

A
Freeman's Orientation
Manual



DECARCERATE LOUISIANA
A Social Change Movement

*Freedom, Truth, Justice, Mercy,
Compassion, Self-Determination, Love*

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Freeman's Orientation Manual is to support man and woman's inborn yearning for success and, most importantly, one's undying quest for learning and human progress. This Orientation Manual is a framework supporting man's close relationship to his Creator so that his thinking and actions remain true to his highest self and he do not become a slave or victim to oppressive rules, procedures, regulations, and customs of the institutional life offered by modern day slave traffickers who intend to exploit, subjugate, and dehumanize people inside the Louisiana Department of Corrections prison system.

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Introduction

On June 22, 2018, a Friday afternoon at approximately 1:00 p.m., I was sitting on my locker box in Walnut 1 when several guards entered the dorm and yelled “everybody come up to the front!” One by one prisoners began walking towards the front of the dorm where they were patted down and told not to go back in the bed area while the guards conducted a shakedown.

After sitting in the game room for about 30 minutes watching the guards’ shakedown, I decided to get up and go take a walk outside. When I opened the door to make the exit I was met by several additional guards who abruptly asked, “What’s your name?”

“Ronald Brooks,” I answered.

“That’s him?” one guard said to the other.

“Yes, that’s him. Come on, let’s go!”

I was escorted to the “A” building in the warden’s office on the main compound of Angola Prison. As I entered the office I saw warden Darrel Vannoy along with several assistant wardens, including Kevin Benjamin and Tim Delaney.

“I agree with everything you said in that video except for one thing. I don’t see you all as slaves. I’m trying to do what I can to help. I set up the ‘Thinking for A Change’ program. I see you recently completed this class. Did it help at all?” warden Vannoy asked.

“Yes! It’s a great class and helps build solidarity among prisoners, but it’s only enough to accommodate 10 people in a cellblock that holds over 200 prisoners. If you can set up about several more trailers on the cellblock yard and hire several more inmate-trained instructors to teach the class once in the morning and again in the afternoon five days a week, not only will we have enough space to accommodate all the prisoners in that cellblock, but we will have created a fellowship among those prisoners throughout that cellblock. And if we do that in every cellblock and dormitory in the prison, we will change lives, prevent crime, reduce recidivism and prepare incarcerated people for successful reentry. Should we fail to do this, we skirt the law and fail to implement a corrections program to accommodate and rehabilitate every prison for the benefit of public health and safety,” I said.

“So you’re the founder of Decarcerate Louisiana?” he asked.

“Yes,” I said.

“Since you’re not satisfied with what we have, I’m sending you to David Wade Correctional Center.”

At that juncture, I was escorted out the door to a waiting patrol van and driven to the new prison in Homer, Louisiana.

We arrived at David Wade at approximately 6:00 p.m. I had heard the prison was run like a concentration camp by racist white men in Homer. Prisoners in Angola who were formerly incarcerated at David Wade told me that they used the camp to break your spirit and make you servile. In my mind, my thinking was that I had already served about 15 years on extended lockdown out of the 20 years I been incarcerated at Angola. The privileges that were offered to inmates in the dorms that prisoners in the cellblocks couldn't receive wasn't so good to make me cooperate with the historic forced labor system that was administered daily by warden Vannoy and his entourage of assistant wardens and corrections staff.

The time I spent in the dormitory from 1998 to 2002 convinced me that the dorms and cellblocks were all prison. To me, the dorms and cellblocks were equally disgusting. All of it was the same to me. I didn't see the dorm as better than the cellblock or the cellblock better than the dorm. I didn't want to have anything to do with the free labor system nor playing sports or a good ole boy for the warden. I couldn't see myself being commanded as the dog, mule, or pet animal of man. I am outraged by the whole prison system.

I exited the van and was greeted by a Major Young who then escorted me to a building on the south compound of the prison. Inside was a white lady who was dressed in the attire of a nurse. She asked me a few questions about my health and who to contact in case of a serious health problem. I answered the questions and then went on with Major Young who handed me an offender orientation manual and proceeded to escort me to the cellblock where I was confined to a single man cell.

I sat on the bunk, tired, replaying the day's events in my head. I looked at the offender orientation manual with skepticism and then suddenly dozed off.

It was 3 days later, about eight in the morning, when the guards placed hands, waste, and leg shackles on my person and escorted me to the office of warden Jerry Goodwin.

After formal greetings, we sat down. "What happened up there in Angola," warden Goodwin inquired.

"We were organizing, raising awareness about the evolution of slavery, showing people how it evolved, matured, and grown from chattel slavery to convict leasing, to forced labor in the jail and prison system," I said.

"You spooked warden Vannoy. I see you have a poor conduct record," he said.

"I think my conduct is great. Do you think your father's conduct was poor who rebelled against the King of England and led the Revolutionary War which paved the way for the creation of the American flag?" I asked.

“Of course not! Well, your conduct’s not that bad. You surely spooked Vannoy. I don’t think he wants you back. Do you want to go back?” he asked.

“It doesn’t matter,” I said.

“Alright. Improve your conduct. We have a review board every 90 days. Here’s a copy of our Offender Orientation Manual. If you have any questions, just write a letter and let me know,” he said.

Without even reading it I knew the so-called Offender Orientation Manual was part of the slave-making process. Why should we listen to a mob of slave traffickers who are still walking around in 2018 with the same hand, waste, and leg shackles that their fathers used to contain and hold my fathers as captives during the barbaric antebellum period all the way up to 1865? And then for another brutal 80 plus years during the period of convict leasing from 1867 to 1945? And now for nearly another ruthless 80 years during this era of Law and Order and Criminal Justice from 1965 to 2018? I refuse to accept unjust authority and is the very reason why we are organizing to decarcerate Louisiana and amend the 13th!

I decided that a pro-freedom Orientation Manual is needed to enlighten the minds and to counter the new institution of slavery so that incarcerated people become deinstitutionalized and advocates for their own dreams of success that make men and women productive and useful to the world. Why call out the worst in people by helping to promote offensive behavior and criminal activity in hip-hop and cinema? Engineering poor development practices that create an unsustainable place (ghetto) that in no way we can expect a community to thrive? It is because we know that we have given sustainable development to some and deprive others of same that we know some are going to be rich and some poor. That we have created pathways to success for some and exposed others to the danger of domestic violence and crime that we know some are at a greater risk to offend and commit crimes than others. Does poor development practices in poverty-blighted rural and urban areas explain why we have high rates of domestic violence, crime and incarceration in Louisiana and the country? Does sustainable development practices in the resourceful parts of the states explain why we have significantly lower rates of crime and imprisonment in those places?

It’s clear to scientists and scholars that the engineering of poor development practices produces poverty, provokes people to domestic violence and crime, creates public health and safety concerns for law and order and criminal justice – i.e., the need to build jails and prisons. Law and Order as practiced in the ghettos of America and imposed on those who live in poverty is slavery and involuntary servitude. Criminal Justice is the new way by which hundreds of thousands of destitute African-Americans and poor folks have been re-enslaved in this contemporary forced labor system called “The Department of Corrections.”

It is my hope that this manual opens the eyes of the people inside and outside the prison system, that it stimulates the mind to entertain and adopt higher images of self, that it enlarges and improves the definition of man (and woman) so that he sees himself not as a

criminal or offender but as the man (woman) that God made and placed in charge of the Earth and given the power and responsibility to govern himself and to solve his own problems. In this way, and none other, will success come to man and he fulfill his major life purpose in the creation to live in freedom and prosperity.

Purpose of the Creation

The purpose of creation is the big question for all time that has been given to mankind to solve whether one likes it or not. As a matter of duty, man and woman must figure out – through trial and error – the purpose of all things and of all living matter and must determine its role in the universal scheme of creation. For these reasons, this is why we see man and woman studying the moon, the sun, the stars, the earth and everything inside and outside our solar system.

Why? Why must man and woman figure out the purpose of creation? Because man and woman has been endowed with the power of thought, of imagination, of intelligence, of feeling, of reason. By virtue of his or her intelligence, man and woman comes into this world as a baby seeking to learn and understand and to deal with the world. Note how, as babies, we are fearless little scientists wanting to see and know everything, how it tastes, feel, sound, smell, and operate. Schools have been established to support man and woman's inborn intelligence and to deal with the various questions of who, what, where, when, how, and why.

After all our learning, whether it's about rocks, soil, plants, insects, land, animals, nature, past and modern civilizations, at the end of the day, our primary, overarching concerns are "where are we going?" "What progress have we made?" "What is it good for?" Therefore, since man and woman have been planted on earth and empowered with authority to command oneself and take charge of one's destiny, it is an inalienable right for man and woman to conclude that the purpose of creation is for him and her to determine and to decide what is to be done with his/her learning about it, what is the learning good for, what progress does he/she stand to gain from using his/her learning to accomplish some objective or achieve some goal.

Looking at the surroundings of our environment or place of residence, no matter whether you are outside or inside of a prison, live in a ghetto or community, are wealthy or poor, it must be concluded that man and woman have been given the inalienable right, power and responsibility to govern oneself and to decide at any given moment and at every step of the way that the purpose of creation for him and her is to create, to innovate, to feed and clothe oneself, to provide order and security, to make oneself warm and happy, to seek improvement, to better oneself, to prosper.

Man and woman is at the top of his/her game when he or she considers that freedom and imprisonment, equality and inequality, community and ghetto, wealth and poverty, fairness and bigotry – among other things – are all creations that he and she has inherited in the 21st century but nonetheless is charged with defining its purpose, determining what is it good for, and deciding whether to embrace it or discard it, change it or leave it alone.

From an intelligent standpoint, we can be sure that bigotry, poverty, ghettos, inequality, oppression, and hate correlate, interact and weave together a system designed to segregate, marginalize, impoverish, criminalize, subjugate, exploit, and imprison mankind. Alternatively, freedom, community reinvestment, equality, wealth, and fair play correlate, interact and weave together support systems designed to restore, revive, redeem, liberate, empower, uplift and free man and woman to the fullest and safest extent possible. In both scenarios, it is a thing or purpose of creation, and therefore, a task given to mankind en masse to solve. And since bigotry, inequality, ghettos, poverty, prisons, and hate have been found to be part of a plan to degrade, enslave, and oppress man and woman is authorized by their natural intelligence to destroy it, remove or transform it into a place that holds people accountable not by slavery and involuntary servitude but through education and rehabilitation and releasing them with an arm of job and life skills to give back to their community. Failure to do this would be man and woman's own fault, weakness, indecision, and cowardice. Furthermore, it would condone a multitude of stains on the fabric of our community and blots on the dress of our society.

Man Know Thyself

“Do you know what it means to be a man? To be a man is to be a resemblance to the Creator. If you know in fact that you were created in the image of God and to be a resemblance to the Creator, then you are a man,” said Marcus Garvey

Consider for a moment who or what is the Creator, our Creator. If we didn't know anything else, we can be sure that the Creator is an Intelligent Being. Our Creator is the author—more or less—of a universe or world of creation that makes just enough sense for the creation to hold up, remain steady, cooperate, and allow the cosmos to proceed. Despite all the losses mankind has incurred and witnessed for the duration of his/her life on earth, creation is present and remains a teacher and undying friend to man and woman. There are a lot of things or incidents in creation (e.g., pollution, wars, hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc.) that may confound man; however, at the end of the day, the sun still rises in the east and sets in the west consistently and purposefully. Indeed, that is intelligent design.

Hydrogen and oxygen are brought together and, presto, water is created and man lives. Nitrogen, carbon dioxide, oxygen, hydrogen, et al, are found in the atmosphere and, presto, air

is created and man breathes. The sun is set at just the proper distance from the land and, mysteriously, mankind survives. Man and woman have two hands, two feet, a working brain, and reproductive organs and, miraculously, society persists. Indeed, creation is an intelligent design.

Our Creator is an Intelligent Being. The individual who resembles his Creator is likewise an intelligent being. When man sets or puts something into motion that causes it to work together in harmony with other elements to produce a product or service for the benefit of himself and mankind, and that cooperates with the universal scheme of creation that individual is in action a resemblance to the Creator.

Men and women who have a true knowledge of themselves are informed by their senses and rely on their senses (i.e., sound, feeling, smell, sight, taste, intelligence) to tell them what is right and what is wrong, good and bad, fair and unfair, just and unjust. Given our senses alone, there is no doubt that mankind is born for dominion, made for freedom, empowered to command oneself and take control of one's destiny. If this were not true, man and woman would be disempowered and unable to think, imagine, and reason about yesterday, today, tomorrow and a future life 10, 50, or 100 years from now.

Men and women who possess full knowledge of themselves believe in equality, that regardless of differences in appearances or what have you, all human beings are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them are the right(s) to create, to innovate, to protect and serve the common good of humanity. Inalienable means permanent. Inalienable rights mean permanent rights—rights that are recognized as inviolable and cannot be taken away from man or woman by another man or woman. Should any individual or group of individuals attempt to violate the inalienable rights of any person by creating a system of government and laws designed to segregate, marginalize, impoverish, barbarize, criminalize and enslave any human being, those persons who are under attack are within their rights and justified for taking action by any means necessary to defend themselves.

Consequently, knowledge of self that man and woman—however imperfect—is made for freedom and not bondage is an absolute necessity in the movement of creation and to satisfy one's inborn yearning for success, for liberation. Without it, ignorance prevails and the human descends to the level of the animals and become irresponsible and the subject of slavery and involuntary servitude. Indeed, if man and woman are to abolish the new forced labor system that manifest today as Law and Order and criminal justice, we must obtain knowledge of self and act according to our highest, best interest.

Dissertation of Man

Notwithstanding his Creator, Man (and Woman) with his intelligence is supreme lord of the creation. Empowered by his senses and creative intelligence, and with knowledge of Self, man knows that he is given authority and dominion over the earth, the power and right to rule, to regulate his own affairs, to create a life for himself, to control his own destiny.

Oppress him or her, and he/she becomes a revolutionary. Enslave him or her, and he/she becomes an abolitionist and rebel against the status quo. Sentence him or her to death, and he/she becomes an anti-death penalty organizer and advocate. Deprive him or her of the vote and civil liberties, and he/she becomes a civil rights activist, organizer, litigator. Cut him or her off from earning living wages and he/she finds another way to earn his/her daily bread. Overpower him or her with an organization and before long he/she responds with a counter organization to enforce his/her will.

Knowledge of Self is the recipe for man and woman's success, happiness, and peace of mind. With courage, there is man and woman in their full glory, power, and authority. Without faith in oneself and in one's Creator, belief and confidence in his/her success, man/woman becomes the victim of circumstances and a product of his or her environment. Everything in nature (e.g., the land, air, lakes, rivers, sea, forests, etc.) has been given to mankind by its Creator, it is only proper that he/she seize it, subdue it, utilize it and channel it to his or her pleasure and satisfaction.

Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery

Dr. Na'im Akbar, one of our psychologists, heroes, and saints, instructed us in these words:

“To be free, you must first free your mind. You must begin not to act like prisoners and redefine what your situation is. But as long as you act like prisoners and accept the definition of prisoners, they will keep you as prisoners. No one wants real men in prison, particularly working together rather than trying to destroy each other.”

All inventions and products of woman and man has its origin in the mind. The telephone, television, automobile, computer, bathtub, refrigerator, stove, toothbrush, spoon, cellphone, etc., all began or came into being first as an idea. The hospital, library, park, hotel, casino, museum, gas station, prison and parole began as a thought. Town, county, parish, city, ghetto, community appeared first as an idea.

Slavery and freedom are a thought process. A slave and a free man are two different thought processes. In his mind, the slave sees and believes himself to be defeated, and therefore, acts as a slave. On the other hand, the free man thinks and believes himself to be free, and so, he strives to be successful. Because the poor in spirit accepts the definition of a slave or the prison sentence handed down to him by his slave owner acting as judge and warden, he thinks and acts like a prisoner. The free man believes in the definition of freedom, that he was made to be free and lives a life based on freedom and in pursuit of his freedom no matter what.

A free man will fight you back to Kingdom Come for his liberation, while the slave will submit to the status quo. People of African descent and others in America who are systematically under attack with bigotry, poverty, and prisons is a good example to look at. You hear or see some cases of rebellion, organized rebellion, like Decarcerate Louisiana, the Free Alabama Movement, Amend the 13th Movement to Abolish Legal Slavery in America, et al, and you think, wow, people are fighting back, people are demanding freedom. In the same places under attack, you look around some more and see other people acting like slaves and submitting to conditions of slavery and involuntary servitude. Again, one mind entertains beliefs in freedom and success while the other mind entertains beliefs in defeat and doubts of freedom.

If you have knowledge of yourself and believe that man and woman were created to resemble their Creator and believe that mankind were created in equality with no individual or race being inferior or superior to the other, were made not for bondage but freedom, you have broken the chains of psychological slavery. You clean your mind of all filth, all thoughts, thinking, ideas, and beliefs that are self-defeating and self-destructive.

You may recall: "if you do the crime, do the time!" "Take your lick!" "I'm taking my lick!" "I'm a flunky!" "you're a flunky!" "You're a criminal!" "That's the man's job!" "Let the man handle it!" "We not going to come together!" "We can't unite!" Etc., etc., etc. The free man, the man who possesses knowledge of himself, knows that these statements are in conflict with his freedom and success, and so, he condemns them and discards them from the temple of his mind before it takes root and multiplies and chokes him to death.

"I am great!" "I am born for dominion!" "I am made to be successful!" "You're a success!" "Think it and become it!" "If you don't like how something is done, do it yourself!" "If you can see it, you can achieve it!" "If you believe in it, go after it!" "I'm a problem solver!" "I will solve the problem!" "Stand for something or fall for anything!" These statements restore the mind with truth and knowledge of self and empower and enable man and woman to break the chains of psychological slavery.

A Heritage of Struggle: The Ongoing Battle for Freedom and Justice

Unfortunately, with passage of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, the infamous system of chattel slavery and involuntary servitude has been preserved and upheld as legal and now applicable to all the states in the union. This means that African captives and their descendants who have been brought to the U.S. by force and against their free will can be held as slaves by the passage of new criminal laws by the states and federal government.

Excited and wasting no time, the old slave traffickers (i.e., business owners, sheriffs, the police, prosecutors, judges, legislators) put together a new forced labor system and called it Peonage. Taking its cues from the 13th Amendment, the system of Peonage, or debt slavery, was instituted right after the Civil War with its primary target being people of African descent. Segregation was enforced to make a clear path by which slave traffickers could go straight after its target. In this way, slave traffickers would go out in hot pursuit looking for blacks to arrest and prosecute charges before a local court. Offenses charged ranged from talking loud in public places, arguing with a white man, having intimate relations with a white woman, not having an ID, alleged debt owed to a white man or whatever white men deemed feasible and profitable to its new forced labor system.

Once in court, a plan would be presented to the black defendant to plead guilty in exchange for working off an alleged debt for a white farmer or industrialist who put up bail money to secure the defendant's release. The local judge would then instruct the black defendants in such persuasive language that the defendant would sign the legal papers agreeing to the terms of forced labor set forth in the contract. This practice earned the name Convict Leasing.

Convict Leasing thrived in the Old South for nearly 80 years – from 1867 to 1945 – before finally being investigated, prosecuted, and taken down by the federal government on charges none other than slavery and involuntary servitude.

The destruction of Peonage and/or Convict Leasing wasn't enough to put slavery to death. The 13th Amendment was left intact and is still the law of the land to this very day. Segregation was still the norm and is recognized today as education, income, and housing segregation. This simply means that there are still many schools, jobs, and housing across the country that are predominately white and predominately black and are recognized as sustainable development (good) and unsustainable development (bad). The pathways to go after blacks and other disfavored people are still as clear as day.

By the 1950s, blacks and poor whites began to organize a voting and civil rights movement demanding equality, jobs, and justice. Racial tensions, class war and violence broke out between white communities and black people in the ghetto. Eventually, President Lyndon

B. Johnson was compelled by organized rebellion in the streets and by his Kerner Commission to create a Great Society Program for massive redistributions of wealth to people suffering in America's ghettos. But with the Vietnam War in full swing, too much attention and resources were given to the war that ended up undermining the Great Society program.

Domestic violence and crime levels steadily increased in poverty-blighted rural and urban areas, along with political assassinations and prosecutions of civil rights movements and Black Power leadership. As political debate and discussion about what to do grew stronger, support for the Great Society was losing sway. With the election of Richard Nixon as President of the United States and dwindling black leadership, the conversation about crime and justice quickly changed. Support for law enforcement, jail and prison construction became the solution to domestic violence, no longer community reinvestment. Under Nixon's policies, which became the policies of Ronald Reagan, George H. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, et al, police departments, surveillance systems, and prison populations grew into such a big powerhouse that today it is called the "prison industrial complex."

From a close study of American history, students can see how the forced labor system has – under a veneer of masked bigotry and distorted public health and safety concerns – evolved, matured, and grown from chattel slavery to convict leasing to the rise of the American prison empire. It's obvious that there are powerful interests in economy and Louisiana government and people who reside in the rural and country parts of the state today who are still influenced and enriched by Nixon's policies and believe in slavery and involuntary servitude by any means necessary, even if they must engage in corrupt activities to ensure that poor development, poverty, and crime thrive in certain parts of the land to justify its surveillance systems, get-tough-on-crime laws and forced labor in America's jails and prison system. Indeed, this is extremist politics and radical behavior at its worst.

Consequently, we are calling on the people inside and outside Louisiana's prison system to help with organizing rallies, marches, boycotts, work stoppages, fundraisers, press releases, and political action committees to support legislation to abolish slavery, to protect inalienable rights to human dignity, and to protest against extremist politics and radical political behavior that seeks to exploit and re-enslave people through a new system of Jim Crow laws and forced labor in America's ghettos, jails, and prisons. Does our activism make us extremist and radical, too? No! It makes us saints, heroes, and saviors of the world.

Rights of Man

"Man is the individual who shape his own character, determine his own will, direct his own life, and control his own future," said Marcus Garvey.

If there are to be a such thing as civil rights, constitutional rights, human rights, inalienable rights, whatever, the Creator has authorized and empowered mankind with sufficient intelligence to figure that out for themselves. One day the death penalty is legal, the next day man declares it to be unconstitutional. One day it is alright to sentence juveniles to life without parole, another day it is held unconstitutional. One day it is legal for one man to deny another man civil rights and voting rights, the next day it is a violation of a new law. One day alcohol is illegal to sell and drink, another day it is legal to purchase in stores. One day minimum wages are fine, the next day it is subject to public scrutiny and held to be in violation of present day concepts of human dignity. One day chattel slavery is legal to practice, the next day it is busted and ruled unconstitutional. One day convict leasing is good and lawful, the next day it is declared another form of slavery and involuntary servitude. It is clear that throughout this journey and process of trial and error and learning, man and woman have been given the power in the physical realm to determine violations and to decide rights from wrongs.

Since mankind are created equal, with no individual or race inferior or superior to the other, all men and women have an obligation and duty to honor and respect all individuals equally and definitively as beign in charge of one's own life and responsible for making decisions as to what is good and bad for oneself except that it does not violate the rights of others. Therefore, in all honor and with all due respect, we hold these truths to be self-evident and the undying rights of mankind:

1. All human beings are entitled to a fair share of the land and seas, educational and economic opportunities as would enable a people to create sustainable communities and be successful.
2. No human being shall be deprived of a fair share of the land and seas, educational and economic opportunities as would deprive people of life and liberties and provoke them to the risk of domestic violence and crime.
3. No laws shall be created that would deprived people of human dignity and provoke them to riot, violence, and crime.
4. All human beings are entitled to decent housing. No laws, policies, or regulations shall permit zoning officials, housing developers or real estate developers to create housing that produce overcrowding and violate present day concepts of human dignity.
5. All human beings have a right to home ownership. No laws shall be created that deprive people of the right to home ownership.
6. All human beings are entitled to living wage jobs. No laws, policies, or regulations shall permit any business to pay poverty-level wages in exchange for labor.
7. No human being shall be subject to slavery and involuntary servitude and forced labor in no jail or prison for being provoked to violence and crime created by the state, city or county's unjust land-use policies and zoning regulations that deprive people of land and resources for family and community development.

8. All jails and prisons shall operate as job and life skills centers that educate and rehabilitate and prepare incarcerated people for community building and successful reentry.
9. No jail or prison shall be used as a tool to degrade, abuse, dehumanize and oppress any human being.
10. No jail or prison shall incarcerate people who have a mental disease or defect or otherwise suffer from a mental illness. People suffering from a mental illness shall be housed in facilities staffed with nurses, doctors, social workers, and scientists to study, diagnose, and treat or provide holistic solutions to remedy the problem.
11. Persons incarcerated in a jail or prison shall receive treatment that comport with present day concepts of human dignity. These include, but is not limited to, the right to:
 - (i) Living wages to support oneself and family;
 - (ii) Regular visitation, including furloughs, with family and friends;
 - (iii) Conjugal visits with significant other;
 - (iv) A cellphone or computer to maintain social skills and positive relations with public;
 - (v) Decent housing free of foul odors, loud noises, overcrowding, vermin, inhumane weather conditions (e.g., excessive heat, frigid temperatures);
 - (vi) Communicate with the media;
 - (vii) Practice religion of one's choice;
 - (viii) Grooming and hair styles according to one's choice;
 - (ix) Decent food;
 - (x) Medical care with no bigotry, racism;
 - (xi) Report complaints of racism, bigotry, guard brutality, or other foul play through written grievances or via social media or recording incidents of abuse live on cellphone;
 - (xii) Peaceably assemble or organize nonviolent boycotts, work stoppages, hunger strikes, press releases, vigils, fundraisers, political action committees, and protests against violations of rights that contravene present day concepts of human dignity;
 - (xiii) Vote and participate in local, state, and national elections.

Is this possible? Can we obtain these rights and more? Is it just an unrealistic dream? If you were living before the Atlantic Slave Trade and someone told you that millions of Africans would be kidnapped and brought to foreign lands to work as slaves without pay, you would have thought they were nuts. If you were living during the time of the Civil War and witnessed the defeat of the Confederate government by the Union, and heard Abraham Lincoln read the Emancipation Proclamation Act that supposedly freed free men of Africa from American slavery, and then you ran into a fellow who told you

he overheard white men discussing plans that would reenslave people of African descent through the passage of new laws, you would have said “impossible!”

Never under-estimate the intelligence and power of man or men! The saying is so true: “what you believe, you can achieve.” Therefore, it is written: “If you can see it, and you want it, then by all means go after it.”

Linking Passion with Purpose

Man must figure out what is his major life purpose (reason) for being on the planet, and then determine what work he must do to fulfill that purpose. To men and women who possess knowledge of self, it is not impossible to say that the major life purpose for mankind on the planet is to excel in procreation, to produce and/or provide food, water, housing, clothing, health care, transportation, science, education, technology, leadership, self-defense, solutions to the world’s problems, freedom, equality, justice, peace and prosperity in the earth.

Man has many passions. But, among them all, what is his chief passion? As a human species, what is mankind’s greatest passion? If we stay close to home (our major life purpose) and not get lost out there in the world, it’s not hard to discover mankind’s chief passion – something that we have deep affection for or feel so strongly enthusiastic about that we would risk our life for? One word: “freedom!” All the big bloody wars in the history of the world has all boiled down to conflicts or disputes about freedom. Take away his freedom or let him feel threatened by the violation or loss of life or liberty, and you see a passion come alive in man powerful enough to provoke the next world war or civil war.

From these premises, it is safe to say that mankind’s chief passion (freedom) and major life purpose (produce and conserve) are intertwined and inseparable. And the work that we must do as individuals to secure our “freedom” and to “produce and conserve” – or “protect and serve” – is a deeply personal reality that every man, woman, and child must come to terms with or forsake.

Consequently, for people on the outside of the walls, and those of us on the inside, it is in our highest best interest as human beings and believers in our communities to realize freedom, to protect and serve and go forward together in solidarity opposing bigotry and demanding abolition of new Jim Crow laws that create poverty, ghettos, crime, and prison farms to exploit free labor for state revenue, profits, and the maintenance of white supremacy.

Connecting Your Talents to the Cause

The “cause” is freedom – the right to live, to create, to learn from history, to apply scientific knowledge to improve the world, to produce goods and services, to seek justice, to excel, to be successful, to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Our talents are the skills we develop in life that makes us experts, professionals, pundits, and an authority in the thing we are good at doing. Once our “skills” are found and our “cause” is identified, the connection is made. For example, laws and policies that create unsustainable development, provoke domestic violence, produce crime and forced labor laws in jails and prisons are a modified version of slavery and involuntary servitude (cause identified), and if you are a lawyer, legislator, lobbyist, judge, sheriff, reporter, journalist, community organizer, social change activist, teacher, poet, musical artist, painter, social scientist, orator, negotiator, web designer, financier, whatever, these talents are needed to build a social change movement and a political demand to abolish slavery (skills found).

Law and Order and Criminal Justice is a cover for bigotry and are the new code words by which Jim Crow is practiced and the reenslavement of Black Americans (and others) continues into the 21st century. This is a clear violation of “*Freedom*” and a call to action to apply one’s skills to Decarcerate Louisiana and Free our People!

Determine the Rule of Law

In most European countries like France, Germany, Britain, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Poland, et al, there is no death penalty, no mandatory life sentences, no solitary confinement, no systematic oppression and mass incarceration of its citizens by the government. There are social programs like housing allowances, family allowances, and other initiatives to prevent domestic, family and community breakdown, and crime. A universal free education and health care program has been extended to all its citizens.

Can you imagine? No one is out to get you. If by chance something out of the ordinary happens, a madman is on the loose and is armed and dangerous. An innocent bystander gets shot and, unlike the United States with its modern segregation, the whole country is mobilized by community leaders to come out in the public to show solidarity and support. The madman is eventually apprehended and taken into custody. The victim dies. Is there justice?

The population of people of African descent and others in European countries is the same as that of Asians in the United States, a very small number of no more than 3 percent. With the Black population being so small, there is no fear of the other in these European countries. There's no need to fight – no fear that someone else of foreign character will take away their rights, their privileges, their country. Fairness thrives throughout the whole country. The Justice Department adopts a system that is inquisitorial and cooperative, not accusatorial and adversarial. Justice is on the side of both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). The laws and social sciences are consulted and a solution is found that works not just for the victim or perpetrator by society en masse.

Organization, system, and rule of law determine why the citizens of these European countries cooperate and get along so better than people of the United States – a country that's supposedly the richest and powerfulest nation on Earth. While the U.S. is governed by a philosophy of "I'ma get mine, you better get yours," its closest allies are governed by quite a different one that says, "we're better together!"

Even though the United States is quick to tout itself as a freedom-fighter, a peaceful and loving society, unfortunately, we all know that is not true. Rather than integrate its citizens and ensure that every American owns a home, a car, have access to top quality health care, gets a good education, earns living wages and has access to immediate and reliable support systems to sustain human progress and the collective success of its citizenry, we hear excuses and more excuses that it cost too much, but as soon as domestic violence and crime waves break out, or even a war with a foreign country, we see billions—trillions—of U.S. dollars given to the military, law enforcement, jail and prison construction. If there were genuine concerns for public health and safety, sustainable communities would be given top priority for budgeting and investment decisions.

Consequently, if capitalism or any system prevents a society from producing equality, fair share, human progress and justice for all, then it is in the highest best interest of the people to rethink their system if they want to address inequality and prevent domestic violence and the waste of its citizens to poverty, street gangs, and prison.

Organizational Structure

The right to be successful is inalienable and God-given. But if freedom is the goal, success will only come through organizing and planning every step of the way until Kingdom come.

Mind you: any system that creates poverty, provokes its people to domestic violence and crime, then criminalizes and imprisons them to exploit free labor to turn a profit and generate revenue for the state or local economies is anti-freedom, anti-success and, more bluntly, it is a version of slavery and involuntary servitude.

The organizational system that counteracts the oppressive one to such an extent that it permits its citizens to regulate its own affairs or adjust it so that it gives enough freedom without taking too much away is the ideal organizational structure that is most kind and just to mankind.

What does the “ideal” organizational structure look like – the one that counteracts the oppressive one, the one that prevents injury and restores dignity? It is many people with different, useful skills coming together to discuss vision, to talk about what the community can and should become. Since unsustainable development practices produce poverty and ghettos, provoke domestic violence and crime, and create a need to build prisons to protect public health and safety, the question becomes: can society become a place without poverty, ghettos? Can society’s ghettos be reinvented and transformed into sustainable communities? Can we give more people educational and economic opportunities and social initiatives sufficient to prevent domestic violence, reduce reliance on prisons, and restore community revival?

There is a great community-of-interest who believe that if billions of dollars are redirected from the military and criminal justice system so that sustainable communities become top priority for budgeting and investment decisions, society can become more freer and a place where every man, woman, and child can be successful without fear of persecution and oppression.

Consequently, the people who comprise this community-of-interest must become the “ideal” organizational structure and workers to advocate for justice, to promote the vision, to recruit more voters, to keep a close watch and study of the problem, to draft legislation, to lobby public officials, to recall public officials, to vote in new public officials, to present its own initiatives, to raise funds for the cause, to build unity and solidarity among the people, to organize a movement of press releases, rallies, marches, demonstrations, political action committees, and protests to demand social change.

Create the World You Want to Live In

Remember, mankind is the architect, director, and creator of its own life and of its own physical destiny. This is true of man and woman for all the days of his/her life regardless to what circumstances or conditions confronts them on planet earth. For the

sentient human being who is in full possession of its senses, there can be no excuse for indecision, weakness, or cowardice. Considering his/her chief passion to be free, man (or woman) must use his power of decision to govern or be governed, command or be dictated, create or suffer.

Look at your place of residence and the land surrounding it. Study it. Conduct a survey of the landscape including, but not limited to, the land, lakes, rivers, sea, forests, marshes and swamps accompanying the city, state, or country where you live. Make a note of the land and its resources (e.g., fish in the sea, animals in the land, wood in the forests, minerals in the earth, etc.). How many people constitute the population of your city, state, or country? Consider what resources are available—near and far—and what skills are required to create the world you want to live in. This is the kind of thinking that's required to invent, to reinvent, to transform impoverished environments into sustainable communities, or a prison (culture of punishment) into a rehabilitation center (culture of learning and growth).

If it's a ghetto, consider what kind of "development" is needed for people to grow and prosper. To prevent crime and create a culture of success for every man, woman, and child, consider how much of the land needs to be zoned or rezoned for home ownership, economic development, agriculture, horticulture, farming, schools, hospitals, parks, libraries, lakes, manufacturing plants, community development enterprises and support systems that incorporate and enable community members to thrive.

If it's a prison, consider what kind of "development" is needed for prisoner atonement and rehabilitation. To prevent recidivism and prepare incarcerated people to be productive members of society, find out how the dormitories and cellblocks are being used then determine how many workshops and instructors are needed in the prison to teach every prisoner job and life skills useful to community building and successful reentry.

The homework that has been outlined above is a fundamental task that must be completed by man and woman no matter what. He either shows up for work and takes charge of the job, or a dictator usurps the position and takes him into custody. As the saying goes: "He who does not work neither shall he eat." "Create or be a victim of your environment."

Fellowship

Any unity of people draws its strength from fellowship. The strength of an organization or any people-power movement is ultimately determined by the fellowship of its members.

In the context of organizations, or social change movements, fellowship is a commitment to learning, sharing, growing, and building together with fellow comrades. It is an expression of solidarity, as in the verbal statements “what’s up, Fam!” “One love!” Or, as in the active statements shown by special acts of care, kindness, compassion, charity, cooperation, love.

Fellowship is like a family affair of love, loyalty, sacrifice, duty, and trust among comrades. It is a constant act of giving and receiving, receiving and giving affection and attention to the Fam. What we give to one another in fellowship is not for naught but to water the plant, to see the plant develop and grow and become strong, fruitful, and prosperous. Every comrade desires to see the plant prosper and become strong in manpower to protect and serve and defend the rights of every man, woman and child. This is why fellowship is so important.

Note the similarities in the words organizing, networking, aiding, assisting, partnership, friendliness, fellowship. All these words express a similar meaning of people supporting one another. Consider, too, that the more frequent and widespread the organizing and networking and fellowship extends across race, culture, religious, and gender lines across a city, state, country, and nation-state the easier it is to mobilize people to solve problems, to secure the freedoms and liberties and satisfaction from life.

Any place where antisocial behavior thrives, and there is less networking and fellowship, organizing is choked and people suffer the painful experience of brutalizing conditions. In order for “more” people to win and have success in life, to become homeowners, to secure living wages, to secure higher education, to prevent crime, to become stable families, to reinvent and transform ghettos into communities and prisons into centers of higher learning, we must practice fellowship with our neighbors. If there is a loss of rights to any man, woman, or child, the way to recover the loss of those freedoms and liberties is through organizing which can only be accomplished through fellowship.

Message to the Black Man and Woman

History is key to obtaining a proper knowledge of ourselves. Who tells the history of our people and of ourselves, who we are, where we come from, how we came to have conditions at various stages of history, what impact these experiences have in how we see ourselves and relate to one another and other people in the world will have a mighty influence on our behavior and conduct as a people.

It is indisputable that the more knowledge you have of yourself and of your history as a culture, as a race, the more things you have to talk about with one another and relate to as a people, but who we rely on to tell us about ourselves in grade school up to the college and university level is a matter that we must look at right now. Why? Because we are the sons of God! And because we are the sons of God, created in his image and after his likeness, and given dominion over the earth and “power of decision” to regulate our own affairs and control our own destiny, we have to be sure that what is being told to us and our people is not only true and right knowledge of ourselves but is being told to us by someone we trust and whom we intimately believe will do it unapologetically and masterfully. Someone must do this job or we perish, period!

The education in the schools that we receive today are controlled by whom? Who determines the curriculum for what we learn in history, math, social studies, language, science and technology? It’s not hard to find out. Ask around and find the answers to these questions. However, for those of us who have good sense, it’s not hard to see that someone else other than Africans and who is out-of-touch with African history and civilizations dictate to us our curriculum and control our education. When education makes you forget where you come from and go elsewhere to be incorporated into alien societies against your free will, that’s miseducation of the Black man and woman. When education makes you indifferent to your civilization(s) and history as a race of people to the point where you say, “I’m putting all this stuff about me behind me and I’m going on with my life,” that’s miseducation of the Black man and woman. When education fails to draw a big picture of the African in the world, including lessons from your successes and shortcomings of past and present kingdoms for critical thinking of what you have done, are doing today, and might do in the future in the place of your dreams, that is miseducation of the Black man and woman. When education fails to tell you about the earth and the resources in the land where you live, what quality of life you can provide and how much manpower is needed to produce for a city, state, nation, and foreign trade, you cannot be sure how the citizens will fare and that is profound miseducation of the Black man and woman.

True education prepares us to be the landlords, landowners, and lawmakers in the place where we live. True education prepares us to operate, own, and control our

own institutions including, but not limited to, economy, government, food, water, housing, schools, medical, medicine, manufacturing plants, military, education, cinema, music, telecommunications, religion, et al. True education makes us creative and inventive and the solution to our own problems. True education instructs you to be the boss, leader, director, manager, CEO, superintendent, chief, warden, and master of your own fate. True education makes you dream, it makes you imagine the possibilities, it makes you look at your surroundings and the place where you live and see what is good and bad, right or wrong, what it can and should become. Do the names of the people, places, events, things, and ideas properly represent the best interest of the people and inspire them to higher achievement?

We have been told by our elders that it takes a village to raise children, not just parents; and that sick villages raise sick children. Because most of us have not been told the truth about ourselves, and because the truth about African Kingdoms (e.g., Ashanti, Timbuktu, Mali, Benin, et al) before the Atlantic Slave Trade have not been given top priority in budgeting and investment decisions for grade school up to the college and university level, it's not important. The abandonment of Reconstruction, the 13th Amendment's remaking of slavery, segregation, the Iran Contra Affair, the backlash against the Civil Rights Movement, the FBI Counter-Intelligence Program to Destroy Black Leadership, the War on Drugs, the War Against Poverty, the New Jim Crow of Mass Incarceration and Forced Labor in Jails and Prisons are pressing realities for Black men, women and children that has been deemed not important and relevant to education for our daily curriculum. So our students are not talking about what happening to them because strangers who set our curriculum decided it's not important. And not talking about it prevents us from discussing our problems and figuring out solutions that works for us, not against us. This is why we have ghettos, poverty, crime, sick villages and high incarceration rates.

The schools that our students attend and the education that they receive are paid for by taxpayers. Charter schools or Choice schools are giving our people more control – supposedly – over their education. On top of that, you are the children of God! Prepare your own education just like you would do your breakfast, lunch, and home dinner. The choice is ours: a master's education or a slave-education!

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Abolitionist writers, orators, poets, song artists, paint artists, community organizers, comrades, and supporters are the people who I enjoy spending my time with and whom I dream of as my family and community. When I listen to music, I visualize a round table of us in the study including, but not limited to, Denmark Vessey, Nat Turner, John Brown, Henry Highland Garnet, David Walker, Marcus Garvey, Jomo Kenyatta, Paul Robeson, Winne Mandela, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Malcolm X, MLK Jr., Assata Shakur, Fred Hampton, George and Jonathan Jackson, Bobby Seale, Huey P. Newton, Big Man, Dr. Naim Akbar, Robert Perkinson, Douglas Blackmon, Michelle Alexander, Max Prathas, Tameka Smith, Victor Wallis, Stephen Figurasmith, John DeVincent, Malik Da God, King T, Too Short, Kailika Muhammad, Queen Tahiyrah, FAM-Team, Casino, Da Da, Prince², Zeno, Soul Child, Gregory Jr., Money Team, D.C., Albert Woodfox, Mr. Hooks, Heshima and the Amend the 13th Coalition and the rest of you all who do this work from the heart. Y'all inspire me and you are acknowledged here by me.

There are a lot of people out there who support abolitionist organizing and social change movements to abolish unjust laws, policies, regulations, and practices that create and uphold conditions of slavery and involuntary servitude in the world. We respect you and appreciate you and encourage you to keep up the good work and fight on till Kingdom Come.

I believe that abolitionist organizing is a God-given responsibility and divinely inspired work set in motion by the Omnipotent Creator. Therefore, in the name of our fathers who are in good standing with the Creator, Amen!

About Us

Decarcerate Louisiana is a freedom movement. Decarcerate Louisiana is a social change movement organizing to bust the new system of slavery and involuntary servitude that has returned in the 21st century as Law and Order, get-tough-on-crime laws and the systematic re-enslavement of a disproportionate number of Black Americans on prison farms across the USA. Organizing for better schools, higher education, better health care systems, economic development space for community development enterprises, living wages, home ownership programs, community land trusts, rehabilitation and pardons for incarcerated people, abolishing slavery in capitalism and in prisons, eliminating solitary confinement, ending the death penalty, equality and respect for the right to human dignity for every man, woman and child is what it's gonna take to decarcerate Louisiana and free the land and the people.

Join us! Follow us! Learn more about us at DecarcerateLouisiana.com, facebook.com/DecarcerateLouisiana, twitter.com/DecarcerateLA, decarceratelouisiana.com/documents, decarceratelouisiana.blogspot.com.