



The African American Slave Reparations Team
Working To End The Racial Net Worth Gap. Helping To Heal America.

A Bold Petition To The Spirit Of Righteousness

Beyond the quotidian joys of Our Divine Creator and the love of family and friends, life for the Black American in this country is, and has always been, an outrageous affair, painful to experience, and, in the words of President Lyndon B. Johnson, “anguishing to observe.”

The inflicted horrors of being kidnapped from one’s homeland - nevermore to return, perilous and soul-crushing travel over land and sea, dehumanization in the marketplace of human flesh and the realms of society and law, uncompensated labor without relent, dismemberment and destruction of family ties without regard to the humanity of the afflicted, physical and psychological indignity and peril of every imaginable kind imposed without regard, save for the comfort, convenience, sport, or craven passion of the imposer, and the lingering pall of second-class citizenship after centuries of the brutality of slavery have created a demonic pastiche of cruelties, evaporative to the human spirit and perilous to the immortal souls of both the hopeless victim and the violent oppressor alike.

As starkly unjust as the most severe manifestations of this system of wrong have been, they are now removed from our present existence by many generations after civil conflict, executive decree, legislative action, judicial decision, and by time itself. None of the sufferers or perpetrators of American slavery walk the Earth any longer, and yet, its deep and protean consequences remain in the national experience, particularly for the Black.

Our temporal distance from the acute events of slavery have obscured cause and effect relationships in this sad matter, and the stubborn persistence of awful consequence and enduring shame of American Slavery for the aggrieved Black, combined with the desire of the progeny of its White perpetrators to distance themselves emotionally and spiritually from the perfidious conduct of their kin and kind, has resulted in a bizarre conspiracy of silence, ignorance, and false attribution of culpability and proportionate responsibility, leaving all concerned to pose the question, whether openly or silently within oneself, “what is wrong with Black people and their communities?”

The answer to this question is not unlike our present understanding of the significance of DNA in humankind – relatively recently known, but anciently crucial. A recent study of financial net worth differences by race revealed stark disparities between Blacks and Whites, with the current a current Black per capita net worth gap, based upon Federal Reserve Bank Triennial Survey and U.S. Census Bureau data of over **\$327,000**, with an aggregated net worth gap of **\$13.166 trillion**.

“Trillion” is always a number of a thing influenced by spirits, dynasties, or vast amounts of time. Grains of sand and the weight of galaxies are numbered and measured in these amounts. Four trillion dollars, counted at one dollar a second, night and day without ceasing, would take nearly 128 thousand years to count. Amounts such as these are not just values, but existences. They move mountains and alter cultures. Such vast sums cannot be moved by any one individual, or for that matter, a group of individuals. Sums of treasure such as these must be moved by a systematic apparatus. These apparatuses, if they are apparatuses of virtue in the modern human realm, all follow a certain blueprint of assembly and key components, consisting of a spiritual foundation that supports a moral conscience. This conscience informs a political movement to achieve a social purpose, which yields a quantifiable financial result.

Each component of this particular apparatus is buttressed by the following foundational documents:

Financial Result: To eliminate the approximately \$4 trillion aggregate net worth discrepancy between Black and White Americans.

Foundational Document: Beyond Broke – Why Closing The Racial Wealth Gap Is A Priority For National Economic Security (Center For Global Policy Solutions – Dr. Maya Rockymore, et. al.)

Key Statement: “Whites have a median net worth over 15 times that of Blacks... when it comes to liquid wealth, the disparity is even starker. The median liquid wealth of Whites is over 100 times that of Blacks...”

Social Purpose: To obtain recompense for Black Americans for unpaid labor during American Slavery and underpaid labor and overpriced goods and services during the Jim Crow Era and through government supported racially segregated and disadvantageous policies.

Foundational Document: The Case For Reparations – Atlantic Monthly Magazine, May 2014, by TaNehisi Coates

Key Statement: “Two hundred fifty years of slavery. Ninety years of Jim Crow. Sixty years of separate but equal. Thirty-five years of racist housing policy. Until we reckon with our compounding moral debts, America will never be whole.”

Political Action: To develop political and government support and assistance in eliminating the Racial Wealth Gap for Black Americans in the United States.

Foundational Document: President Lyndon B. Johnson's Commencement Address at Howard University: "To Fulfill These Rights", June 4, 1965

Key Statement: “This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result...For Negro poverty is not white poverty. Many of its causes and many of its cures are the same. But there are differences - deep, corrosive, obstinate differences - radiating painful roots into the community, and into the family, and the nature of the individual...These differences are not racial differences. They are solely and simply the consequence of ancient brutality, past injustice, and present prejudice. They are anguishing to observe. For the Negro they are a constant reminder of oppression. For the white they are a constant reminder of guilt. But they must be faced and they must be dealt with and they must be overcome, if we are ever to reach the time when the only difference between Negroes and whites is the color of their skin.”

Moral Conscience: That it is only fair and just to honor the promises explicitly and implicitly stated in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. **Foundational Document:** “I Have A Dream Speech” by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King; August 28th, 1963, Washington D.C.

Key Statement: “In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.”

Spiritual Foundation: If Black Americans request their Reparations in a spirit of justice and righteousness before God, they shall be satisfied.

Foundational Document: Book of Exodus, Chapter 12, Verses 35 and 36, The Holy Bible, Good News Version

Key Statement: “The Israelites had done as Moses had said, and had asked the Egyptians for gold and silver jewelry and for clothes. The Lord made the Egyptians respect the people and give them what they asked for. In this way the Israelites carried away the wealth of the Egyptians.”

We conclude and assert, based the information above, the following:

1. The state of black people in America is fundamentally a product of our failure to successfully demand and obtain recompense (Reparations) for 250 years of work without pay under inhuman conditions and 150 years of citizenship and work for inferior pay and excessive costs under similarly unjust conditions.
2. The most quantifiably impactful manifestation of the damages as a result of that failure is the vast discrepancy in average net worth between Blacks and Whites in America.
3. No meaningful or lasting improvement in the condition of Black America can take place without addressing this issue directly and above all other issues affecting African-Americans.
4. Failure to address this issue successfully will eventually result in the end of American world hegemony and an end to the American way of life for all Americans as we have come to know it.

It is then, by the utilization of this passionate apparatus of spiritual foundation and earthly consequence, that we submit this bold petition to the Spirit of Righteousness for Reparations for America. We do not submit this petition to the White citizens of America for recompense per se, for none living are or were participants in the slave trade. Neither do we submit this petition to living participants in Jim Crow, racist housing and employment policy, police brutality towards Blacks, or any other unjust behavior toward the descendants of slaves or those similarly situated, since, through the actions of their elected governmental leaders and appointed judiciary, they have consistently and steadfastly refused to honor the just code of a days work for a day's pay for Black people, and thusly, have spoken their peace. Instead, we present this petition directly to the Spirit of Righteousness ensconced among any man or woman of this nation or any other nation, who are moved by that holy, just, and righteous Spirit to address this urgent issue earnestly and effectively, recognizing that such a Spirit surely resides within many individuals of every racial persuasion, and that among these righteous individuals are some with ample wealth, influence, notoriety, knowledge, and power to effect meaningful change in this realm.

Furthermore, we submit this petition not merely to be recompensed in money, for money is insufficient compensation for so epic a loss by a people. Rather, we demand to be recompensed in wealth, for just as a hungry man requests not a bushel of fruit to bless his family for a season, but a fruit tree that will bless them for a lifetime, so too do we now petition for the functional attributes of wealth, stolen from us throughout history and largely denied to us in the present day. These attributes include full and equal access to banks and banking services, which allow people to obtain the resources they need to bridge the gap between their present condition and their future aspirations; investment in businesses and equity markets that allow multiply earnings with less effort; land and home ownership that provides a physical place of an individual's own to lay his head, build his dreams, in increase his earnings; and finally, inheritance, through both business ownership and insurance vehicles, to sustain prosperity and security from generation to generation.

We come against the injustice of slave reparations unpaid because of the failure of Black men and women in America to consistently demand that this “insufficient funds” check of just due be paid and the mirroring failure of White men and women in America to address it when it is demanded has left Black people in a sad state of affairs that is irreconcilable to justice, inconsistent with freedom, and repugnant to righteousness. In a way, Blacks in America find themselves existing in a kind of “black hole,” surrounded in its universe by light, but so dense in lack that often even light cannot escape it. And even what light is seen at its most peripheral perimeters is distorted by the pain, indignity, and suffering that our painful history and present offenses daily remind us of.

With this petition, we place laser focus on this issue, subordinating all other issues of race involving Blacks in America, understanding that the racial wealth gap is not “a problem” for Black Americans, but “the problem” significantly impacting each and every significant challenges Blacks face in this great nation.

We pursue this recompense bereft of malice for current or past oppressors or their present descendants, and in this current time of notable police brutality, we specifically include the police with whom we harbor no ill will, since they are currently placed in the unenviable situation of having to enforce injustice peacefully; that is they are asked to maintain law and order in the midst of systemic and endemic oppression and prejudice (particularly of the economic kind) without being encouraged by their colleagues or goaded by the black oppressed, to violence. This makes their job impossible, since injustice demands violence from the oppressor and the oppressed alike.

It was said by the pre-eminent “Drum Major For Justice” in America, Dr. King, that the moral arc of the universe is long, but that it bends toward justice. We pray now and have faith that we live in a time of true and palpable curvature toward that destination of justice, and that this petition will be a force to move that arc away from the inertia of racism to the higher ground of freedom and true equality for all.

“...learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” - Isaiah 1:17

“But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” – Amos 5:24

Respectfully Submitted,

Darryl and Shelia Fortson