

Messages from the Mound



In 2007, I began my prison ministry where I facilitated my Relationship First Aid spiritual based personal development classes at Mound Correctional Facility in Detroit. After Mound closed in 2012, I continued to communicate with the inmates through newsletters, birthday cards and attending/speaking at events at various facilities. It is suspected that the facility got its name because of the many ancient mounds that were found all over Detroit, and I believe the most concentrated and/largest ones

were along what is now known as Mound Rd.

"Messages from the Mound" is named after the newsletters that I send out to the inmates since that is where we all initially met. Because the classes that I was teaching them focused on spiritual elevation allowing the negativity within them to die, thus ultimately elevating their consciousness, I thought it an appropriate name because a "mound" is defined as: an "elevation" formed of earth overlying ruins, a grave etc., a heap or raised mass. The following articles are from men that are currently incarcerated or released and this serves as an opportunity for the voiceless to have a voice. If you have a loved one that is currently incarcerated and would like for me to send them newsletters, please forward their contact information with a MDOC number to: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or contact me at: Relationship First Aid, Attn: Ma'at Seba, P.O. Box 1934, Belleville, MI. 48112

"Deceptive intelligence, wrong vs right"

By Savante Johnson
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

I heard Hon. Louis Farrakhan say "a devil is the deceptive intelligence that rationalizes disobedience to God." When someone knows the right thing to do but they want to do wrong, immediately intelligence will spring up in their minds to rationalize what they are about to do. For instance, one guy sees that someone unknowing drops their wallet. If they want to keep it for themselves he may make up some excuse in his mind like: "He wouldn't return it to me if it were my wallet; I need it more than he does." On several occasions drug dealers and aspiring drug dealers have said to me "dope fiends are going to get high no matter what... they're gonna buy from somebody anyway... it might as well be me."

You see an extreme form of these kinds of rationalizations when police officers shoot unarmed Black People. You also hear right-wing media saying, "he should have complied" or "they have an arrest record." All kinds of rationalizations are made to excuse crimes committed by police. There's a saying that "You can't justify bad behavior by pointing to worse behavior." In these cases the police don't even bother to point to worse behavior because most of the people killed have done nothing wrong or are only suspected of minor offenses. Not only have they criminalize Blackness, they've made all infractions worthy of the death penalty.

This deceptive intelligence masks institutional racism. The police don't see a conflict between the laws that govern their conduct and the murder of Black people. In the same way the Ku Klux Klan, a religious organization, didn't see a conflict between their religion and the Lynching of Blacks.

Even if there's a legal basis to do something it can still be wrong. Oppressive governments often use the laws of their lands to justify their mistreatment of the people. The Nazis in Germany were careful to pass laws sanctioning everything they did. It was all within the law. Yet it was still wrong. The fact that slavery was legal in this country didn't make it right. Jim Crow segregation was written into the law. Their belief in white supremacy was the deceptive intelligence that rationalized their wrong doing. It allowed them to pass laws to legally sanction their oppression. Wrong is wrong even if everyone votes to approve it.

Right and wrong are built into human consciousness. If the devil is the deceptive intelligence then what is its counterpart? It's the Self-accusing Spirit. Also referred to as the conscience. This is that inner voice that informs us what's right without having to be told by someone outside of ourselves. If one doesn't listen to that inner voice and continue to ignore it, then it will eventually grow silent. When that happens it must be resurrected. Min. Farrakhan said that the resurrected starts with the awakening of the self-accusing spirit and doesn't end until one is in perfect harmony with the will of God. Listen to that inner voice. Nurture it so that it's presence grows in your life.

Underneath all the rationalizations, excuses, and legal justifications lies the truth: Right is right and wrong is wrong.

Life sentences in Michigan

By Willie X Harris
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Life Sentences without the possibility of parole in Michigan is a death sentence. In 1846 the Michigan Constitution abolished the death penalty. Michigan's First Degree Murder Statute, MCL 750.316; MSA 28.548 does not limit a life sentence which must expire after serving 10, 20, 30 or 50 years, but the life sentence under MCL 750.316; MSA 28.548 goes into infinity, that is 10, 20, 30 or 500 years into the future and such a sentence exceeds the life expectancy of any prisoner. Prisoners serving LWOP (Life Without Parole) sentences in Michigan are "State Slaves".

In *People vs Cooper*, 236 Mich. App 643, at 661 (1999), the court held that the Michigan Constitution of 1963 Article 4, Section 46, empowered the legislature to impose an "Indeterminate" and "Determinate" sentence as punishment for crimes and for the detention and release of persons imprisoned or detained under such sentence as long as the sentence does not violate...any provision of either the Michigan Constitution of Federal Law, at 663-664. The imposition of a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole is not within the constitutional grant of authority to the legislature under the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article 4,

Section 46. The determinate sentence provision and the indeterminate sentence provision under the Constitution of 1850, Article 4, Section 47, Constitution of 1908, Article 5, Section 28 and the Constitution of 1963, Article 4, Section 46 have NEVER authorized the Michigan Legislature to enact any statute providing for a penalty of death (Death-by-Incarceration) like the mandatory, non-parolable life sentence which expires ONLY After a prisoner's DEATH.

Willis X. Harris is a former Michigan prisoner with LWOP sentence who served 23½ yrs. for a first degree murder he did not commit. His mandatory life sentence was commuted in 1980 at which time he was paroled. After two years on parole, he was pardoned by former Governor William Milliken. He is the founder and president of the Michigan Lifer's Association which publishes two quarterly publications, the "Michigan Lifer's Report" and the "Cure Life Long" on the correctional system featuring various featured writers including current and former incarcerated individuals. To receive his publications or for further information in the above article, he can be contacted at: Michigan Lifers Association, 4417 Second Ave., Detroit, MI. 48201, (313) 442-3629.

Conviction designed for Greatness

By Bobby Bostic
SPECIAL TO THE SUN



When a person is convicted of a crime, greatness is the last thing on their mind. Freedom is what they are thinking about constantly. But in time they come to realize that freedom is a state of mind. So they begin to pursue mental freedom. Through this quest a prisoner comes to see that prison is not their greatest

burden. Via their studies they come to see that the truly free are people that are great or at least striving for greatness. Thus a seed is born. From the depths of the dirt the convicted person starts striving for his own greatness. It is from the lowest depths that the greatest people have risen. That's even true for people in prison.

During pre-Biblical days Joseph rose from the rank of prisoner to one of the highest state officials in Egypt. While in prison he had a vision, as do many of us who still sit in prison. There are countless examples of many men who were convicted of a crime; then found their true calling in life and then rose to greatness. In contemporary times we have Malcolm X, Merle Haggard, and Nelson Mandela as examples. Yet many of us have potential to rise to the same level of greatness. Yet as the saying goes: many are called but few are chosen. Meaning that many can potentially be called to greatness, but only a few will do the necessary hard work and make the needed sacrifices to achieve greatness in life or in their particular calling or field.

From the conviction of a crime a man can become convicted of his own potential for greatness. Let's look at the word conviction.

Conviction: 1. the act of convicting a person in

court. 2. the state of being convinced. 3. a strong persuasion or belief.

After being convicted of a crime in court the prisoner must use his time to find himself; thereby finding his true calling in life. We all have a gift, something that we can contribute to the world. A prisoner must be convinced of this. His strong belief in his own redemption will lead him to a path of maturity and growth. Once a person has been down for so long he wants to rise to unknown heights. If he doesn't limit his vision he can surely attain greatness. It's been said that the mind can achieve what the mind can conceive. This can be done even from a prison cell. In fact it has been done time and time again as documented throughout history. Certainly a criminal conviction is not designed to help a person achieve greatness. Designed conviction is when a prisoner personally designs their conviction to change their life for the better.

To construct such a design takes great conviction on the part of the prisoner. It requires a strenuous effort. Once the seed of greatness is implanted in the mind of the prisoner he must till the soil in order for the seed to germinate. This seed is watered through reading books and other materials. The sun shines on the seed through inspirational tidbits such as motivational music and encouraging movies. Doing the work to change his life is the air that allows his tree to blossom. Programs, classes, college, creating nonprofits, blueprints for charity, etc. are the nutrients that nurture the seed of greatness. Look at Malcolm X and how he designed his conviction to become great. The average prisoner must also design his conviction to attain to greatness. Take the worse situation of your life and become your best self. There is greatness in you if you search for it by design. If you succeed in finding it then you can transform your personal situation from the worse to the best. Then you can turn your entire life around as a result of a designed conviction.

Office: (313)964-2525
Fax no. (248)438-6724

Cell: (248)672-2303

Kathy Lynn Henry
Attorney and Counselor at Law
P-41314

Law Office of Smith & Henry, PLLC
615 Griswold Street, Suite 925 • Detroit, MI 48226
Email: AttnyKathy@aol.com

**EVERYONE
HAS A PLACE,
A VOICE,
AND SOMETHING
TO CONTRIBUTE.**