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## Children of the King: Teaching, Supporting and Protecting African-American Children

*A Commentary by Jason Curry*



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It is not uncommon for men and women who are entering the Christian ministry to serve a pastor and congregation as a Youth Minister or Director of Young Adult Ministries. I am extremely grateful for the love and support of one of my father's in the ministry, the Reverend Sidney F. Bryant, Pastor of Payne Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, for affording me the opportunity to address the spiritual needs of children and young adults as the Youth Minister. I truly enjoyed teaching, counseling and advising children and young adults in a supportive and Christian atmosphere. It is refreshing to know that churches, non-profits organizations, community based organizations (CBO's) and non governmental organizations (NGO's) are continuing to address the holistic needs of children in general and African-American children in particular. As a young adult, I also found value working for a non-profit organization known as Tutoring Plus as the Director who organized

efforts to provide academic instruction to underprivileged children who were and were not homeless. The mission statements of many of these organizations boldly declare that children are invaluable resources, and that they should be supported, encouraged, instructed and protected because they are unable to advocate for themselves. Jesus the Christ also found value in children for he told his disciples: "Let the children come unto me, do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14)."

One would naturally assume that everyone finds value in teaching, supporting and protecting African-American children. It is a bit disconcerting to know that the Disciples wanted to keep children away from Jesus. Matthew 19:13 states: "Then children were brought to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people." According to the 2012 Report of the Children's Defense Fund, "Black children and teens experienced nearly 60

percent of all gun injuries caused by an assault in 2009 while White children and teens accounted for eight percent." Data for additional sources stated that approximately one-third of all African-American children live below the poverty line. Also, the data suggest that the rate of reported abuse among African-American children is disproportionately higher than that of children of other backgrounds.

Jesus loved children. He took them in his arms and blessed them (Mark 10:16). Let us continue to promote and support programs within and outside of the church which teach, encourage and protect African-American children. Let us continue to partner with recognized and credible CBO's and NGO's which advocate on behalf of African-American children. The children of today are the church of tomorrow; therefore, the teachings and stewardship of Christ must forever serve as our model for helping children who are in need of care.