

What's Next for Black America in 2021? Today's Experts Share Their Perspectives

A panel of experts shares their professional insight during Black History Month to foster better conditions for Black America in 2021.



Tennessee, Knoxville, Feb 22, 2021 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - A new U.S. presidential administration, ongoing civil unrest, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and a struggling economy are among areas to keep watching in 2021, according to **African American experts sharing their assessments as the nation observes Black History Month this February**. One key conclusion reinforced in their

analysis is that Black citizens continue to suffer disproportionately from the effects of COVID-19.

According to the National Urban League's 2020 *State of Black America Report*, the economic devastation **wreaked havoc on Black America, highlighting deeply rooted inequities** in the economy. Black and Latino Americans are overrepresented in low-wage jobs that offer the least flexibility in working accommodations and increase their risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

Unreliable information is another concern identified by the group. "In many cases, the Black community is flooded with misinformation," said **Dr. Daryl Green**, a business strategist and author. **"Yet, we have some brilliant people within our community. Therefore, it is important that Black professionals share their expertise in order to propel this generation."**

Dr. Trina Jackson, an Associate Professor in the School of Business, Logistics and Entrepreneurship at Ivy Tech Community College in Northwest Indiana, also identified communications hurdles, stated, "Understanding what's going on in your communities is relevant in real-time. The challenge is being able to analyze and communicate this information." Jackson noted that service workers are especially susceptible during this pandemic. "The least paid and the least acknowledged!"

Political climate and media performance are part of the debate.

"Right at a time when the public needs credible information on urgent matters such as the pandemic and the economy, the U.S. is experiencing a crisis of public trust," said **Caesar Andrews**, a former editor and current educator in Nevada. "President Joe Biden promised a more forthright approach in managing key issues. And building community trust in factual news coverage is a significant preoccupation for journalists," Andrews added.

Dr. Xan Polk, an Associate Professor in the School of Business, Economics, and Technology at King University, described a positive outcome of disruptions. Some historically Black Colleges and Universities are experiencing a surge in attention. According to Forbes magazine, 2020 was the year of the HBCU.

"African-American students are returning to HBCUs in record numbers," Polk said, despite the pandemic. "Financial struggles have distressed all universities and colleges. Despite the distress, HBCUs continue to shine a light that seemingly beacons African Americans 'back home.'"

Nurse Betty H. Blackman of Knoxville, Tenn., highlighted lingering health disparities in African American communities: "COVID exposed the glaring inequities as it relates to healthcare in the United States. The epidemic of diabetes and obesity, as well as other health disparities, have existed for years. This pandemic has put this matter at the forefront of society. It shows a true need to focus on changing conditions and outcomes for underserved communities."

"African Americans' lack of trust in the medical system is a decades-old barrier to proper health care," said **Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry**. "If we are going to address health disparities through a holistic approach, then families, churches, schools, healthcare agencies, and governments must be willing to commit and make fundamental and/or systematic changes at every level to address health disparities in every context!"

Sharp-McHenry recommended a more diverse corps of health professionals. "The need for more African American and Latino doctors, nurses, and other allied healthcare providers is greater today than ever before. Diversifying our healthcare providers will provide a workforce that minorities can feel

supported by and trust.”

Dr. Gloria Thomas Anderson, assistant professor of social work at North Carolina State University and leading advance care planning expert, noted that disparities persist across the full spectrum of the health system. “Research shows that minoritized groups receive a lower quality of health care than non-Blacks. There are barriers to informed healthcare decision-making in the Black community, such as misinformation, myths, and mistrust of mainstream healthcare systems.”

“The patterns continue even during end-stage scenarios,” continued Anderson, whose expertise includes end-of-life care. “African Americans, in particular, are less likely to talk about end-of-life care issues. Making medical wishes known in advance, however, can lead to a better quality of healthcare that aligns with desired treatments and outcomes.”

Each panel member brought a unique perspective on Black America.

To reach this panel of experts, please contact Dr. Green at drdarylgreen@gmail.com.

About These Panel Members:

Dr Daryl. D. Green, DSL:

Owner with wife Estraelta of AGSM Consulting LLC, based in Tennessee. Professor and Dickinson Chair of Business at Oklahoma Baptist University. Retired from the U.S. Department of Energy in 2016, after 27 years as a senior engineer. Speaker and author of several books, including *Job Strategies for the 21st Century*, *Small Business Marketing*, and *Marketing for Professionals*.

Dr. Gloria Thomas Anderson:

Assistant professor of social work, North Carolina State University, and author of a CDC-recommended resource book for advance care planning called *The African-American Spiritual and Ethical Guide to End-of-Life Care*. She works extensively with healthcare and hospice organizations on implementing equitable healthcare decision-making strategies that include advance care planning (ACP) and end-of-life (EOL) care options for African-American communities.

Caesar Andrews:

Professor and Distinguished Chair in Media Ethics and Writing, Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada, Reno. A former editor for Gannett Co. at newsrooms in Florida, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, New York, and Detroit.

Betty H. Blackman:

Nurse, Knoxville, Tenn. Owner of Health Spectrum Worksite Solutions, which provides health and safety training and consulting. The past executive director of People Empowering People Project (PEPP), which raises health awareness within the community. Consultant for corporate and private organizations.

Dr. Trina Jackson:

An Associate Professor in the School of Business, Logistics and Entrepreneurship at Ivy Tech Community College in Northwest Indiana; U.S. Army veteran; doctorate dissertation was on “Community Response to Veterans Overcoming Barriers to Education.” Continuum of Care organization focused on homelessness in Northwest Indiana.

Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry:

Nursing administrator; registered nurse since 1981. Worked in various clinical and management positions in long-term care, medical/surgical, and psychiatric mental health settings. Founding president of the Arkansas Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care Association, nursing consultant, and past vice president of the National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care.

Dr. Xan Polk:

An Associate Professor in the School of Business, Economics, and Technology at King University. She has over 15 years of professional management and marketing experience. Her research focuses on consumer behavior, marketing management, innovation, corporate social responsibility, and persuasive communication. Her work has been published in various peer-reviewed academic journals.





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