

Until Justice Rains Down

by Rodney J. Sumler

den at "main line" during the mid-day meal. No matter what your problem is, you stand in the hearing distance of other inmates to discuss your problems. The problems in prison are not always the inmates. The problems in prison sometimes are the leadership and its attitudes. Many wardens start as a "hack" (prison guard) and they look and strive to advance to a higher position within the "BOP." Federal Bureau of Prison officials, like politicians, have misplaced priorities. Instead of doing the job they are presently in, nearly all of them will do whatever is necessary to move up to the next step in their careers.

Blacks were the first to sell our ancestors into slavery. We were divided and some blacks were given authority over other slaves; helping the slave master rule, govern and control other slaves. These slaves were taught that they were better. They snatched on other slaves, keeping the slave master informed of everything slaves did or planned to do. Slaves were nearly always treated unjustly. Blacks in the BOP continue to deal injustice to the descendants of once slaves. In prison, truth should be honored. And a man who speaks the truth should be respected, but too many prison staff willfully lie on inmates and lie in support of each other. BOP policies appear to be intended to punish inmates more. There is no real rehabilitation or genuine educational job training opportunities at Seymour Johnson and nearly all FPCs. The GED programs are mere maintenance programs. Most inmates leave the BOP in worse condition than they came in. There is severe psychological damage inflicted on nearly all inmates. That is a major reason for the high recidivism. There

was one white Lt. at Seymour Johnson that was the investigative officer. He had a Nazi attitude and practiced psychological methods of the GESTAPO. The captain ordered him to stop wearing weighted black leather gloves while questioning inmates. He overreacted and charges inmates with the extreme in any incident report. With his blond hair he looks like a NEO-NAZI.

Most BOP officials are irreligious. They use God and religion to control some inmates but they don't honor God nor His Word. Those who are black and descendants of slaves and will not do right by other blacks are liars and hypocrites. Devious men and women cannot be expected to do right by one another. On the surface, Seymour Johnson FPC in the mid-90s should have been shining and the pride of the black community. With blacks in almost 20 of 30 administrative positions at this prison camp (there were five Hispanics on staff), they were not shining. They showed no light or guidance. Everywhere you look for guidance, there was none.

If you really want to have equal, fair and just treatment of ALL inmates, you have to start at the top and then let fairness and just treatment flow down. But if it does not come from the top, you can't have it at the bottom nor in between because the bottom is a reflection of what's going on at the top. At Federal Prison Camp Seymour Johnson in 1993 there was a black warden, black assistant warden, black captain, four black lieutenants, three black case managers, a black director of R&D, black safety director, black assistant director of facilities, a black recreation director, a black controller, a black chaplain, a

black case manager supervisor, a black trust fund director and a black personnel director. A majority of the prison guards (hacks) were black. But as inmates say at Seymour Johnson FPC, "I don't have nothing coming." A "House Nigger Mentality" begins at the top and is dispersed through out the blacks on the staff. They all seem to fear being accused of helping a "black slave" - a black inmate (the 1998 field niggers).

Whites always help whites! White inmates, trying to do right, receive special benefits of kindness and favors from the white BOP officials and from many blacks on the staff. In 1998 blacks are still trying to prove that they can "treat" whites better than blacks; better than we "treat" each other. White Airmen on Seymour Johnson Air Force Base treat white inmates better, breaking rules to help them. A majority of blacks, and especially black women on the base, act as if they are afraid to speak to black inmates. The white women are too friendly!

Names, labels and titles tend to divide us and cause us to look askance at one another. Black BOP employees from the top to the bottom secretly look at each other with suspicion, mistrust and disapproval. Some talk about each other, even to inmates. Black slaves were taught to look askance by slave masters. The descendants of slaves are still doing it in 1998, 135 years after the Emancipation Proclamation. They willingly obey orders from above to keep their jobs. They cater to the biased, vanity and low expectations of those whites over them who need an ego boost, a scapegoat or reinforcement of their feelings of superiority. These 1998 "house niggers, Uncle Toms and Aunt

Jemima's" are not concerned that wrong messages with misleading implications are sent to thousands of inmates. Like all federal government employees, BOP officials have tremendous fear of the FBI and being targets of investigation.

The black leadership at Seymour Johnson FPC refused to allow any black inmates to participate in any organizations started by blacks. Fifty inmates signed a NAACP application for a NAACP branch. The warden (a black man) refused to allow the inmates to participate in the NAACP. He says the NAACP is a political organization. The black assistant warden says that she would have to allow inmates to participate in the KKK if she allowed the NAACP on this prison compound.

Job discrimination and bias is widespread even in prison. More white inmates have the highest paying jobs. Most whites earn an average of \$42 to \$60 per month, while most blacks earn \$15 to \$25 per month. More whites are given job assignments which provide them with skills that will help them get a good job after completing their sentences. Most blacks do janitorial, maintenance and yard care. More whites work in the kitchen at Seymour Johnson camp than any other. They eat better, steal more food and look out for whites as they are served during "main-line" (when meals are served).

From minor to major incident reports, blacks are written up and punished more while at this camp than whites. Slavery was not intended to be a punishment. Prison-style slavery is a punishment. It is having inmates records stacked with as many negatives as

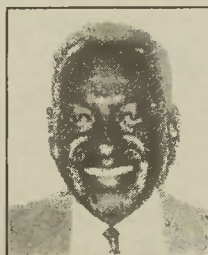
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"In a multiracial society, no group can make it alone. It is a myth to believe that the Irish, the Italians, and the Jews . . . rose to power through separatism. It is true that they stuck together. But their group unity was always enlarged by joining in alliances with other groups such as political machines and trade unions. To succeed in a pluralistic society, and an often hostile one at that, the Negro obviously needs organized strength, but that strength will only be effective when it is consolidated through constructive alliances with the majority group."

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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