

## Alexander's Album

by Clifford Alexander

### The Trouble Is Jealousy & Envy

I have mentioned many times in previous lectures, essays and personal dialogues that, regardless of how many civil rights laws or affirmative action edicts are passed by Congress and sanctioned by the U. S. Supreme Court, none will be worth a hill of beans or potatoes if the hearts, souls and minds of most members of all of the ethnic groups in this nation go through moral fumigation. Blacks have acquired the right to vote here in Las Vegas with little, if any, difficulty (through the Voting Rights Act). However, a mass division of the minds and emotions has made the success of the voting privilege ineffective since there has been little or no solidarity of the minds when it came to getting together and voting for candidates who may have had the opportunity to move into the three-car category; they seem to isolate themselves socially from the rest of their kind, creating a lack of communication for effective ideas for this community. They also create a lack of effective voting trends for the best candidate. Here is where jealousy and envy have been negative factors and have gotten in the way of the important learning process.

A group of national Black urban leaders recently participated in a two-day workshop in Las Vegas and this event could have served as a healthy learning and information source for members of all minority groups. This conference attracted some of the outstanding Black political, educational and civic leaders in the country. Envy, jealousy and misinformation played a major role in keeping this event from being well attended. Innocent ignorance has played a major role in preventing many people from having proper knowledge of how to use their knowledge or how to make their votes really count on Election Day.

Through the years, most Blacks have come up on the short end of these aspects of life. The conference mentioned above was open to all citizens of this city. However, teachers of government, economics and social studies did not attempt to include their students. Black-oriented high schools had an opportunity to bring groups of students from their classes, but did not. Most concerned citizens, especially Blacks, would want to know about successful approaches to problems within our community, but, well . . . Yes, a number of minority teachers and high school boys and girls missed a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn and mingle with successful persons in the flesh--but stayed away.

Like it or not, "grown folk" jealousy, envy, and hate" deprived high school boys and girls and many uninformed adults an opportunity of hearing about programs that will and have worked.

Today, in this electronic age, many of us still don't know what to do with our vote; many of us still don't know what steps to take toward employment or promotions in employment. Many of us still sit back, refuse to learn a skill that will better our lot in life, but wait patiently for the self-interest leaders to continue to lead us to the slaughter pen of failure or the status quo syndrome. But, we will take every opportunity possible to "knock" the person who is trying to improve some things. Is it envy, jealousy or hate?

Thank God for the man who has ears and can hear; eyes and can see; a mind and can think, unselfishly; and a desire to continuously work to improve for the present and the future. He sees pitiful plight of our people and is board and big enough to try to enlighten us. It is sad that we fail to learn that, together we stand and divided we fall. Think about it!

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### Chaplain's Corner

#### "COUNTRY CLUB OR PRISON"

I'm sure there are many of you who have heard time and time again that the prison here in Jean, Nevada is nothing more than a country club. Of course you will have your own opinion concerning the matter, but hopefully with this article I can give you a little insight which will help you form those very important opinions that could very well affect the lives of the men doing time here in Jean, Nevada. To begin, I think it's important that you the reader understand that I am an inmate. I'm going to ask you not to let the fact that I am living in the Southern Nevada Correction Center influence the opinions you will form one way or the other about this article.

The Southern Nevada Correction is not a country club! I will be the first to admit that the living conditions are better here than most prisons, but no matter what mistake myself, and the men here doing time have made we're human beings. There has been some talk about the men here having their own room. I suppose there are a number of different views and concepts to the above statement, but an important has on the inmate mentally.

How many times have you read in you news paper or heard on a news program about a man getting stab or killed in prison? There are many reasons why a man could find himself the victim of a stabbing. No matter which end of the knife the men in question might find themselves in the end there are no winners. The source to the stabbing or both. Being able to retreat to the privacy of your room with out a doubt has eliminated a great deal of the mental pressure that would otherwise be a part of an inmates day to day life.

"No the prison in Jean is not a country club." But what it is, is a new concept in prisons that should be given a chance to work. All the men in Jean will one day return to free society, I ask you, do you want a prison to be a place where a man is worst when he comes out than he was when he went in? Or should prison be a place that tries to help a man overcome his mistakes.

I have heard and I'm sure you have heard the old saying "once a criminal always a criminal," and how many times have you heard someone say that you can't rehabilitate a convict? I say that these old saying are just that "Old Sayings" and they are not the whole truth. There are men here who really want to overcome their mistakes. Another reason all the bad you hear about a convict will stick in your mind is because you never hear about the ex-con is not something you can be proud of, and if you are an ex-con who just got out

of prison and you are trying to go straight and live inside of the law, you try to forget that the part of your life when you went to prison every happen, and you hope to god ever one else goes.

I would like to at this time inform you of some of the good that is coming from the prison in Jean. We have organize programs here, and unlike the gangs you have read about that exist in prisons these programs are made up with both black and white men who are working together to reach a constitutive goal. These programs consist of different type groups. All of the groups are ran by the inmates. Understand that all major projects and decisions must be cleared thru prison administration, but the groups themselves are ran by inmates.

Two groups that have stood out in their work both inside and outside the prison are first S.O.C. (Save Our Children) This program was design to carry a message of warning to our state youth. They tell the real and uncut truth about crime, and what the use of drugs have done to their lives. The information these men give is first hand simply because they have lived the cold life that they talk about. The other group is the United States Jaycees. These men have done more in the eight month they have been a chapter of the jaycees then any other prison chapter in our State. They are number one out of our States prison chapter They are working with the voluntary action center in Las Vegas. Because of the work they have done with the handicap and their sincere desire to help the needy their name has been submitted in Washington D.C. to recieve our Nation Humanitarian Award, something that no Jaycee chapter in our state has ever accomplished in prison or in free society.

Again the whole thing goes back to mental pressure. Because there is a very low amount of mental pressure here in Jean the men are able to think about things other than if they will live to see tomorrow.

There is another very important thing that can't be over looked and that is the free people that work here. For the most part the inmates here are lucky enough to have some good people who really care and who want to help. One man that has stood out is our Chaplin (Mr. Charles L. Wyatt) I don't think that there is a man here who don't respect and admire this man. There is no way for me to know how many men this man has helped in their hour of need. But I do know the number is high. When a man goes to see the Chaplin he goes so because he knows he is going to see someone who cares and who will do all that he can to help.

The facts speak for themself, it's up to you free society if the prison and it's concept is given a chance to work. When society say things like we are living in a country club they force the men that they elected to office to take action and correct what ever it is they don't like.

On behalf of the men here at Jean I am asking you (free society) to be sure that you don't like the prison in Jean and what it trying to do before you ask that it is stopped. There are to many lives that will be affected by a wrong decision.

Arthur Lee McCormick  
Inmate

## WORDS OF LIFE

"Let not your hearts be troubled"  
—St. John 14:27

1. *Our heartbeats are central.* We are told that God, in assessing us, looks upon our hearts. We should—indeed, we must—do no less in dealing with one another.

As husbands and wives, as parents, as friends, in our work and everywhere, we should sense the heartbeat of others rather than simply see them for the outward things they do.

2. *God wants us to have confidence in Him.* "Do not worry," He says in effect. "I have the whole wide world in My hands."

The presence of worry suggests an absence of faith. We must know for a certainty that God has already met

our every need. Through the second author (of the second portion) of the Book of Isaiah, God says: "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem. Cry aloud; and say unto her that her warfare is (already) accomplished, that her iniquity is (already) pardoned." "Let not your heart be troubled."

3. *Worry wastes energy!* It takes infinitely more of our strength to worry than to have the serene confidence that He who clothes the lilies of the field and has His "eye upon the sparrow" watches over and has control of all that is good and necessary for our happiness and fulfillment.