

## NOT YOUR AVERAGE FAMILY

Tyree Reed

Ferris State University

February 10, 2015

We live in a complex world, and each day we are faced with various situations that in ways test each and every one of us in a different way. They are what define us as humans. In our society we are faced with controversial situations, in particular when it comes to race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, politics, and so on and so forth. Our personal motives and societal motives are what drive us, we better recognize them as values. But values vary from person to person, so how do we measure all of those variables? We as Americans, take pride in our sense of value. We live each day establishing what is right, and what is wrong. We follow that to a tee without even thinking twice about it or asking any questions. We establish what we wear, what we eat, how we interact with others. As a society, we even establish what the average family looks like with this generalized idea of what roles we should each adhere too as well. Your average family consist of a same race mom, dad, and about 2.5 children (Lindsey, 2012).

A plus about America, is that we never strictly define who or whom could form a family. This virtually leaves the doors wide open with limitless combinations and possibilities. Adoption is one of them. Over the past several years there has been a shift in what the average family looks like. With this shift has come the blending of racial and cultural lines within families. Transracial adoption is the combining parents and children of different races to form an adoptive family. More families, predominantly white males and females, are seeking out transracial adoption. They are taking the first step to a life that many could not comprehend, unless they have experienced it. As an adoptee of a transracial adoption myself, transracial adoptions defy the social, racial, and cultural norms of the average American family. If given the opportunity, parents looking to adopt should consider transracial adoption as a route of action. It contributes to the progression of racial equality in the United States and is beneficial to establishing new family values.

When becoming a parent, a parent's duty is to provide, protect, educate, etc. Overall a parent's duty is to consider the welfare of their child or children, and to do their best as parents to give their child the best life possible. Child welfare is one of the utmost important things to consider when social workers pair children with their adopted families. Social workers are trained to observe signs between the adopters and adoptee to ensure that the pairing is the most beneficial for all parties. Across the nation, there is a vast shortage of families seeking to adopt children of an African-American descent. The number of minority children in foster care in the United States exceeds the number of available minority adoptive or foster parents. This could potentially be due to the nature of current racial bias in society, as well as, the inequalities in the child welfare system. According to Lindsey (2012), in 2011 the Office of Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services works to ensure that child welfare policies, procedures, and practices do not discriminate against children or perspective parents on the basis of race, color, or national origin through the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994. Thus, allowing transracial adoption legally, but not necessarily socially.

When people think of America, they see her as a land of opportunity. In that mix of opportunity is the chance to live in a country where people come from many different backgrounds. We take pride in our country's diversity, it makes us who we are. You can look to your left as well as your right and no two people are the same. Transracial adoptions go against the grain even though they are adopting a child just like a same race adoption couple. Bottom line is, same race adoptions are more socially acceptable. Transracial adoptions has society against them due to racial biases, prejudices, and stereotypes. Whether or not people want to believe it, racism still exists. I have had several first encounters with myself and my family. I say that I live in a Black and White world which most will not understand it. That is a way to

describe my experience of being a Black child with Caucasian parents. It is hard to put in words the mind of a human, but our society chews multiracial families apart. More specifically Caucasian parents with minority children. No matter how much you could try and prepare yourselves for the amount of pressure your family will receive, our minds are limitless. People are incomprehensible. Though society is against multiracial families, it is the families to educate themselves on racial issues and diversity. Adopted parents should encourage their children to embrace the races within their family. It allows children to create their own identities, and encourages them to be different. Multiracial families help to promote diversity as well as racial equality. In a world marked by racial boundaries, multiracial provide convincing evidence that races can coexist not only in the same neighborhood but in the same home (“Family of many colors”, 1998).

Family is one a key element is structuring identity. Family is our core foundation in defining who we are and where we came from. Lineages can be traced back for hundreds of years. Each family has its set of values that we use to drive us. A universal value is love, love is what binds us all together as humans. My family is extremely diverse but we take pride in our differences. Our family is a circle strength and love, every crisis we face together makes our circle grow stronger. It is not about whose blood you have, but about who you care about. The good thing about love, is that love is limitless. Love has no color. Multiracial families practice the art of one love. They establish new family values in our society today. They contribute to the progression of racial equality in the United States. They are agents of change, and simply not your average family.

WORKS CITED

(1998). "Families of many colors." *Scholastic Update*, 130(9), 12

Lindsey, Brandi. (2012). "Transracial Adoption". *International Journal of Childbirth Education*, 27(4), 55-59