



P.O. BOX 56157
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70156

MARJORIE R. ESMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 5, 2009

VIA U.S. MAIL AND FACSIMILE

Warden Burl Cain
Louisiana State Penitentiary
Angola, LA 70712

Re: Offer to Remove Monument Language in December 10, 2008 letter.

Dear Warden Cain,

The ACLU of Louisiana supports you in your efforts to encourage prisoners to look forward toward changing their lives for the better. We expect those efforts to be conducted in a way that will not endorse one religion over another, or religion over non-religion. The Philippians Monument, as it currently exists, presents several constitutional problems, most notably that it endorses one particular religion over others. Delivery people, family members visiting prisoners, attorneys visiting clients, clergy, and state employees all travel down Tunica Trace to the buildings at Angola and all must pass the Philippians Monument along the way. They all deserve to have their own religious beliefs respected as they go about their business at Angola.

In consultation with our complainant, we accept your agreement to remove the prayer¹ from the left side of the monument, and to remove the attribution to Philippians 3:13. Please let us know when this will be accomplished. We thank you for recognizing the need to protect the religious freedoms of all.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Esman
Executive Director

¹ We believe the prayer on the left side of the monument is the "Prayer of Protection," which states:

The light of God surrounds you,
The love of God enfolds you,
The power of God protects you,
And the presence of God watches over you;
Wherever you are, God is.

BOBBY JINDAL
Governor

JAMES M. Le BLANC
Secretary

State of Louisiana
Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Louisiana State Penitentiary

December 10, 2008

Majorie R. Esman
Executive Director
PO Box 56157
New Orleans, LA 70156

RE: Philippians Monument

Dear Ms. Esman:

This letter is in response to your public records act request regarding the "Philippians Monument" located at Louisiana State Penitentiary.

Listed below you will find the responses to your request:

1. Any and all documents regarding the cost of designing, building, or otherwise creating the Philippians Monument. The monument was built out of recycled materials; therefore, no costs were incurred.
2. Any and all documents regarding the purpose, objective and/or intent associated with the creation of the Philippians Monument. Enclosed you will find a copy of the book *Cain's Redemption* by Dennis Shere and a power point presentation.
3. Any and all documents regarding people, agencies, corporations or entities consulted regarding the funding, creation or placement of the Philippians Monument. No documents exist.
4. If the Philippians Monument was donated to either the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections or the Louisiana State Penitentiary, then any and all documents related to the donation. Monument was not a donation.
5. Any and all documents regarding the placement of the Philippians Monument. There were none.

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6. Any and all documents regarding the purpose, objective and/or intent associated with the location of the Philippians Monument. Please refer to the enclosed book *Cains Redemption* regarding "moral rehabilitation" (page 10).
7. Any and all documents regarding any ceremonies, speeches, worship, or service associated with the creation and placement of the Philippians Monument. There were none held.
8. Any and all documents containing the text of speeches or articles wherein Louisiana State Penitentiary employees, including the Warden, refer to the Philippians Monument. No documents exist. I do not prepare written speeches.

I chose the location of the Philippians Monument. The monument is for moral rehabilitation. It was erected by the Front Gate for new inmates arriving at Angola to see that their past stopped when they entered the gates of Angola. Inmates are to forget the past because it can't be changed. It's time to look for the future. Angola is their "Land of New Beginnings".

The monument has no religious value. There is no mention of God or religion in the statement. Again, its purpose is to set the stage for new inmates entering the prison. It advises them we are not going to look at the past – to let it go and begin change for the better. It is an encouragement as they begin to serve their long sentence at Angola. Ninety percent of inmates who enter the gates of Angola die here.

If it would please the ACLU, we would be more than willing to remove the statement on the left side of the monument and the words Philippians 3:13.

Again, this sign has no religious purpose – its purpose is to encourage.

Sincerely,



Burl Cain, CCE
Warden

BC/cf/jmd

cc: File

Enclosures