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From : GARY FIELDS, ID: M05398
To : ██████████, CustomerID: 22570083
Date : 1/20/2019 8:52:31 PM EST, Letter ID: 539348639 Parent Letter ID: 539053978
Location : 401
Housing : D2203L

██████████,
I've been putting together a few speeches for the upcoming Black History Month Programs that will be taking place here at ECI.

What's in a name?

(written in response to the unacceptable use of the "N" word among young African American men in general, and specifically incarcerated brothers who were casually calling each other, "My Nigger.")

In 1974, I was given a scholarship to a New England Prep School. In going from the "Inner City" to a country club environment, I had quite a bit of adjusting to do.

One weekend, I joined a group of students and took the school van to a nearby ice cream parlor. While waiting in line, I saw a little 5 year old girl. She was beautiful! She had blond hair, blue eyes, rosy cheeks with dimples, and a smile that just lit up the room. I was about to tell her mom what a beautiful child she was, when she spotted me and said, "Look mom, a NIGGER!"

I began by saying I was "given" a scholarship.... Well, I actually earned it that day, because, you see, I was smarter than a five year old.

Napoleon Bonaparte once said that "History was set of lies agree upon." Not long after, the little Corsican marched his army into Egypt, on the continent of Africa. He came across evidence of a great civilization.... giant pyramids and massive monuments.

When he saw the features on the Sphinx, he was no smarter than a five old. Rather than face the truth, he had his men use their canons to destroy the evidence of its black features. You see, the truth did not fight his version of reality, so he wanted to change the face of history into "a set of lies agreed upon."

Somehow, when we, as a people, look back upon our history, we begin with our rise from slavery.... but slavery was only a chapter of our story. Our history begins, not with our rise from slavery, but with the rise if civilization. "Truth without freedom is a chain, but freedom without truth is just an illusion." Until we wrap our minds around the "truth" we will remain, no smarter than a 5 years old.

Bob Marley sang "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds." Well, as surely as those cyclone fences and razor wire will limit your mobility, a history which consists of "a set of lies agreed upon" will put a cap on your ability, and limit you to yellow lines and prison blues, just doing time in re-soled shoes.

As long as we continue to call ourselves "nigger," we will be chained to a set of lies agreed upon. Let us begin to realize that our people were wearing silks and linen when Napoleon's were still wearing the skins of beasts beaten with clubs.

That beautiful little girl didn't wake up one day and think that some people were niggers. That lie as planted like a seed planted like the fruit of a poisoned tree. Our people did not begin in chains, you were not meant to were those prison blues, and we are not niggers!

As we celebrate the past, let us look beyond the lies. As we embrace the future, let us recognize the truth. We may be incarcerated, for a season, but we're free to move beyond the expectations of those who would erase the face of history. We may have to deal, for a time, with "controlled movement" but we control the most valuable real estate in the world, the six inches between our ears.

Let us learn of our true history, and not the "set if lies agreed upon." Let us look at our current situation as "just another chapter," and not the way that our story ends. Let us begin to realize that when we call each other "nigger," we look through a lens of lies better worn by a five year old. Truth without freedom is a chain, but freedom without truth is just an illusion.

***jp*ay Tell your friends and family to visit www.jp.com to write letters and send money!**

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Our people marched with their heads held high as that hateful name was hurled at them along with bottles and stones. They marched and refused to believe that lie don't let their torch pass us by, let's pass the truth along to the next generation.

What's in a name?

I challenge you today to cast aside the fruit of that poisoned tree. I challenge you to toss that name into the trash bin of history, and let the pain that it once caused join with the dust of those who once put us in chains let it join with the dust of those who once tried to erase the face if history. And let our "future" be a truth agreed upon... we are not now, nor have we ever been niggers!

Gary

Hello GARY,
I check my JPAY email "INBOX" daily,
hoping to see that you've registered so we can
write each other directly. There is so
much that I want to share with you.
UNTIL NEXT time, STAY STRONG IN THE LORD,
AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT!

Eph. 6:10-20

DAD