

Publisher's Statement



John H. Johnson
Editor and Publisher

THIS special issue is an invitation, an anticipation, and a summons.

It poses in frank and realistic terms the question of the future of Black Americans, and it summons all Americans to the task of preparing now for the new and multicolored world of the 21st century.

That world, a world of unlimited challenges and opportunities, is only 15 short years away. And what that means on a critical and personal level is that the future is unfolding right now in the plans, hopes, dreams and ambitions of living men and women.

This special issue, then, is an invitation to a tomorrow that is being shaped and prepared today. We have avoided the useless exercise of preparing a science-fiction fantasy issue. We have tried instead to present a serious, searching anticipation of where Black people will be when the door of tomorrow opens.

We asked some of the best minds of Black America to help us summon the spirit of that tomorrow, and we believe their answers are crucial to the future of all Americans.

There are, as many experts note, alarming trends on the economic front. Too many of our brightest students are dropping out of school and falling behind in the fight for access to the technological information that will be necessary for survival in the 21st century. These trends are disturbing, but it is a fundamental article of the EBONY faith that the future is made not by trends but by people who make trends by working, dreaming, planning, struggling, and willing. The central message of this issue is that the future belongs to Black people who prepare for it today.

For this reason, and for others as well, we say that the most important hour of the future is now. We believe that *the next 15 years will be the most important years of our future* in terms of our preparation for the 21st century, and we endorse the observation of M. Carl Holman who says that we must "begin again at the beginning" and prepare our children for technological survival and maximum economic self-sufficiency.

This is the challenge—and the opportunity—of the Black and White future.

And if we meet that challenge with the spirit and determination of our ancestors, there is no limit to what we can hope and achieve in America in the next century.

This is the commitment and the faith of EBONY magazine which will be 55 years old in the year 2000 and still growing and challenging and dreaming.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John H. Johnson".