



## ANTI-INCARCERATION DAY

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

**Sunday, October 10, 2010**

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**This year more than 700,000 people will return to their communities after being in prison.**

--[www.SentencingProject.org](http://www.SentencingProject.org)

#### **I. Etymology**

*Redemption* - from circa 1340, meaning “deliverance from sin,” is from the Latin *redemptionem*, meaning “a buying back, releasing, ransoming.” “Ransom,” from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, refers to a “sum paid for the release of a prisoner or captured man,” from Old French *ranson*, from the Latin *redemptionem*.<sup>1</sup>

We were asked in preparing this unit to focus on redemption. Our scriptural lesson finds Jesus in company with those considered sinners. When criticized for it, Jesus responds that his work is not with the righteous but with those within the community in need of repentance.

There are many within the African American family who are in need of redemption. However, the role of prison within American society, and its impact on the African American family and community, suggests that not only those who find themselves incarcerated are in desperate need of *redemption*, but so too is this country's practice of incarceration.

There is a great need for dual redemption. The nation must examine the way it has shifted its laws to block redemptive measures within the criminal justice system, and those who violate the laws of society. The church is called to not turn away but to find ways to reach out and offer support when there are opportunities to aid in redirecting those who walk down the wrong path. The church also is called to be interventionist within the very system of incarceration that so greatly intensifies rather than minimizes the damage to specific souls and their communities.

Bob Marley's famous song, "Redemption Songs," echoes the duality of the problem: singing of the slavers as pirates in merchant ships and those trapped and sent so far from all we knew. He calls to those of us trapped as we move forward generationally to emancipate ourselves from being mental slaves and free ourselves from that which is destructive to us and our communities.

### **Redemption Songs**

**Oh pirates, yes they rob I  
Sold I to the merchant ships  
Minutes after they took I  
from the bottomless pits**

**My hands have been made strong  
By the hands of the Almighty  
We forward in this generation  
Triumphantly....  
Won't you help me to sing, these songs of freedom  
cause all I ever have is redemption songs, redemption songs.**

**Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery  
None but ourselves can free our minds  
Have no fear for atomic energy  
none of these can stop the time  
How long will they kill our Prophets  
While we stand aside and look  
Some say it's just a part of it  
We got to fulfill the Book.**

**Won't you help me to sing, these songs of freedom  
cause all I ever have is redemption songs, redemption songs, redemption songs.<sup>2</sup>**

The text of "He Touched Me," composed by William J. Gaither, recorded by Shirley Caesar and The Brooklyn All Stars, goes to the essence of Jesus' statement of his mission to redeem us.

**He Touched Me**

**Shackled by a heavy burden  
'Neath a load of guilt and shame.  
Then the Hand of Jesus touched me,  
And now I am no longer the same.**

**Refrain**

**He touched me,  
Oh, He touched me,  
And oh the joy that floods my soul.  
Something happened and now I know,  
He touched me and made me whole.**

**Since I met the Blessed Saviour,  
Since He cleansed and made me whole,  
I will never cease to praise Him!  
I'll shout it while eternity rolls.**

**Refrain<sup>3</sup>**

## **II. Historical Impact of Criminal Justice System on African Americans**

The evolution of our current criminal justice system has its roots in the founding of the nation. One might say that if the state of Georgia was founded by persons looking at long prison terms in their home country, they would want in the founding of the nation the idea of another chance for those who are found in violation of the laws of the communities in which they live.

Over time there have been many different ways that African Americans have been impacted by the criminal justice system---think police, jail, courts--- and, in just as many ways, we have struggled to keep our people from paths that lead to jail and long or repeated prison terms.

During the Civil Rights Movement, demonstrators, American citizens, were jailed in large numbers; however, those identified as leaders and organizers, whether local or from out of town, were especially targeted by the police. It was a time when local and state powers of the segregated South were concentrated to strike against those who were fighting for the right to practice their right to vote, their rights to jobs and services

provided to the white citizens of the same towns, counties and cities. One of the freedom songs out the Americas Georgia Movement was:

**Ain't scared of your jails cause I want my freedom,  
I want my freedom, I want my freedom  
Ain' scared of your jails cause I want my freedom,  
I want my freedom now!**

When many of us went to jail, we did not find the cells empty. There were people in jail from our communities, and we wondered how it was that they were there. Maybe they had committed crimes against society and maybe they were just black, and maybe they did not have legal representation.

### **III. Historical Narrative: Responding to the Problem**

We live in a country with the highest incarceration rate in the world. The top seven states with the highest rates are all southern: Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. Incarceration is overused and threatens the health not just of those who are jailed but of the entire populous.

A recent issue of “Construction Report,” a monthly newsletter published by Correctional Building News, provides details of the nation’s latest public works projects: a 3,100-bed jail in Harris County, Texas; a 500-bed medium-security prison in Redgranite, Wisconsin; a 130-bed minimum-security facility in Oakland County, Michigan; two 200-bed housing pods at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Iowa; a 350-bed juvenile correctional facility in Pendleton, Indiana; and dozens more. The newsletter includes the telephone numbers of project managers so that prison-supply companies can call and make bids. All across the country new cellblocks rise. And every one of them, every brand-new prison, concrete and ringed with deadly razor wire, becomes a lasting monument to the fear and greed and political cowardice that now pervade American society.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Incarceration as an Economic Issue**

When one finds oneself inside of a system that is calling you out of your name, directing you in such a way that you will fit into a slot in the stream of things that distort your way, is there no resort? Does one just go along, or is it possible to circumvent what seems to be the prescribed journey, go against the tide so to speak and construct a path founded on different principles?

The African American legacy has all of it. Within our community we have people at all stages of our evolution in this land of our birth. They have sought and executed all manner of development to create from their imagination, in full consideration of what they thought might be possible, a different future. Seeking to reject, undermine and, in the long or short run, destroy the negative and un-nurturing places created for us.

Slavery was an economic system and, as DuBois stated in Souls of Black Folk,

our labor built this economic empire that made possible the land we know as America.<sup>5</sup> Slavery was not a good place for those of us who were slaves and, in the end, was not a good thing for the evolution of a future of the nation. Fighting against it sometimes meant working out a way to stay alive and sane day-to-day, or organizing—seeking an opportunity to run for freedom; and finally, a civil war with the nation breaking against itself into a future that saw the system of slavery destroyed.

The economic system that replaced slavery shifted things a bit, and African Americans, with support from churches, built schools and courageously made much of the difference. New systems like sharecropping, the chain gang, police systems and political systems run by whites who wished we were still slaves, made being African American in the South in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries a place of danger. In spite of the dangers, black leaders and sturdy black folk built families, homes, schools, churches and institutions that demanded opportunity for us to be more of what we could be.

A large portion of public works projects in the South were based on prison labor, thus fueling the need to have in place a system that sucked young, hardy black men into prisons to do the work. This was the South; nationwide, we faced an urban landscape that seemed to provide an endless supply of our youth into the criminal justice system. Today's prisons, like slavery, are an economic industry; yes they lock up people, but they are also manufacturers, seeking contracts for producing goods for the wider market using free or cheap prison labor.

In various organized initiatives, we are asking, why do we lock up more people than any other place in the world? Why have some political campaigns targeted programs that allowed prisoners to educate themselves and earn degrees to such an extent that many of these programs have disappeared, withering under questions like: Why should criminals be educated in jail with public funds when middle and working class families increasingly cannot afford to send their children to college?

What are we to do about creating viable options to keep so many of our children from a path that leads from our homes to schools to the streets to periods in jail?

### **The Rebecca Project For Human Rights (RPHR)**

The Rebecca Project for Human Rights is a national legal and policy organization that advocates for public policy reform, justice and dignity for vulnerable families.<sup>6</sup>

Founded by Malika Saada Saar, this organization is dedicated to reforming welfare and criminal justice as they affect women and children. Saar states that most of the women and girls in prison are there because they are runaways or are involved in sex trade industries. According to Saar,

*The Rebecca Project strives to reform child welfare, criminal justice, and substance abuse policies that impact the lives of vulnerable families. We frame the pervasiveness of violence against women and girls, the draconian conditions that too often characterize maternal incarceration, and the*

*dearth of access to health and healing for mothers and their children, as fundamental human rights violations. We seek to stop the shattering cycle of violence, trauma and addiction. We seek to urge for policies and practices that honor, strengthen, and render whole the sacred ties between parents and children. We affirm the worth and dignity of every child, every family.*<sup>7</sup>

Saada Saar's is a jarring message: The same American society that talks so much about valuing families often destroys them by tarring drug-addicted mothers, runaway girls and sexually abused teens as criminals, rather than finding ways to heal them. She founded the Rebecca Project, which took its name from the biblical figure, as well as a beloved Washington-based mentor, named Rebecca Rice. The organization grew out of workshops that encouraged addicts to seek healing through poetry and other forms of artistic expression. In the Rebecca Project's infancy, Saar and Imani Walker, a mother of four who was recovering from addiction to crack cocaine, shared a single donated desk in the Washington Law Clinic. "We came to this work in a brazen way. Imani and I weren't supposed to be in the room. I used to wear a shell in my braid; Imani had her hair wrapped. There was a sense of not being welcome, of simply not being taken seriously. There was no space given to us, and sometimes others took credit for work we had accomplished." Despite its size, the Rebecca Project began to make headway influencing policy on Capitol Hill. They are on track to establishing eleven chapters of Sacred Authority, a training program for parents and advocates.<sup>8</sup>

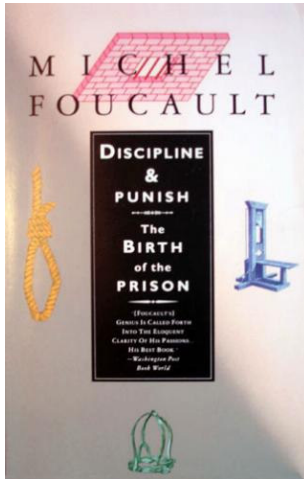
### **How Early Must We Start?**

Dr. Lesley M. Morrow, President of the International Reading Association, states that some states use the reading tests of third grade students to determine the number of prison beds needed in future prisons as well as the number of prisons to be built. Telling the larger society that city planners look at reading scores to determine how many prisons to build has been largely attributed to the work of members associated with The Children of the Code Project. The Project is directed by Dr. Peter E. Leone (Director, National Center on Education, Disability & Juvenile Justice). According to Dr Leone:

*What we find for African American kids is that they're about twice as likely to be suspended as white kids. In the last five or six years, that likelihood has increased.... If we add disability to the mix, disabled kids are two to three times more likely to be suspended than non-disabled kids. If we put both of those together, African American kids with disabling conditions are three and a half to four times as likely to be suspended -- all other things being equal -- three and a half to four times as likely to be suspended as any other kid in the state.*<sup>9</sup>

There is an overuse of incarceration as a solution to drug addition, mental illness, and poverty. Overcrowding in prisons and jails makes them more dangerous and makes people sicker. These conditions contribute to a culture of violence and abuse that flow out beyond the prison walls.<sup>10</sup>

## **IV. An Important Book**



Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison is a book written by the philosopher Michel Foucault. Originally published in 1975 in France under the title *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la Prison*, it was translated into English in 1977. It is an examination of the social and theoretical mechanisms behind the massive changes that occurred in western penal systems during the modern age. It focuses on historical documents from France, but the issues it examines are relevant to every modern western society. It is considered a seminal work and has influenced many theorists and artists.

Foucault challenges the commonly accepted idea that prison became the consistent form of punishment due to humanitarian concerns of reformists, although he does not deny those. He does so by meticulously tracing out the shifts in culture that led to prison's dominance, focusing on the body and questions of power. Prison is a form used by the “disciplines,” a new technological power, which can also be found, according to Foucault, in schools, hospitals, military barracks, etc. The main ideas of Discipline and Punish can be grouped according to its four parts: torture, punishment, discipline and prison.<sup>11</sup> This is a must-read book for those interesting in gaining a deeper understanding of incarceration.

## V. Anti-Incarceration Organizations

Churches are not always financially able to operate the types of anti-incarceration programs that their communities need. They may not have the funds to do so or the personnel. However, money and personnel cannot stop churches from becoming involved in anti-incarceration efforts given the epidemic number of African American men and women who are incarcerated. In addition to efforts that keep people out of prisons, our community sorely needs efforts to assist people in jail and prison and those who exit jail and prison. One excellent idea is for churches to partner with proven and respected anti-incarceration organizations. The following are some of those organizations.

### a. The Exodus Foundation

The Exodus Foundation is located in Huntersville, North Carolina, formed and led by Madeline Sadler, a former lectionary writer. It is a new self-help venture with a national focus that invites African-Americans, individuals, churches, businesses and other non-profits to join in its mission to assist African-Americans wasting in America’s prisons. Their aim is to assist incarcerated African-Americans in the movement from wilderness (crisis) to promise (self-actualization) through mentoring and scholarships. It is considered vitally important that the descendants of African slaves continue to recognize the debt owed to each other in the recovery from slavery, Jim Crow and continuing discrimination. To accomplish its stated mission and vision, the Exodus Foundation.org has as its main goal:

To build an Endowment, the proceeds of which will be awarded to African-Americans with felony records and those at risk for coming under the jurisdiction of the Courts in

order to support them in achieving educational goals in certificate programs, community college, trade schools and college. Each recipient will be assigned a mentor and participate in the Foundation's mentoring programs.<sup>12</sup>

### **b. The Sentencing Project**

“The Sentencing Project is a national organization working for a fair and effective criminal justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing law and practice, and alternatives to incarceration.

The Sentencing Project was founded in 1986 to provide defense lawyers with sentencing advocacy training and to reduce the reliance on incarceration. Since that time, The Sentencing Project has become a leader in the effort to bring national attention to disturbing trends and inequities in the criminal justice system with a successful formula that includes the publication of groundbreaking research, aggressive media campaigns and strategic advocacy for policy reform.

As a result of The Sentencing Project's research, publications and advocacy, many people know that this country is the world's leader in incarceration, that one in three young black men is under control of the criminal justice system, that five million Americans can't vote because of felony convictions, and that thousands of women and children have lost welfare, education and housing benefits as the result of convictions for minor drug offenses.

The Sentencing Project is dedicated to changing the way Americans think about crime and punishment.”<sup>13</sup>

## **VI. Prison Ministries of Various Types**

There is a train that rolls through our classrooms, campuses, and our streets picking up our children at younger and younger ages. So intense is this gang recruitment that young children at the age of 4 and 5 think that they will join gangs as soon as they get older. They go to school and the gangs often control the area around the schools and actually often operate in the schools, recruit in the schools, battle each other for territory and members in the schools. Into this terror the contemporary black individuals and churches have begun to take a stand.

### **Operation Prison Gap**

Every Friday night about 800 people, mostly women and children, almost all of them African American or Latino, gather at Columbus Circle in Manhattan and board buses for the north. The buses leave through the night and arrive in time for visiting hours on Saturday. Operation Prison Gap, which runs the service, was founded by an ex-convict named Ray Simmons who had been imprisoned upstate and knew how hard it was for the families of inmates to arrange visits. When the company started in 1973, it carried passengers in a single van. Now, it charts thirty-five buses and vans on a typical weekend and a larger number on special occasions, such as Father's Day and Thanksgiving. Ray Simmons's brother Tyrone, who heads the company, says that despite



the rising inmate population, ridership has fallen a bit over the past few years. The inconvenience and expense of the long bus trips take their toll. One customer, however, has for fifteen years faithfully visited her son in Comstock every weekend. In 1996, she stopped appearing at Columbus Circle; her son had been released. Six months later he was convicted of another violent crime and sent back to the same prison. The woman, now in her seventies, still boards the 2:00 A.M. bus for Comstock every weekend. Simmons gives her a discount, charging her \$15—the same price she paid on her first trip, in 1983.<sup>14</sup>

### **Churches and Anti-Incarceration Efforts**

What is the role of churches? Hundreds of our urban churches are involved in being a part of the solution. Many, like Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ pastored by Rev. Otis Moss, III, have prison ministries reaching into prisons to provide support for those inside with continued outreach to those who return to the community after serving prison sentences.

An expanding contemporary trend is that many African American churches are also determining that they have to intervene directly in creating and controlling the environment in which our children grow up. These churches are finding public schools not effective enough in protecting the learning and safety of children. To this end, these churches are increasingly opening their own independent schools and playing a more intimate role as parenting partners with African American families.

The strategy of church-sponsored schools is as old as African American's struggle to master the culture and systems that enslaved them to facilitate efforts to change their place within that system.

More and more churches are coming to the decision that their work for their community requires them to in fact be a place where children can come and learn and advance without the constant pressure from forces in their communities that pull them toward paths that lead to incarceration or death.

Surveying a few congregations in the nation's capital, Maryland and Virginia, there has been in the last twenty years a steady increase in church-sponsored schools. Historically, education for Black people was aggressively fostered by the church. Coming through the early decades of Reconstructionism, schools were initially held inside of churches and then the first school buildings were built by local churches.

The response by a few of today's church's has been to build schools so that there will be a safety zone where children can learn and feel secure. These schools are structured with the reality that whether two parents or single parent homes, 90% of African American parents work to support their families in an intense capital driven society. Parents choose church schools because the schools also provide support for this reality. These schools are a response to a path that currently runs from birth to toddler to day care or no care to local public schools that are danger zones for students and staff; along the way dropping of increasing numbers to the criminal justice system where judges' roles in determining

the best course for saving the young people who come before them are greatly diminished by laws that mete out longer sentences and overloading.

### **Ebenezer AME Church, Fort Washington, MD**



Many churches have begun anti-incarceration locations by offering the full range of experiences in worship, learning, training, physical and social development within the church. One modern example is that of the Ebenezer AME Church, located in Ft. Washington, Maryland, Co-Pastors Grainger Browning, Jr. and

Jo Ann Browning.

In 1856, thirteen “colored members” left Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church because of its discrimination and segregation policies and founded a new church. Their goal was to “establish a church by colored folks with colored pastors,” where they could worship in dignity, spirit and truth. They erected a church at 2727 “O” Street NW, and named it “Ebenezer,” meaning stone of help, “found in I Samuel 7:12.” By 1983, black families started leaving Georgetown for economic and political reasons, seventeen members moved to Fort Washington, Maryland, as the church in Georgetown was sold. Like Abraham, we moved to a land we knew not, in the midst of a people we knew not, and into an edifice that logic suggested we could not afford. But we did so in faith. One month following our move to a 500-seat sanctuary with a \$3,500 monthly mortgage note and a \$300 weekly offering, our Pastors, the Reverends Dr.'s Grainger and Jo Ann Browning were called to serve the Ebenezer family. “The Miracle on Allentown Road” now nurtures more than 12,000 members and 100 ministries with meetings, Bible studies and activities every day



of the week. The church plans to include a school, family life center and senior citizens' complex.<sup>15</sup>



Ebenezer has established the following programs for children ages 12-18. These ministries are anti-incarceration efforts that go a long way toward keeping children out of the prison pipeline. It is also working on four other efforts that will be unveiled this year to assist persons who have gone through the

criminal justice system and their families. They have more than forty ministries for youths; they include:

### **Ebenezer's Ministries 4 U**

#### **1. Scouts & Citizenship** - Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts

#### **2. Bible Education**

- Children's Bible Study (CBS)
- Youth Bible Study (YBS)
- Daughters of Esther and Exodus Generation

These two complementary ministries provide support in youth programming and one-on-one or small group mentoring for youth ages 12 to 18.

#### **3. Rites of Passage Ministries (ROP)**

- Manhood Rites of Passage for boys ages 12-16.
- Womanhood Rites of Passage for girls ages 12-18

The program is built on the foundation of Biblical teachings and the seven principles of Nguzu Saba, which are known through Kwanzaa celebrations: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagulia (Self-determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity), Imani (Faith). *Titus 2:7-8 – In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.*

#### **4. Education & Tutoring**

- Tutorial - A walk-in tutoring program for youth who may be struggling in one or more subjects and require extra assistance.
- SAT Preparation
- A tutoring program to aid high school students in preparing for their SATs.
- Entrepreneurship Project – Cartoon Designing and Clothing Designing
- Youth Leadership Training
- College Tours

#### **5. Special Gifts & Abilities**

Exceptional Persons Ministry: Activities include weekly Sunday morning spiritual development activities, a monthly Respite Saturday and monthly meetings with parents, helpers and workers.

#### **6. Performance Arts**

- Children's Choir
- Youth Choir Orchestra
- Liturgical Dance (6 groups: Praise Angels, Apostles, JWHG-Juniors with the Holy Ghost, Miriam's Prophets, Gideon's Army, and the Royal Priesthood-African Drummers and Dancers)

- Step Team

## 7. Recreation

- Sports - Basketball, Track, Tennis, and Golf

## 8. Support

- Support Department - Youth Ushers, Computer Ministry, Scholarship Committee
- AME Connectional - Young People's Department (YPD), Sunday School, AME Scouts.<sup>16</sup>

While Ebenezer is a faith community providing services for its membership through its diverse and comprehensive series of programs and experiences, many congregations have developed their own church schools. One example is a church in Baltimore that has joined the Public School system and created two charter schools.

### Northwood-Appold United Methodist Church, Baltimore

*NACA is committed to being a reason families decide to stay in – and return to – the city and the city's public education system.*

Northwood-Appold United Methodist Church is pastored by Reverend Cecil Gray. This congregation supports two charter schools as a part of the Baltimore Public School System. The Northwood-Appold Community Academy (NACA) is committed to “preparing students to make a living and a life,” so that they “navigate the life journey effectively and with integrity.” (TM) NACA’s mission is to cultivate -- with regularity and predictability -- young people who are proficient relative to academic achievement and intellectual skills; and who are advanced, constructive, and healthy relative to character development.

NACA is open to all Baltimore City children in grades K-12. In its first year (2005-2006), it served a total of 126 K-2 students, and today they serve 210 K-4 students.

NACA boasts a 7:1 student to adult ratio; as each class consists of twenty-one (21) students, one master teacher, one paraprofessional/teacher’s assistant, and one volunteer parent. We have two classes for each grade level. At the start of each year following the first year, one grade level will be added until NACA culminates at the 12th grade level.

Their current context involves some families leaving the city seeking better public schools for their children, while others remain in the city and strain financially as they utilize independent/private schools. NACA is committed to being part of the transformation and cessation of that pattern. NACA is committed to being a reason families decide to stay in -- and return to -- the city and the city's public education system. NACA demonstrates the said commitment by serving the full spectrum of students and families -- from those possessing the lowest through the highest incomes.

We know that at every economic level, there are students (and parents) able, primed, and eager to achieve at high levels; and NACA is attracting and working with those people.

In partnership with each family, their children, and the community, NACA offers a sophisticated-practical-user-friendly, proficient, twenty-first century, public school. Specifically, NACA is committed to meeting proficiently the specific needs articulated by area families, and local retired and current public school teachers and administrators.

Utilizing input acquired from ongoing small and large meetings with parents, educators, and others from February 2003 through summer 2004; along with input acquired from phoning, hand delivering, and mailing communications to 222 neighborhood/community leaders and other residents during spring and summer 2004; the priority needs were identified: high academic standards, linked to rigorous-and-practical academics, linked to masterful-loving-creative teachers; personal attention; character education; state-of-the-art computers, digital, and related high-tech applications as essential parts of each classroom; affirmation of each students' cultural background(s); intentional teaching and modeling of creative, nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution; engaging, stimulating extracurricular opportunities available year-round; and finally, intentional teaching and modeling of peaceful, humane values.<sup>17</sup>

## **VII. Songs for this Lectionary Moment**

### **Prison Songs**

From behind the walls of prisons come the poignant messages of conditions that are beyond description. In “Go Down Hannah,” Hannah is the sun. The song is one of the earliest to speak of the incarceration of women. “Another Man Done Gone,” is a prison song that speaks of another inmate who has died while working on a county-farm chain-gang. “Rocks and Gravel,” is prison song sung by male and female prisoners who worked breaking up rock for various building projects and on chain-gangs.

#### **Go Down Hannah**

**Want you go down ol Hannah, well, well, well  
Don't you rise no more, don't you rise no more  
Want you go down ol Hannah,  
Don't you rise no more**

**If you rise in the morning, well, well, well  
Bring judgment sho, bring judgment sho  
If you rise in the morning  
Bring judgment sho**

**Well I look at old Hannah, well well well  
She was turning red, she was turning red,  
I looked at my partner,  
He was almost dead...<sup>18</sup>**

Here are two wonderful video versions of this song. The first is performed by the one and only Leadbelly. On his version, he adds verses to the song that are not included in most versions and gives a brief history of the genesis of the song. The second performance is by Bill Sims, Jr.; he sings the song as it is most often sung.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv3Qt\\_ZCsu4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv3Qt_ZCsu4&feature=related)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHnObAMyLas](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHnObAMyLas)

### **Another Man Done Gone**

**Another man done gone  
Another man done gone  
From the county farm  
Another man done...<sup>19</sup>**

### **Rocks and Gravel**

**Takes a rocks and gravel wellah  
To make a solid road wellah  
Takes a rocks and gravel wellah  
To make a solid road wellah**

**Well it's early in the morning wellah  
When I rise, wellah  
Sometimes I see the sun coming  
Makes me wanna lay down and die**

**Oughta been on the river wellah  
1904 wellah  
You could find a dead man wellah  
Tween every row wellah**

**Ought been on the river wellah,  
1910 wellah  
They were driving the women wellah  
Like they do the men wellah<sup>20</sup>**

### **Warning Songs**

*The well loved Horatio Richmond Palmer's hymn, "Yield Not to Temptation," it both urges one to turn away from temptation and delivers a strong message for where to turn for salvation. "You better Mind," speaks forcefully of the fate awaiting those who fail to be obedient to the commandments of God. The final song, "Sinner, Where You Gonna Run To?" is a well-known African American song that pointedly suggests that those who violate God's laws can't hide from God's judgment.*

### **Yield Not to Temptation**

**Yield not to temptations, for yielding is sin  
Each victory will help you, some other to win,**

**Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue  
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.**

**Shun evil companions, Bad language disdain,  
God's name hold in reverence, Nor take it in vain  
Be thoughtful and earnest, Kindhearted and true,  
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.**

**To him that o'er cometh, God giveth a crown;  
Thro' faith we will conquer, Tho' often cast down  
He who is our Savior, our strength will renew  
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.<sup>21</sup>**

*On the other hand, many of the songs that focus on behavior have a very upfront warning: Note the lyrics to the quartet song, "You Better Mind." The underlying message is that one is going to be judge by one's deeds:*

### **You Better Mind**

**You better mind, you better mind  
You got to give account at the Judgment,  
You better mind.**

**You better mind how you talk  
You better mind what you talkin' about  
You got to give an account at the judgment  
You better mind**

**You better mind how you shout...  
You better mind how you sing...<sup>22</sup>**

See the video of Unshaken from Harare Zimbabwe singing You Better Mind.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPP\\_rowt3d0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPP_rowt3d0)

"Sinner Man Where You Gonna Run To" is another example of the genre of warning songs pointing to a future reckoning ....

### **Sinner Man Where You Gonna Run To**

**Oh Sinner Man Where you Gonna Run to  
Oh, sinner man,  
Where you gonna run to?  
Oh, sinner man,  
Where you gonna run to?  
Oh, sinner man,  
Where you gonna run to  
All on that day?**

**Run from the light,  
Satan's gonna see you.  
Run from the light,  
Satan's gonna see you.  
Run from the light,  
Satan's gonna see you  
All on that day....<sup>23</sup>**

### Notes

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21. "Yield Not to Temptation." By Horatio Palmer
22. "You Better Mind (AKA You Better Min)." Negro Spiritual
23. "Sinner Man Where You Gonna Run To." Negro Spiritual