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I am William Webb IV, ordained elder of Kingdom First Ministries International of Philadelphia; owner of Webb Enterprises (WE), a professional cleaning company; and Executive Director of Opportunity, Inc., a non-profit organization that creates favorable conditions for advancement and personal transformation. In addition, I am a proud member of ReConstruction, Inc.'s Alumni's Ex-Offender Association (AEA), as well as serve on the resource committee board. I consider myself educated, well-rounded, well-spoken, and socially conscious, to name a few. However, a most recent experience and participation with ReConstruction, Inc. blew me away. The "History and Reconstruction Project" funded by PEW increased my level of cultural and historical awareness. The voyage into African American history connected the past horrific historical trauma of African people with the negative behaviors, thoughts, words, and deeds of African-Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As an individual who resorted to criminal activities as a means to an end, this project definitely challenged and hooked me immediately.

My role and participation as a cohort member of the "History and Reconstruction Project" occurred twice a week. I received the services of conscious professionals and leaders whose expertise ranged from historians, human services practitioners, storytellers, humanitarians, researchers, leadership consultants, and psychologists. The experience captivated and astounded me; people of this caliber considered taking time out of their busy schedules to pour into the members of the cohort. Lacking the awareness of existing knowledge, I learned of life changing, mind-altering facts, data, books, research reports, documents, and information. In addition to these resources and materials, ReConstruction, Inc. armed the cohort members with a journal title, *ALL or Nothing: Giving Up Everything to Discover Your Greatness, A Special Edition for the "History and Reconstruction Project"*. This journal's deliberate intent and design worked in conjunction with the course's curriculum in order to boost the cohort members' personal transformation and capability to receive this eruption of knowledge.

During every session, my thirst for more of *this* knowledge increased; it peaked the highest height of my awareness. I finally found what I searched for all my life: the real accounts of black history and data not recorded in the history books. Interestingly enough, the information did not evoke rage. On the contrary, it liberated my spirit. It confirmed what I knew intuitively, but could not explain or comprehend. That calm still voice resounding in my head, the cries of my ancestors pumping through my veins finally made a connection with me, and the reunification process began. Now I truly declare, *"I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind but now I see"*. This upgraded me; and allowed me to insert the missing piece of the puzzle into its proper place.

At midpoint of the "History and Reconstruction Project", the uniquely dispersed information empowered me far beyond anything that endowed me prior. The knowledge of the past prompted unexpected power that oozed into my present and simultaneously radiated my future. For example, I recently implemented a campaign awareness that mobilizes leaders of the church to expose them and their congregations to the pertinent information from the "History and Reconstruction Project". Moreover and with little effort, a young activist with the same inherent desire to do more for African Americans engaged me to assist with her determinations. In closing, all of the relationships formed with the participants, including the leadership consultant and professors of "History and Reconstruction Project" benefited the organizational structure and visibility of Opportunity, Inc. Likewise, it financially benefited Webb Enterprises through a referral to an entity that contracted professional cleaning services. This created an opportunity, not only for myself, but also for a few of the other cohort members to earn extra income.

The vital information provided through the "History and Reconstruction Project" offers a solution to affect substantial change in our communities by *"changing ourselves in order to change the world."*



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