

Family



Research Council

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Dear Friend:

Hillary Rodham Clinton has written a new book. It isn't supposed to be about herself, but in one disturbing sense it is a biography. Mrs. Clinton's book—*It Takes a Village and Other Lessons Children Teach Us*—attempts to write the biography of the next generation of America's children. I disagree with her message, and I want to tell you why.

The book's title comes from an African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." An article about the book in *Newsweek* magazine helps make the proverb's meaning perfectly clear. One of Mrs. Clinton's favorite expressions, the article says, is, "There is no such thing as other people's children." After reading just a few chapters of *It Takes a Village*, it becomes obvious that what she means by "village" is really more Big Government. What she means by "family values" is the mush that's left over after the time-honored traditions of men and women of faith have been driven from the public square.

I believe that our problem today is that too many parents are looking to the so-called village to care for their children, instead of meeting this precious responsibility themselves. Many other parents are struggling to meet this responsibility themselves, but are overwhelmed by crushing taxes, stagnating incomes, the relentless encroachment on parental rights by government, and the destruction of values by an amoral culture. From Calvin Klein ads to the studios of Hollywood, there is indeed a "village" seeking to raise our children—a Greenwich Village of sexual license and crass materialism. I don't want my children raised this way, and I am confident you don't want it for your children or grandchildren either.

Kay Coles James, a former Vice President at the Family Research Council, knows this African proverb well. Kay, a black American who was born in the slums of Portsmouth, Virginia, has risen to prominence in our national political life. She has written how Mrs. Clinton's slogan has made the rounds and how deeply wrong it is:

It is really quite simple, we are told, if only we would cede parental control to the village, all would be well. Children would no longer grow up insecure or worried; they would be well-adjusted, well-developed, and full of healthy self-esteem. What a wonderful world it would be. . .

But the village cannot raise a child. Children don't belong to the community. Children belong to the parents who tuck them in at night, wipe away their tears, feed them their meals, and answer their questions. If the past thirty years have taught us anything, it is that stable, intact, two-parent families are the foundation of a healthy village.¹