

Remake the World

Shahid A. Muhammad

WITH THE NAME OF GOD, THE GRACIOUS, THE COMPASSIONATE

Last week we discussed the television documentary "Scared Straight" and in general, the growing problem of juvenile delinquency. Many valuable lessons can be learned from "Scared Straight" that the entire society should take note of. We witnessed prisoners (who, in fact are grown up juvenile delinquents) showing human compassion for young offenders.

Even though their manner of expression might lead some to believe otherwise. What we saw were men genuinely concerned for the well being of those youths who were fast approaching the harvest of their deeds — Prison life.

Possibly the most significant thing about "Scared Straight" is that it gave the public a candid view of the harsh realities of prison life. Leaving no doubt in

my mind that the majority of our prisons are without the element of a true rehabilitation process. It is virtually impossible to be rehabilitated in the same kind of environment that resulted in the arrest and subsequent incarceration of the offender.

The only difference is that the prison environment is closed leaving no place for a person to flee such hellish conditions if they wanted to. They are locked into it — drugs, homosexuality, homosexual rape, assault, robbery and even slavery. If the prison environment cannot be made reasonably safe for an offender to do time — then they cannot be rightly called correctional facilities simply because such facilities are more conducive to maintaining criminal behavior than correcting it. And believe me dear people — the type of prison life depicted in "Scared Straight" happens everyday right here with the penal institutions in Iowa. What can be done?

We need more involvement from the greater community — more involvement from the ministers, religious groups and social groups. We must provide the incarcerated with a second chance and we must help them to help themselves so that they qualify to meet the responsibilities that go with a second chance. We must seek alternatives to the antiquated prison structures that presently exist and we must remove ourselves from the fearful, vengeful and apathetic attitudes that we presently hold toward the

incarcerated.

We are very quick to give aid to and hire Vietnamese refugees and others who come from war torn areas throughout the world. But how fast will you aid and hire an ex-convict who got his start in crime as a direct result of a war torn family or war torn community riddled with poverty, ignorance and crime? We cannot be isolated from our responsibilities to each other. Please don't misconstrue what I'm saying — I am not an advocate for the pacification of prisoners.

They must do their time for crimes committed against society — But we must also get at the root of the problem and work to get prisoners to come to grips with this reality in order to effect positive change for everyone involved. If we are successful, we will have helped in the salvaging of human life. Bring a positive contribution to our society and save the taxpayers a great deal of money (It cost \$17,000+ to maintain one inmate per year).

Think about it — May God bless you all with the light of understanding.

As-Salaam-Alaikum
(Peace be unto you)
Shahid A. Muhammad



WORDS OF LIFE

Prayer Poem

"Oh that I might find him!"—Job 23:3

1. *Who comes first in your life?* Job, who spoke our biblical words, wanted more than anything else in life to find God. After many difficulties, he came to know that God was with him all along, that indeed God's grace, God's love and God's power were already with him, sustaining him in every obstacle with which he was confronted. God often "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

2. *What comes first in your life?* Is it having your own way? Or is it seeking God's way and will? There is a world of difference between the two. When we try to have our own way, we run into conflict with everyone with

whom we meet. When we seek for God's will, for God's way for us, we find a harmonious path that synchronizes and meshes all that we do in a gloriously helpful and supportive way with others. Seek, above all else, God's way and will...for you.

3. *Know God!* Know that God's life is within you. Hence it is never "far away." God's breath, God's image form your basic self. You are a reflection, a manifestation, an embodiment of God. To know God is, then, to know the infinite riches, the divine treasure, the sublime realities and resources which are to be found within our lives.

The disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee thought that God perhaps had forsaken them. Jesus was calmly asleep, and the disciples came to him pleading that he might save them, lest they perish. Then Jesus arose and spoke to the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

It was mindful of this quality of ever-present help and deliverance on the part of God that Edward Hopper (1818.-1888) wrote "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."

*Jesus, Savior, pilot me,
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me
roll,
Hiding rock and treacherous
shoal;
Chart and compass came
from thee:*

Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

*As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean
wild;
Boisterous ways obey thy will
When thou say'st to them,
"Be still."
Wondrous Sovereign of the
sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.*

*When at least I near the
shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
'Twixt me and the peaceful
rest,
Then, while leaning on thy
breast,
May I hear thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."*

God is ever at hand to rescue, deliver, redeem.

Biblical Inspiration

Prayer Poem

"God will supply every need."—Phil. 4:19

1. *God is good.* Most of us give at least lip service to the belief or the conviction that God is good. That is our "judgment" or estimate of the One beyond our judgment and who is, indeed, our Judge. But God and good are synonymous. It is by the standard of godlikeness that goodness is assessed. Whether we may agree with God's will or not, all that is according to God's will is good.

2. *God is our sufficient supply.* This is a difficult realization to come by, particularly when life is bleak and all seems lost. A despondent soul, in the face of just this kind of all-too-common circumstance, thumbed through his book of hymns and the book fell completely open on the words: "Hast

thou not seen how all thou needest hath been granted in what God ordaineth." While we are sleeping...or even weeping... God is doing and preparing for us good things far, far beyond our own imagining. God is faithful and true.

3. *Nothing is ever lost!* Sometimes we tend to feel that, when God takes loved things or loved ones away from us, we are faced with an unfillable void. Not so. In the plan and economy of God, nothing is ever lost. God takes good things beyond our sight simply that the better view or vision and experience may become our own. "God will supply every need." God—the same yesterday, today and forever—will continue to meet each need.

When God's spirit and mind "rule, guide and direct" our lives, whatever we may will or decree shall come to pass.

In 1888 Ernest W. Shurtleff had this certainly in mind when he was asked to write the class hymn for his graduating class at the Andover Theological School in Massachusetts. Shurtleff believed that success was, always assured when God's life led our every endeavor. It was also in this spirit that he wrote what became the ever-popular youth hymn of Christian confidence and hope, "Lead on, O King Eternal."

*Lead on, O King Eternal,
The day of march has come;*

*Henceforth in fields of
conquest
Thy tents shall be our home;
Through days of preparation
Thy grace has made us
strong,
And now, O King Eternal,
We lift our battle-song.*

*Lead on, O King Eternal,
We follow, not with fears,
For gladness breaks like
morning
Whene'er thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us,
We journey in its light;
The crown awaits the
conquest;
Lead on, O God of might.*

When God rules in us, says an ancient prayer of the Church, we reign!

**NAACP
Highlights**

The Las Vegas branch of the NAACP will hold groundbreaking ceremonies at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 14th, for its \$4.5 million, 115-unit senior citizen housing complex, special projects developer Bob Bailey said Monday.

Construction of the project, to be located at Eastern Avenue and Harris Street, will culminate 18 months of work by many people in the community, including vigorous support by Mayor Bill Briare, Bailey said.

**BREAK THE HATE HABIT
UNDERSTAND
THY
NEIGHBOR
BLACK, WHITE or BROWN**

