

Farrakhan, Ferguson and Foolishness

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

He either has the courage of a lion or the judgment of a jackass – Mark Twain

In light of the grand jury's decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for shooting Michael Brown to death in Ferguson, Missouri, and the violence that followed, Minister Louis Farrakhan has maintained that the Qur'an condones a "law for retaliation" in which people may resort to violence to avenge wrongs. News of Farrakhan's speech at historically Black Morgan State University in Baltimore was carried in *The Challenger* of Buffalo (December 3, 2014, p. 4), and many other publications throughout the U.S.

Farrakhan told his frenzied audience, "You may not want to fight, but you better get ready. Teach your baby how to throw the bottle [a firebomb] if they can. We going to die anyway. Let's die for something. As long as they kill us and go to Wendy's and have a burger and go to sleep, they gonna keep killing us. But when we die and they die, then soon we're going to sit at a table and talk about it! We're tired! We want some of this earth or we'll tear this God damn country up!"

Obviously, this incendiary rhetoric is disgracefully irresponsible, especially coming from a highly influential Black leader and so-called "Man of God." In all of these "urban rebellions," the taxes of Black people go up, Black property values go down, Blacks are the main ones that get arrested, injured, locked up, killed, etc. In Ferguson, some Black businesses were looted and/or destroyed, with some Black business owners openly and angrily weeping. How is the destruction of Black businesses by Blacks to be translated into retaliation against real and perceived White supremacists?

Sadly, representatives of the Nation of Islam (NOI) have always made wildly reckless statements fueled by blind rage. After all, it was Farrakhan – then known as Louis X – who wrote in the Nation's paper, *Muhammad Speaks*, that Malcolm X was worthy of death, that the die was cast, and that Malcolm could not escape. Shortly thereafter, Malcolm was assassinated by goons from the NOI. (Could angry Blacks have been following the law for retaliation when they burned down Muhammad's Mosque Number Seven in Harlem after Malcolm was murdered?)

And who can forget the late Khalid Abdul Muhammad who, during a speech at Kean College in New Jersey, praised the "freedom fighter" Colin Ferguson after he brutally murdered innocent Whites on the Long Island Railroad in Garden City, New York on December 7, 1993, another December 7th that will live in infamy? The fiery spokesperson also urged Black South Africans to wipe out White South Africans.

Farrakhan probably does not realize that young White men in the U.S. are the most well-armed civilians in the country. That makes the urging of Blacks to violence pretty much tantamount to attempted racial suicide. It is too bad that Farrakhan does not think much of more sensible nonviolent protests. Many of those that are upset with the grand jury's verdict participated in Black Friday and holiday spending boycotts. Others engaged in mass protests. Fortunately, most of them had the good sense not to burn their own neighborhoods to the ground.

Phile Chionesu, who organized the Million Woman March in Philadelphia that according to some reports attracted an estimated two million Black women, plans to meet with Farrakhan to discuss domestic violence and the rape, trafficking and murder of Black women. This is highly problematic. Farrakhan has always sided with Black men accused of rape and sexual harassment, especially in high-profile cases. He sided with Mike Tyson, even after the former boxing champion was *convicted* for the rape of Desiree Washington. He sided with Clarence Thomas after he was accused of sexually harassing Anita Hill. (He also sided with O.J. Simpson from the very beginning when he was accused of murdering Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.)

The only time Farrakhan sides with Black women that accuse men of rape is when the accused are *White* men. The best example was when he sided with Tawana Brawley who falsely claimed she was raped by White men. (Former prosecutor Steven Pagonis successfully sued Brawley and her advisor, Al Sharpton, for slander. Sharpton paid Pagonis \$65,000. Brawley was eventually ordered to pay Pagonis a whopping \$434,764.61. A Virginia court ordered her to pay \$627.00 per month. In July, 2013, she had \$3,764.61 garnished from her job as a nurse. The monthly payments she has been ordered to make could last her the rest of her natural life.)

Complicating matters is that Farrakhan has always supported the most sexist, rigidly patriarchal and ultra-reactionary extremist Muslim fanatics in the world. How serious can one be about protecting women if one has such a primitive, played-out male view? Is it even *possible* to seriously combat rape and sexual harassment without also combating patriarchy, sexism and misogyny?

During the speech, Farrakhan also told those in attendance that God would not permit them to enter the Promised Land because they are too much like pharaoh. Indeed, Farrakhan continues to harbor the fantasy that there is a God that will set Black people free if they only listen to the supposed wisdom of Farrakhan. However, this view obviously has no basis in reality.

When I was 10-years-old, I had my Black neighborhood integrated by the National Guard after the assassination of Martin Luther King. There was looting throughout the neighborhood, including across the street from where I lived on the corner of Race Street and Homewood Avenue in Pittsburgh. That neighborhood has not recovered economically to this day. Farrakhan should be ashamed of himself for advocating senseless destruction as a reaction to the grand jury's verdict. If this is the best that Black leadership has to offer, why, good night!