

THE DISEASE

During the past 2 1/2 decades (1970-1995) the United States of America has witnessed herself soar in technological development : computers of varying capabilities (INTERNET, MODEM, E-MAIL), electric cars, cellular phones, beepers, and ATM's galore. While the nation's ascendancy in (to) the realm of technology continues to swell, her lack of vested interest, time, and research into the complete health and wellness of her people has resulted in an accelerated descentive in the lives and in the lifestyles of her people. Her failure to recognize unnatural and premature death being caused by (due to) social and behavioral ills has opened the gates for the inundation of an epidemic of malevolence which has swept through every major and minor city, flooded the nation, and whose victims are drowning rapidly. The rise in the rate of death and destruction (homicide and incarceration) in our children and young adults, and the response of the private and public sectors to this "phenomenon" – constructing more funeral parlors and prisons – illustrates one thing clearly : an infectious virus has been transmitted through-out the population and it continues to spread and will continue to wage its war with impunity on all peoples, if we continue to give a cursory glance at violence as A CONDITION; A SITUATION; A TREND rather than studying with circumspectness this crisis and treating it as the DISEASE that it actually is.

Consider the following astounding facts:

- o Every 4 hours a Black child is MURDERED
- o Every 43 minutes a Black baby DIES
- o Every 6 hours a Black child DIES from a gunshot wound
- o Every 11 minutes a Black child is ARRESTED for a violent crime
- o Every 18 minutes a Black child is ARRESTED for a drug offense
- o Every 76 minutes a Black child is ARRESTED for an alcohol-related crime
- o If current patterns continue, by the year 2010, 75% of all African American youth will be incarcerated
- o Homicide is the leading cause of death among African American males 15 - 24 years old
- o African American males are 12% of the U.S. population, yet make up 50.6% of the prison population
- o The biggest rise of incarceration has been the 78% increase in criminal justice supervision of African-American women (between 1989 - 1994), as a result of drug use in recent years.
- o A recent study by the Sentencing Project, a research group in Washington, D.C., concluded that one out of three Black men in their 20's is either in JAIL, on PROBATION, or on PAROLE. This figure has jumped by more than one third (33%) over the past five years.

When one utters or merely thinks of the term "African-American male", within the same thought process comes "Incarceration and Death/Prison and Homicide". It is as though African-American male has become synonymous with incarceration and death. Although this is quite common, it is by no means normal. On the contrary, this is an abnormal state of affairs. If one were to consider the number of deaths that occur prior to individuals reaching the age of 25, the conclusion would be that this incidents of death is an aberration and unacceptable; one would determine that an epidemic is at hand. In a recent report to the AMA Journal, Dr. Deirdre Anglin, assistant professor of emergency medicine at the Los Angeles County, University of Southern California Medical Center, suggests that we attack the problem (of killings/violent deaths) as one would a disease. By definition a disease is : an abnormal bodily condition that impairs functioning and can usually be recognized by signs and symptoms; an illness, in general, a particularly destructive process in an organism. A disease is also defined as any disorder or harmful condition : poverty, prejudice, and other diseases of society. When any illness goes misdiagnosed and/or untreated for any length of time, the carrier's health worsens, he usually becomes (more) sick and eventually dies. Additionally, in the case of a communicable disease, the carrier transmits the germ causing bacteria, aiding in the spread of the disease. Ultimately, not only does the individual carrier suffer, but all with whom he came into contact suffer : illness and/or death. This state can only change if the disease is diagnosed and treated. Given the aforementioned data/evidence, it is clear that a disease of epidemic proportion is ravishing the Black community and its effects are spilling over to all communities of varied ethnicities. This disease is an "Equal Opportunity Employer" disease -- it does not discriminate, knows no sexual, age, nor color barriers. Its primary function is to kill and destroy as rapidly as possible. It plagues the Black community and is infiltrating other communities because until now it has neither been identified, diagnosed, nor treated.

I. D.:	<i>H.I.V. - Hood Infected Virus</i> Hood Disease
Primary Symptom:	A. I. D. S. (Addiction to Incarceration and Death Syndrome)
Treatment:	Reduce Risk Factors Deal with Anger - Fear - Pain
Prescription:	Adopt Rules for Living

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