

## Willing to go the Distance to make a Difference



### THE VISIONARY

At the close of the last decade and the beginning of the new millennium, the Reverend Mark C. Olds has evolved into a bright new voice of leadership in the African American community. His emergence has been spurred by a unique and multifaceted approach to ministry that has gained him respect and influence in the church, the academic community and the corrections/prison industry complex.

One of Reverend Olds' most inspiring contributions is his *Redirection of Young Minds (ROYM)* program, a project that complements the traditional education of high school students by giving them hands-on experience in several facets of print and broadcast journalism. Under his guidance, students have produced a radio show, a newsletter entitled *Today's Youth – Tomorrow's Leadership* and a magazine called *Voices of the Future*. In addition to providing an invaluable experience for its participants, *ROYM* presents African Americans in a positive, educated and articulate demeanor, repudiating the many negative images that are often presented in the mainstream media.

More than an exhorter, Reverend Olds is an example of the importance and benefits of educational achievement. Well after his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, he returned to school to earn a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Organizations from Case Western Reserve University. He did post graduate studies at Case's history department. He is a doctoral candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies with a Specialization in Public Policy/Health at the Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Reverend Olds has put his education and life experiences to good use in presiding over Community Resource Inc., a nonprofit organization he created to enhance the spiritual, cultural and educational aspects of life in African American communities. He is always striving for new plateaus to enhance the quality of life for all humanity.

As an author, he has written a number of articles, books, journals and manuals. His work, "*Not Without Scars...The Inspiring Life Journey of Mark C. Olds*," has something for everyone: Black and White, young and old, rich and poor, Christian and non-Christian. *Not Without Scars* is truly a dramatic and heartening story that can educate and encourage anyone interested in the redemption of human beings, particularly young African American men who are walking the wayward path. It is proof that no life is beyond saving and in a time when many young men aspire to become the "gangsta" that Mark Olds was. His story is a refreshing sign of hope.

The stirring tale unfolds to the reader an invaluable history lesson. Olds' life journey takes us through the infamous sharecropping system that enslaved many Blacks, including his family; the dysfunctional subculture created by Black Southerners whose migration up North left them disenfranchised; the militant period of the 1960s; the disturbing and perverse culture of prison; and even the birth of the hip-hop culture that now dominates the lives of America's youth.

Compelling and inspirational, historical and spiritual, "*Not Without Scars*" is an American success story destined to be a classic. The life of Reverend Mark C. Olds has already been adapted to the stage as a sensational play. It is soon to be on the big screen with a message for the ages.