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TRUTH IN LOVE

If I Were White ... I'd Get It

By Parris J. Baker
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It is a privilege to be white and male. To be born in a white body, equipped with a phallus, requires little effort. If you were so fortunate before you began breathing, you would be born into invisible and indivisible privileges.

I often wondered what it would be like to live in a white body, if only momentarily. So, I closed my eyes and conceived, in the uterus of my mind; to be born white on Sunday, Nov. 24, 1957, in the United States of America. My amazing epiphany was an extraordinary proprioceptive^[1] journey, a concept guided by a psychedelic kaleidoscope of thoughts, fully focused on black and white colors. In my dream state, I was born a beautiful white baby boy and, better yet, I was born a white man-child in the United States of America.

The realization that my life was tailored swiftly consumed me. I was stamped before the start. It did not take me long to learn why my parents didn't teach me about race relations in America, why the American education systems coded white history as U.S. his-story, and why I was free to dream of being anything I wanted to become.

I appreciated their forethought to restrict my knowledge of Black history and my awareness of the contributions of Black people in American and world history or anyone else's history for that matter. Book banning spared me the uneasy and unnecessary discomfort of learning about the marginalized. If included in mainstream education I might learn to ask questions like, "How did they become marginalized?"

I became a “rugged individualist” who learned, if I wanted to achieve or when faced with adversity, to pull myself up by my bootstraps. For me, history recorded I would never need to fight for the right to vote, for control of my body, for civil rights and human rights, for affirmative action and citizenship. Thank God I was born at this time, in this space called America. With the purveyors of the Holy Bible, the U.S. Constitution, and Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise (referred to as Project 2025), providing the direction for our nation, my success was always assured.

The logic that an invisible God would ordain my uncolored spirit to be born into an immaculate white body and because of that feature alone I would become far superior to any other uncolored spirit placed in an invidious black or brown body is undeniable. I get it now. I understood why I could not see or hear you. An uncolored spirit in a black body calling me friend and brother was impossible. The possibility that I could be in a relationship with anyone other than uncolored spirits in white bodies made sense now. Every community I ever lived, played, worshipped, and worked in was filled with uncolored spirits in white bodies. The white bodies in control had phalluses and children.

It is a privilege to be white. However, to be white and human takes courage and strength. To be confronted face to face with charity, my soul “woke,” with the audacity of hope.^[2] The concept of choice is innate, an inalienable right. I was immediately challenged with a new question: What does it mean to be human? Then I realized there are an abundance of uncolored spirits in white bodies who understand that being white provides neither prosperity, power, nor privilege. One’s lived experience only becomes “advantaged” when color, culture, and the desire to control “Trumps” living as a human and behaving humanely in a white body. Those lived experiences, living as a human being, requires one to continuously confront the absurd assumption that whiteness is the standard of morality, omnipotence, and justice and that white skin reflects the divine will of God.

What would it be like to trade personal comfort and security for agony and anguish and believe that the exchange is a divine expression of God’s and a radical kind of extreme brotherly love. “We must all learn to live together as brothers, piped the drum major for justice, or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way God’s universe is made; this is the way it is structured.”^[3]

Within this new reality I celebrate with courageous uncolored spirits in white bodies, past and present, who chose daily to discard their power and privilege and become united with other uncolored spirits who reside in black and brown bodies, to chase the possibilities of solidarity and shared community. This is a vastly

different worldview of today's Christian extremists. Their desire is to control people and destroy differences. The use of violence to achieve those objectives is now much more viable than ever before.

President Abraham Lincoln discarded his white privilege when he said, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this to the extent of this difference is not democracy."^[4] It is believed that this action may have led to his assassination. Another Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin, affirmed, "Freedom is not a gift bestowed upon us by other men, but a right that belongs to us by the laws of God and nature."^[5]

It takes an abundance of courage and strength to be human, in a white body: To acknowledge the history we were born into, to apologize, when necessary, not for our birth, but for apathy in our present history, and to advocate for the changed history we will live in, reflects one's understanding that "no one is free until we are all free."^[6]

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace."^[7]

Then I woke up from this dream, "woke."

References

- [1] Derived from the Latin word *proprius*,^[1] which means, "one's own," the process promotes the activity of attentively listening to one's inner voice.
- [2] Obama, B. H. (2006). *The audacity of hope: Thoughts of reclaiming the American dream*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- [3] King, Jr., M. L. (1964). *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*. In *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- [4] Quote from Abraham Lincoln, a lawyer, statesperson, and the 16th President of the United States
- [5] Quote from Benjamin Franklin, Founding Father of the U.S. Constitution, and activist.
- [6] Fannie Lou Hamer. This phrase was delivered at the Founding of the National Women's Political Caucus in Washington, D.C. on July 10, 1971. [Here](#)
- [7] Quote from Jimi Hendrix.
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