

## References

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### **On the Outskirts: The Black Community**

*Leroy Franklin Moore, Jr.*

What does this mean to me? It means isolation, being mute, being out-of-sight-out-of-mind, rejections; it means role models, awareness and education. My brothers and sisters are stuck on a picket fence watching our communities charge down two streets that have not connected yet into a freeway!

The two communities I am talking about have so much in common. They both have a civil rights movement that produced laws, a march on Washington, and a rich culture. They unfortunately also share high percentages of unemployment, low educational achievements, and people living below the poverty line. During election years, they are used as targets for the ills of our society. Although the two communities have so much in common, they continue to travel on their own streets. I am talking about the Black community and the Disabled community. Black disabled people are on a picket fence and on the outskirts of the Black and disabled communities.

The Black community has finally recognized and listened to the voices of Black women as a powerful and firm element in the community. The Black civil rights movement and the feminist movement had to step aside to make room at the tables of their communities, movements, and in history books for this strong tell-it-like-it-is, important, and solid chair.

Black gays and lesbians are making the same moves and knocking at the doors of the Black and gay and lesbian communities like Black women did. However, their voices are only now slowly opening the doors. But there is no door in the Black community for Black disabled people! Why? Black disabled people are pushed out of the Black community and into the white world to receive services and benefits from therapy to education. Black parents with disabled children have to enter a new world, the Disabled Rights Movement, which is predominately white above the grassroots. So the Black community is untouched by the needs, concerns, and rights of Black disabled children. As Black disabled children grow up, they learn if they need services, their legal rights enforced, and a job they have to leave their community and enter a community of which they are rightful members, but because of a lack of diversity it is even harder to obtain services, rights, and jobs. The voices of Black disabled people are not being heard in their communities.

Every civil rights movement has a ladder which splits the movement into two camps: the haves at the top and the have nots at the bottom. The Black Gay and Lesbian, Women's, and, yes, the Disabled movements all have or had people that belong to their respective movements, but

were not recognized until they forced their movements to share the wealth by running their own organizations that represent them and their needs.

The disabled community only recently realized that a huge chunk of their community were not and still are not seeking the benefits of the movement. Too many Black disabled and non-disabled children alike are dumped, segregated, and left in classes for the developmentally disabled which, most of the time, leads to nowhere! What did *Brown v. Board of Education* do for Black disabled children?

Being Black over rides our disabilities! But Black women, gays and lesbians brought their whole selves into the community, movement, culture, and history and the Black community had to deal with it! In mainstream society, disability is largely seen as negative and the myth is still present that disabled people do not contribute to society. Does the Black community share the same views?

In the past decade or more the disabled community knocked on the doors into the mainstream with their own culture. Today the disabled community has their own magazines, newspapers, a cable television station, arts, books, and some universities offer degrees in disability studies. But once again there is a lack of Blacks and other ethnic minorities participating in this newly found culture. How many times have you heard or read anything on the status and life styles of non-famous Black disabled people in Black magazines, newspapers, journals, or on BET and Black talk shows? When I started doing research about Black disabled people in this country, it was and still is shocking how little Black organizations from the church to the NAACP know about the struggles, lives, and rights of Black disabled people.

The Black and disabled communities can learn a lot from disabled communities in Great Britain, mainly in the London area, but they are spreading fast! Black disabled people realized that their concerns, issues, and rights were not getting any attention from the Black community and the disabled rights movement has a lack of diversity. It is like a Black woman going to a women's rights organization and finding out that the organization is predominately white, but on the other side when she reenters the Black community she finds out that their organizations are run by Black men. She then realizes that she has to run her own organizations to represent her and to satisfy her needs. This is what Black people in Britain are doing. People like Nasa Begum, Mildrette Hill, Andy Stevens, and more came together to run Black disabled organizations like the Black Disabled Group, the Black Women's Collective, and more. Mildrette Hill says:

In Britain the Disability Rights Movement is accusing the Black Disability Movement of diluting debates, distracting attention away from core issues and fragmenting the movement. (Begum, Hill, Stevens, 1994:23)

Does this sound familiar? The same tactic was charged against Black women in the feminist movement! Not only does Britain have Black and Asian disabled organizations, they also have one of many books that is written by and about Black disabled people, Reflections: Views of Black Disabled People on Their Lives and Community Care which was published in March of 1994. It was edited by Nasa Begum, Mildrette Hill, and Andy Stevens. It is a shame that I had to go to another country for this type of book that I have been seeking for years. I strongly recommend to the Black and disabled communities that they read Reflections and think!

The Black Disabled Movement and an excellent university which offers graduate degrees in Disability Studies are the main reason why I am planning to go back to Britain. Right now I am

doing research for my Masters on Black disabled high school and college students from Brown v. The Board of Education to the present. If you have any information on my topic or scholarships and fellowships, please drop me a line.

There are some positive moves for Black disabled people in this country. For example, Howard University has a Research and Training Center which deals with disabled ethnic minorities in the fields of rehabilitation, research, and training. Ask to be placed on their mailing list for their newsletter Bridges. A disabled magazine, Mouth, will be offering a collection of writings from Black disabled writers.

Black disabled people can not rely on anyone except ourselves. We know (I hope) by now that our communities will leave us on this picket fence. We need to learn and follow the actions of our brothers and sisters in Britain. If we do not do it, nobody will!

### References

Begum, Nasa; Hill, Mildrette; Stevens, Andy. (editors) (1994) Reflections: Views of Black Disabled People on Their Lives and Community Care.

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### Book Reviews

Bell, Stephen H., Orr, Larry L., Blomquist, John D., Cain, Glen G. Program Applicants as a Comparison Group in Evaluating Training Programs, Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1995, 183 pages, \$24.00 hardcover, \$14.00 softcover.

There is no question that the United States has a decades-long commitment to advance the employment potentials of its citizens. The authors of this monograph aptly characterize this commitment as "the key to America's standard of living and competitive position in the world economy" (p. 3). Therein lies the root for all the education and vocational training programs supported by public and private sources. Unfortunately, some segments of the workforce, e.g., disadvantaged, displaced, and disabled workers, often require additional and/or remedial assistance to help them realize their employment potentials. The authors, a team from Abt Associates, Inc., and a University of Wisconsin-Madison collaborator, recognize that in responding to this need comes the parallel need to assess critically the impact of such programs. Basically, the assessment questions are two-fold: whether the remedial intervention results in better realized employment, i.e., higher earnings; and how policy makers can rationalize continued support of appropriate employment and training programs.

Unfortunately, the authors point out, the evaluative efforts of the employment and training programs of the last thirty years have not reached consistent or adequate conclusions methodologically to answer either of the two basic questions. This monograph summarizes the last thirty years of advances and setbacks in evaluation methodologies as applied to national employment and training programs, particularly the Manpower Development and Training Act (1960s) and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1970s). The methodological debate centers on a number of stumbling blocks, a solution to which is the theme of this monograph. Evaluative researchers have battled "experimental versus non-experimental