
10/1/2009, 5:45:17 PM

That means that we have lost our Judeo-Christian ethic and we are not tying into those values that helped to make this country great. Because of social engineering and what I call the social liberals and the experimentation they have done in our community, starting in the '60's with the great society programs where they have forced black men out of their homes and offered to substitute for fathers with welfare checks and food stamp programs and they have established a pattern of destroying the black family, and if the family is not intact, then what you're seeing is an out-of-control community because it doesn't have the basis through which values are transmitted to children, and that is through a healthy marriage, and through healthy families t doesn't exist in our community. Single-parent households are out of control. What we have is a decline in marriage. I just came from an institute at Hampton University where they're studying this issue, and what they have concluded is that in 1970, a healthy marriage in the black community represented about 70.3% of those who were married. In 2008, it is down to 39.6. Marriage is the fundamental entity that produces families, and if there is no father there to raise these children, you're going to see the kind of out of control situation that is going on. There is a fix.

Glenn: I got to take a break here, but what the pastor is saying here is one of the reasons why tomorrow we are going to have yet another update on the moms. I'm looking for a million moms that will stand up and just hold their children tight and say we got to fix the family. We got to fix our republic. We'll have that on tomorrow. More with Charles and the pastor in just a second.

Glenn: by the way, if you're in the northeast at all, I'm going to be out on a book tour for "Arguing with idiots." There is a full list of where I will be doing the book signings. Go to glennbeck.com/bookczar. You have to click on my head to make the book czar talk. Charles Payne with Wall Street strategies and Pastor Broden from the Fair Park Bible Fellowship church in Texas. Real quick, Charles, you were saying at the break --

The bottom line is that ultimately black people have to pull themselves out of this. We can't wait for the democrats, liberals even the Obamas to pull us out. It has to be God, pastor and family.

Glenn: that is the secret with all of us, not just the African-American community. It has to be the individual, each individual.

The village, though, each individual, changing their own family.

Accountability has to mean something at some point.

Glenn: may I ask both of you if you will join me -- I was talking to Charles and the pastor on the set here. I would like to do another studio show and have you come in and I'd like to find -- I hear from African-Americans who are preaching this whether republican or democrat, preaching to us, you know what, accountability, self reliance, all of this stuff, but they're shunned sometimes, especially if they're a conservative in their own community, and they're made to feel alone. i have learned one thing this year. We are not alone, and so I would like to bring a studio audience together of African-Americans. Would you join me on that?

I'd love to join you. I just want to say this, that there is a fix-it happening. There is a group out of Hampton University in Virginia. I just left the conference where's they're studying. It is the Summit for Marriage, Families and Parenting, and Linda Malone-Colon is one of the leaders of that.

WTKR-TV**9/29/2009, 4:03:06 PM**

At Hampton University today - the topic was marriage. Actually, it was titled a marriage summit. I was called on to read a proclamation to reaffirm the merits of marriage and family values. Organizers arranged to make the promise near the old Emancipation Oak on campus. There were leaders in business, media, faith and all walks of life offering testimony and workshops to help families deal with the issues of parenting, marriage, and family challenges. There was some debate, CNN commentator some debate, CNN commentator, Roland Martin, said "How is it that 500 thousand will march on Washington in protest of gay marriage-- but you can't get that same number to stand up to protect and preserve marriage between a man and woman. There's a gala tonight on campus, and the panels and workshops wrap up tomorrow.

WTKR-TV**9/28/2009, 4:45:16 PM**

Hampton University will play host tomorrow to a summit on marriage. Among the topics: why fewer people are tying the knot and problems in today's relationships. The HU National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families start at 11:30am. Coordinators say the event will also include discussions on reverse trends like high divorce rates and out of wedlock births. More than 100 religious leaders, psychologists and public health workers are invited. Former NFL Coach Tony Dungy and Chick-fil-a founders, Truett Cathy and his son are honorary co-chairs of the two-day event. They're not expected to attend.

WVEC-TV**9/25/2009, 12:41 PM**

Is the state of marriage in our country in crisis? That's just one of the topics that more than 100 experts will be taking on next week at Hampton University. Joining us is Dr. Linda Malone-Colon, chair of the psychology department at Hampton University...and she's the chair-person of the summit on the state of marriage, parenting and families in America. How are you? I'm great. Thanks for coming. This is a big topic. Why did you guys decide to take it on?

Well, there's a crisis. And it's a topic that not a lot of people are talking about a lot in the public arena. Why do you think that is?

Well, there are a lot of reasons why that is... it's become political in a lot of ways. I think in some ways people don't know how bad the crisis is – the dramatic increases in numbers of divorce, separation and children being born in out of wedlock births, declines in marital quality and father involvement. People aren't aware of how big the problem is. For example, over the last 5 years, there was a 25 percent jump in out of wedlock births, so that now 40 percent of all children are born out of wedlock in our country...and this varies by race. So that 29 percent of white children are born out of wedlock, 51 percent of Latino children are born out of wedlock, 72 percent of black children are born out of wedlock. So we're seeing too that the black community is suffering from this. And we aren't aware of it. This is probably news to you.

So who's coming here to talk about this? The list is pretty impressive.

It's very impressive. We have a renowned group of clergy who are coming in. Bishop Eddie Long is a pretty well-known; Jackie Hood Martin, the wife of Roland Martin and many others will be here. What we've tried to do at this summit is really diversify, so we have leaders from the Hindu and Islamic community, for example.

We've got William Raspberry with the Washington Post, Tim and Daphne Reid, Roland Martin. It's coming up next week, right?

It's Tuesday and Wednesday next week. And it's an invited summit, but the public can view it online by going to our website, www.hamptonu.edu, and watching in live.

Thanks.

WHRO
“HearSay with Kathy Lewis”
October 5, 2009

<http://www.hearsay.org/2009/10/05/default.aspx>

The State of Marital Unions Much has been made about the state of marriage in America lately, the debate could be summed up by the title of a recent article in TIME magazine: 'Is There Hope for the American Marriage?'. Today we'll tackle that question and others with Nisa Islam Muhammad from the Wedded Bliss Foundation, Dr. Linda Malone-Colon, a psychologist at Hampton University specializing in relationships, and W. Bradford Wilcox Director of the National Marriage Project and a professor of sociology at UVA.

ONLINE:



The Five Leading Indicators of Marriage

Author: Maggie Gallagher

October 6, 2009

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ucmg/20091006/cm_ucmg/thefiveleadingindicatorsofmarriage

How do you measure a marriage culture?

The Institute for American Values, in conjunction with the new National Center for African-American Marriage and Parenting has just released a new "Marriage Index" that for the very first time in American history creates a tool to measure the health of marriage in America.

It's a brilliant conceptual idea, long overdue. This is a GDP for marriage, a way to statistically sum up complex trends in a way that allows us to capture a core truth: Is marriage getting weaker or stronger?

The report (available at www.americanvalues.org) begins by asking key questions: "What helps us the most to thrive, as individuals and as a society? Money or marriage? Assets or relationships? Here's what we know: A large body of research suggests that the status of our marriages influences our well-being at least as much as the status of our finances."

So why, the report's authors ask, do we work so hard to create a consensus measure of our leading economic indicators and not our marriage indicators?

The leading economic indicators are not mere dry statistical artifacts; they are a living part of our intellectual, social, media and political culture. "These indicators are generally accepted by elites and by the broad public as both accurate and important. As a result, they matter. We read about them in publications and hear about them on TV. Policymakers and opinion shapers pay attention to them. If they are improving, we tend to rejoice. If they are declining, we tend to fret, and ask, 'What can we do?'"

But these authors point out: "There is no equivalent effort to focus on marriage. ... Consequently, policymakers and opinion leaders rarely seem to care about marriage trends, or even notice them."

Until now.

The Marriage Index is the product of a bipartisan group of scholars and leaders who selected five indicators as fundamental. What are these five?

(1) A marriage rate measure -- the proportion of adults under age 54 who are married. (The focus on younger Americans is in order to avoid conflating longer life and more widows with the decline of marriage.)

(2) A divorce measure -- the proportion of first marriages that are still intact.

(3) A marital happiness measure -- the proportion of married people who say their marriage is "very happy" (because quality matters, too).

There are also two child-centered measures:

(4) The proportion of babies who are born to married people.

(5) The proportion of all children who live with their own two married parents.

These last two are to many of us the most important. "Why devote two-fifths of a Marriage Index to children?" the authors ask. "These last two indicators concern more than just children: Fundamentally, they reflect the link between adults and children that marriage is designed to create and secure. At its essence, marriage is a social institution that, when it's working, meets social needs -- and perhaps the greatest of these needs is supporting the helpless offspring that result from the sexual union of two people."

So how are we doing on marriage? No one will be surprised to hear the answer: not well. Overall, since 1970 the combined Five Leading Marriage Indicators dropped from 76.2 percent to 60.3 percent.

But the news is not all bad. Since 2000, three of the five leading marriage indicators have actually stabilized or begun to improve: The proportion of first marriages that are intact plunged from 77 percent to under 60 percent between 1970 and 2000; it actually climbed three-tenths of a percent since 2000. The proportion of children living with their own married parents similarly ticked up half a percentage point. And the proportion of marriages that are "very happy" has been stable. We can learn to do better.

Of course, the very best scientific indicators will capture only a portion of why we really care about marriage. Maps are not roads. But that is precisely why they are useful.

(Maggie Gallagher is president of the National Organization for Marriage and has been a syndicated columnist for 14 years.)

First-ever index of leading marriage indicators

October 2, 2009

Author: Trudy Schuett

<http://www.examiner.com/x-12866-Domestic-Violence-Examiner~y2009m10d2-Firstever-index-of-leading-marriage-indicators>

The Marriage Index

The Marriage Index

A Proposal to Establish Leading Marriage Indicators



Bipartisan group of scholars argues marriage as important as the economy to nation's overall health

NEW YORK, October 2, 2009. Family scholars from six major universities and four leading research institutes have launched a U.S. Marriage Index, the first attempt to track, with a clear, accessible measure, the health of marriage in America. The full report—including a special index focused on the African American community—is available at www.americanvalues.org.

Released by the Institute for American Values, a non-partisan research institute in New York City, and the new National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting (NCAAMP) at Hampton University, a historically black university in Hampton, Va., the Index—based on five indicators—shows a dramatic decline in the health of marriage in recent decades, especially among African Americans.

From 76.2 in 1970, the U.S. Marriage Index has fallen to 60.3. In the African American community, the index has fallen from 64.0 to 39.6. But as Professor Linda Malone-Colón of NCAAMP insists, "There's nothing inevitable about this trend. We absolutely can take positive steps to improve this number, and we have to." The report offers 101 recommendations.

Principal Contributors

Linda Malone-Colón is professor of psychology and founding executive director of The National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting at Hampton University.

David Blankenhorn is founder and president of the Institute for American Values and the author of *Fatherless America* (Harper Perennial) and *The Future of Marriage* (Encounter).

Elizabeth Marquardt is vice president for family studies at the Institute for American Values and the author of *Between Two Worlds: The Inner Lives of Children of Divorce* (Crown) and *My Daddy's Name Is Donor* (Harcourt, Spring 2010).

Saving Our Marriages: HBCU Offers Help **September 15, 2009**

http://www.essence.com/relationships/men/articles/saving_our_marriages_hbcu_offers_help/



Calling all married couples! Hampton University is hosting a National Summit on Marriage, Parenting and Families to be held on September 29-30. Important information on the health of American marriages through the past 40 years will be released. More than 100 of the nation's most diverse and influential leaders including Roland Martin and Bishop Eddie Long will gather on Hampton's campus for the two-day discussion.

The summit is a groundbreaking public conversation about marriage and families aimed at increasing the national conversation on the declining status of today's marriages and the importance of healthy, effective parenting. The summit will be streamlined live on the Web at <http://www.hamptonu.edu/> for the general public. The summit will also mark the launch of the Hampton University National Center on African American Marriages and Parenting (NCAAMP). NCAAMP will continue the discussion on marriage and families after the summit as it relates to the African-American community.—BB

BlackAmericans.com
Hampton University to Host 'Marriage Summit'
September 29, 2009

<http://blackamericans.com/blogs/news/archive/2009/09/29/hampton-university-to-host-marriage-summit.aspx>



Dr. Linda Malone-Colon

Hampton University will open a marriage summit Tuesday in Virginia, bringing together religious leaders, psychologists, public health workers and other specialists to discuss the state of marriage and talk about how to reverse trends such as high divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births.

"We'll discuss the current crisis of marriage and parenting and focus on solutions, and how we can come together to start moving things in a better, more positive direction for families," said event coordinator Linda Malone-Colon, head of Hampton's psychology department.

The conference also will mark the launch of the school's National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting. Led by Miss Malone-Colon, the center at the historically black university in Hampton will conduct research and collect data about issues that affect black marriages and families, and provide resources to help parents.

Former National Football League coach Tony Dungy and Chick-Fil-A founder S. Truett Cathy and his son, Donald, are honorary chairmen of the two-day event.

Organizers say they've gathered a diverse group of more than 100 religious leaders, psychologists and other counseling professionals, public health workers and others affiliated with groups that range from the conservative Focus on the Family to the Omega Psi Phi black fraternity. Mr. Dungy and Truett Cathy aren't expected to attend.

W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, said the conference is timely because of American society's ever-widening marriage gap that largely runs along racial and socioeconomic lines. Blacks and people of all races who lack college degrees have much higher rates of divorce and unmarried childbearing than white, college-educated people, said Mr. Wilcox, who isn't connected with the Hampton conference.

U.S. Census data show that 61 percent of first marriages remained intact in 2008, compared with 77 percent in 1970. Nearly 79 percent of adults reported being married in 1970, a figure that fell to 57 percent in 2008.

According to a May report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, nearly 40 percent of children born in 2007 had unmarried mothers, up 21 percent from 2002 and 80 percent higher than in 1980. Birthrates for unmarried women rose for all races between 2002 and 2006, with Hispanic and black women showing the highest out-of-wedlock birthrates in 2006. The figures are of concern because children born to single mothers generally are at higher risk of health, social and economic difficulties.

Hampton's marriage summit and similar efforts are in line with a campaign by President Obama, whose own father left his family when Mr. Obama was 2.

"We need fathers to realize that responsibility does not end at conception," Mr. Obama said in a speech on Father's Day 2008 during his campaign. "We need them to realize that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child - it's the courage to raise one."

Recent marriage trends are partly rooted in economic shifts since the 1970s, as college-educated men have seen their incomes rise modestly while men without college educations have seen earnings fall, Mr. Wilcox said. That makes the latter group "less attractive as potential or ongoing husbands, as being a good provider is integrally tied to being good husbands."

That's only part of the equation, as Americans have undergone what Mr. Wilcox calls an increase in "expressive individualism" over time.

"People are looking for happiness and fulfillment in their lives and relationships in ways that people would not have done two or three generations ago," he said. "People are expecting a high level of fulfillment in marriages, and it's difficult to sustain that day in and day out. That has increased the fragility of marriage in the U.S."

Miss Malone-Colon noted that single motherhood also has become increasingly accepted, even glamorized in some circles, and those who disapprove have been branded as intolerant.

"We're not serving our children, us, or our country well. The evidence is there that it's not the best for the kid," she said. "It's not that some kids don't thrive, but overall, kids are more at risk when they're in a single-parent home rather than a married-parent home, or ideally a healthy married-parent home."

State of Marriage

People getting married older – the pros and cons

Author: Mia R. Cortez

October 7, 2009

<http://www.whatsuppub.com/showArticle.asp?articleId=8059>

A marriage summit held last week at Hampton University in Hampton, Va. addressed the state of marriage in America.

The conference was timely because of an ever-widening “marriage gap” that runs along racial and socioeconomic lines, said Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, to the Associated Press.

The gap, which recognizes higher marriage rates among whites and the well off, is one of many talking points in our country’s endless, self-conscious scrutiny of marriage. Search Google News and you’ll find 100 articles on the subject in the last week. The focus is on everything from gay marriage to celebrity marriage, the cost of divorce and how to keep your love alive. Last week it was announced that the 2010 census form will count same-sex marriages, unions and partnerships.

At the same time, recent data shows that fewer people are getting married, they are doing so at a later age and many are parenting children without taking vows.

For richer or poorer

In the U.S., people are still tying the knot by the hundred-thousands every year, perhaps because there exists a common perception that it’s better to be married than not. Research finds that, in comparison with unmarried persons, married persons tend to exhibit greater physical, emotional and economic well-being, according to the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth.

But while 60 years ago, most people jumped on that boat in their early 20s, there has been a significant rise in the age of first marriages since 1950. In that year, the median age at first marriage was 22.8 years for men and 20.3 years for women. In 2008, that number was 27.6 for men and 25.9 for women.

Notable increases in the age of first marriage among Americans started around 1970 and continued to rise. The steadiness of that rise is clear when you look at the upward slide from 2001, when the median age was 26.9 for men and 25.1 for women, to the most recent numbers.

In Texas, those numbers are higher still: 33.5 years for men and 31.1 for women in 2007, according to the Texas Department of Public Health.

El Pasoans are getting married later in life as well – older than the national average but younger than the Texas average, at 32.03 for men and 29.67 for women.

“I would link that to the Hispanic culture, because the expectation is that you will get married, especially with young women,” said Teresa Hibbert, sociology lecturer at UTEP.

“That (ideal) hasn’t weakened as much, but there is movement towards independence. Young people are not necessarily following cultural ideals or traditions; some have decided to get more education, maybe

go on to a master's degree, etc. Whenever the economy is bad, people go to school. A lot of people wouldn't choose to get married now."

There are advantages and disadvantages to postponing nuptials, say local marriage counselors.

Pros

"More and more young people are giving priority to getting educated," said Melissa Nicholson, licensed marriage and family therapist and chemical dependency counselor with Counseling Services of El Paso. "I have a high school kid (client) who terminated a relationship with a girl he really cared about because he gave priority to going to college."

People who marry after age 25 are less likely to divorce than those who marry earlier, studies find. And recent marriage trends are partly rooted in economic shifts since the 1970s, as college-educated men have seen their incomes rise modestly while men without college educations have seen earnings fall, Wilcox said. That makes the latter group "less attractive as potential or ongoing husbands, as being a good provider is integrally tied to being good husbands."

But that's only part of the equation, as Americans have undergone what Wilcox calls an increase in "expressive individualism" over time.

"People are looking for happiness and fulfillment in their lives and relationships in ways that people would not have done two or three generations ago," Wilcox said in an AP article last week. "People are expecting a high level of fulfillment in marriages, and it's difficult to sustain that day in and day out. That has increased the fragility of marriage in the U.S."

Cons

Older doesn't always mean better.

"The older we are, the more issues we have, (older people) will come equipped with baggage," said local clinical psychologist Richard Patterson. "What they've done to try to heal from what they've been through in past relationships will make a difference in a marriage."

For many, the baggage includes children from previous relationships. "I call these relationships 'capirotada'," Nicholson said. "They are raising each other's kids, and they may have different views on how to raise the children. Capirotada marriages are more likely to experience problems, and then the kids get mixed messages. I think divorce rates are higher (in these cases), and even when they are not divorced, they can become very alienated from each other."

While not all delayed marriages involve children, for those that do, another problem includes parents living together without making a marital commitment.

The National Survey of Families and Households indicates that "unions begun by cohabitation are almost twice as likely to dissolve within 10 years compared to all first marriages: 57 percent to 30 percent."

Race and culture are also big proponents in the marriage debate.

"At a recent national marriage conference I attended, a lot was discussed about how certain ethnic groups – African Americans and segments of the Hispanic population – are not getting married and they wish they would, because fathers are disenfranchised from the kids' lives," said Toni Aguilar, a therapist for Family Services of El Paso.

According to a May report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, nearly 40 percent of children born in 2007 had unmarried mothers, up 21 percent from

2002 and 80 percent higher than in 1980. Birth rates for unmarried women rose for all races between 2002-2006, with Hispanic and black women showing the highest out-of-wedlock birth rates in 2006.

“Single parenthood and poverty are about as closely related as you can get,” David Popenoe, co-director of the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University told Fox News.

Top three reasons couples seek marriage counseling:

1. Communication problems. Communication has deteriorated, or arguing is prevalent.
2. The partners take their relationship for granted. They drift apart and start to live parallel lives.
3. Infidelity. It's extremely destructive and takes a lot of work to be able to recover from.

Other common marriage problems include money, in-laws and sex.

Source: Clinical Psychologist Richard Patterson of El Paso

Is it better to get married younger or older?

Older:

“You change a great deal in your early to mid-20s. In their 30s, more people have gained patience. Their relationships last longer and are less tumultuous.”

M.A., 25, married at 23

Younger:

“I wish I had married and had kids at a younger age, at least two years younger. My body would have been better, I would be younger now and my teenagers would be ready for college now.”

R.B., 52, married at 32

“I think I would have been fine to have married younger, but I am not sure my husband would have been. We are seeing a lot of friends and family starting to divorce who married younger, but I'm not sure it matters so much. The issues in relationships aren't about their age. There's a little bit of danger on either side, it comes down to whether or not you're at a stage in your life where you are prepared to participate in a marriage.”

S.F.W., 35, married at 27



Love and success are more important than preserving your race

Author: Charlton McIlwain

October 20, 2009

<http://www.thegrio.com/author/charlton-mcilwain>

The black family is in constant crisis, with absentee fathers <<http://www.thegrio.com/2009/06/obama-addresses-single-parent-crisis-in-black-community.php>> , children born out of wedlock and a lack of marriageable men. So-called widespread deficiencies in black culture continue to spur on new initiatives that aim to repair what many see as an ever-fracturing black community. Hampton University's National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting <<http://www.hamptonu.edu/ncaamp/>> is one such recent effort.

What exactly is the problem? Washington, D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton put it this way <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/02/AR2009100200255.html>> : "For the first time, young black women cannot necessarily look forward to marriage as the next natural state of life. They are finding themselves without comparable mates." The statement of course assumes that comparable mates are black mates.

But does the survival of the black family and the wider black community depend on fostering relationships that not only thrive within the bonds of marriage, but that flourish because they are within the boundaries of race? Does interracial marriage pose a greater threat to one's well-being than not marrying at all?

When we move beyond the pleasantries of love, passion, lifelong companionship and the various other emotional benefits of marriage or committed relationships, one of the most important goals is often money. That is, increasing family income and, of course passing wealth on to future generations.

Obviously, two incomes are better than one. But beyond that, a recent study from the Social Science Journal reinforces a long known notion: that marrying outside one's race is associated with higher socioeconomic status in terms of education, occupational prestige and per capita income. This is particularly true for African-Americans, who stand to gain more because they generally fall lower on the socioeconomic ladder than other minority groups. If income, social status and wealth are goals of marriage, then black women would be better off married to a white husband or perhaps even an Asian or Hispanic man than remaining on her own.

Raising socially and emotionally healthy children is, of course, another major goal of marriage. With this in mind, are the children of black mothers better off with no father present than they might be with a father who does not look quite - or at all - like they do? The prevailing opinion that black children are better off with black parents was the primary argument used for decades to prevent interracial adoption. But is the opinion valid?

Some studies, like one in a recent edition of Sociology Quarterly, have demonstrated that multiracial adolescents have no greater social and emotional problems than young people of a single race. In fact, other studies, such as one conducted this year by psychology and business professors at Stanford University <<http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS222839+13-May-2009+BW20090513>> suggests that children who closely identify with their bi-racial or multiracial heritage are socially and emotionally healthier than those identifying with a single racial group. While such studies do not affirmatively prove that mixed-race children are better adjusted than those whose parents share the same race, they certainly conclude that racially-mixed parentage does not hurt.

Another motive that some may have for promoting same-race unions is to preserve black culture. But are skin color and culture are inextricably linked? Are particular forms of black cultural expression - whether it be artistic expression, a certain sense of style, or a particular form of social interaction - doomed to disintegrate in the absence of people who look like those from among whom the expression originated?

Whether we look at popular black music, black fashion, black slang or African-American vernacular English, evidence seems to suggest that such forms can not only survive but can thrive when those who practice, engage or otherwise perform it are not black. Thus, one need not necessarily prefer a black partner if one deems it important to sustain black cultural life.

It seems the only real reason to insist on black marriage, or deny oneself the opportunity to be married at all, is to preserve the only thing one can guarantee will be preserved through a same-race union: race itself, and by that I mean blood and skin color.

In the end, is race really worth preserving, when the alternative means denying oneself the pleasures, securities and benefits of finding a mate, raising children and pursuing a family life together? I think not.

BYLINE:

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Marriage crisis is root of poverty

Author: Linda Malone-Colon

September 28, 2009

<http://www.ajc.com/opinion/marriage-crisis-is-root-149231.html>

Ask yourself: When is the last time you heard a public leader talk about the crisis in marriage and family and why it is urgent that we give our attention to this crisis and its consequences? The answer is probably never or rarely.

What is being proposed by these leaders to address the dramatic increases in children born out of wedlock (72 percent for African Americans), divorce, cohabitation, those who never marry and the decline in marital quality?

What are these leaders saying in response to the growing scientific evidence that the breakdown in marriage and family relationships impacts the mental and physical health, educational attainment and delinquent behavior of our children? What about the evidence that this weakening of family relationships is related to increased poverty and to a battery of social and health-related problems for adults?

There are urgent calls to action to address the economic, health care, educational and environmental crises, as there should be, but no national calls to action to address marriages and families. Why not a marriage and family stimulus package?

Unfortunately, marriage has become politicized and marriage-strengthening efforts have been associated with a conservative political agenda. Also, conversations about marriage in the public square are often diverted to or focused on same-sex marriage. While this is an important issue in its own right, the urgency of the black marriage crisis and the 72 percent of black children who are born out of wedlock demands our unqualified and focused attention.

While black public leaders have rightly championed issues of economic and social justice, we have too often neglected the importance within the black community of the health of our marriages and families. The research is clear and unequivocal that as the family fails, issues with poverty, education, health and crime increase. We need champions for healthy marriages and families in the black community to be received as teammates and partners in the broader movement for black uplift.

There have been concerns about airing our dirty laundry in public. Yet, the decline of marriage and family among African Americans (and all Americans for that matter) are on public display and obvious. To act as if they are not is irrational and irresponsible.

There is also concern that marriage-strengthening efforts give blacks false hope. There is an implicit suggestion by some that to inspire African Americans (particularly low-income African-American women) to have healthy marriages gives them hope that they can achieve something that is likely to be unattainable. After all, there simply aren't enough African-American men available to marry. Fewer available African-American men does in fact present a major but surmountable challenge and demonstrates the need for black women to consider other options (including marrying outside the race).

The urgency of the black marriage and family crisis requires that our public leaders speak up and act to strengthen them. Americans must hold these leaders and themselves accountable. We can no longer allow silence on this issue.

Linda Malone-Colon is chair of the Hampton University Department of Psychology in Hampton, Va., and will be executive director of the National Center on African-American Marriages and Parenting at Hampton University, which is hosting a summit on marriage, parenting and families today.

HIGHLIGHT: Hampton University Marriage Summit on Yahoo! homepage

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Recruit's unusual dilemma



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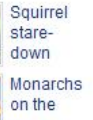
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HIGHLIGHT: National Summit streamed live on Black Radio Network's webpage

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- Hotel owner bans Spanish, order workers to Anglicize their names

Video News Postings

- ✓ Chicago: Latino Fashion Week
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- ✓ N.Y.: Diversity in the Officer Corps.
- ✓ San Fran.: New Chief in Charge

• **Minority- and women-owned businesses can get in on Super Bowl 2011 action**
Last year, the program awarded \$4 million in contracts to 130 businesses in Tampa, Fla., for Super Bowl XLIII

• **Tribal leaders to Congress: End homeownership bureaucracy**
Tribal leaders testified before Congress that government bureaucracy involving the leasing of Indian lands must cease, or increasing numbers of Native American young people will continue to leave their reservations.

• **IBM's top black exec keeps low profile**
In some way, shape or form, Adkins has touched almost every part of the company's business — printers, personal computers, servers, storage and software. He's said being part of the team that helped

• **Medgar Evers' widow to be honored**
"About two nights before he was assassinated, we were consoling each other about the state of affairs and about the very possibility that very soon an attempt would be ...

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