

“It’s Safe to Murder Negroes” in Alabama, “African-Americans in America”

Written by Lyle Russworm
Monday, 26 March 2012 10:59 -

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Before there was a Civil Rights Movement God gave us Rev. Vernon Johns, who preceded Rev. Martin L. King Jr. as the pastor of Alabama Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL.

He gave a historic speech titled “It’s Safe to Murder Negroes” in Alabama at his church before the Deacons of the church was forced to fire him. The police chief and the White community framed him as being radical, but fear was the driving point for the Deacons. During his sermon he was removed from the church by the local police officers. He had been warned not to give the sermon that Sunday, yet, he had the courage to follow his heart. During the sermon, he told his congregation why Black men are killed and nothing happens. He said it’s because the Blacks just stand by without saying anything against it. It’s like they stood by while Christ was being crucified. Is it fear?”(Johns, 1994) During the sermon he berated the Black community for cooperating with the racist system. (Johns, 1994)

Decades later we are still fearful, yet Black men are killed and in so many cases no justice for the victim’s family. Our community institutions should look at each murder that happens in our community to determine if the local law enforcement teams are investigating them with due diligence.

How many African-Americans males must die before we say enough is enough! I have been telling whoever would listen to me for a decade that it is safer for an African-American male to walk the streets of Bagdad than for us to walk on any street in America!

We have failed our children; it starts with fathers, then mothers, then the family, and then community leaders. It takes a village to raise a child and how many more Trayvon Martin’s must be killed before we take control of our children and our communities. Perhaps the greatest responsible we have as parents and community leaders is to protect our children and if we cannot do that, it is a clear sign that we are losing the war for the lives and soul of our children. We should be mad as hell that our children are attacked on day one in our educational systems especially our male children, that police officers profile our youth daily, that judges legislate from the bench by always providing sentencing higher for Blacks than Whites, that our legislative branch of government mandate laws that are discriminatory and greatly affect our people, that voting district are drawn to minimize our voting power, that lenders always charge our people a higher interest rate on loans, that grocery stores in our communities charge higher prices, and that there are more liquor stores than grocery stores in most of our communities. I say what does it take, how many new prisons must be built before you and all our leaders say that we need to begin protesting these not so random act of racism across this country. What does this type of internalized racism say to our children when they see no future and we, as caregiver or so called protectors of the community, say or do nothing to protect or help them!

What will it take before we realize that we are at war and that our children are the targets of

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millions of gatekeepers determined to marginalize their existence. We may as well call our children collateral damage. If that is the case, I ask you what is the risk analysis? How many must die each day before enough is enough, is the number 3, 4 or 10. How many must be imprisoned before enough is enough perhaps 1.5 million, 2.5 million or 3 million. What is the acceptable number for Black male dropout rate, 50%, 67% or 80%? How many Black men need to be unemployed or not in the workforce before enough is enough, 12 million, 16 million or 20 million. Does anyone give a damn?

What did Gandhi do? What did Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. do? What did Nelson Mandela do? Protest!!!!

I call for a National Day of Solidarity for change, a day of community action, a day of community service. My recommendation is that June 19, 2012 be selected for this purpose. I have planted a seed of hope and now what will you and all the community leaders do? My hope is cultivate this seed to rebuild our community and to protect our future which is our children!!!

If you agree in part or in whole in what you just read, please let me know and become active in your community. Please forward this letter to your local, regional, and state leaders, plus Black radio stations and Black newspapers. I will personally call, email, mail and fax 1000 community leaders in America. At this time I will not pass judgment about who will support this project or who will not, I will allow God and history to judge them!!!!

Sincerely,

Lyle G. Russworm,

Founder of African-Americans For A Better Society (AAFABS) lrussworm@yahoo.com

The Road to Freedom: The Vernon Johns Story (1994).

<http://www.vernonjohns.org/snuffy1186/vernjohn.html>

Additional Sites to learn more about Internalized Racism:

<http://www.rc.org/uer/InternalizedRacism.html>

http://www.rc.org/publications/journals/black_reemergence/br2/br2_5_sl.html

http://www.thewtc.org/Internalized_Racism.pdf

<http://racerelations.about.com/od/understandingrac1/a/internalizedracism.htm>