

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Nelson Says He's Going Back To His Roots; An Evangelist Of Peace

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ST. CROIX -- It was the second week that Senator Terrence "Positive" Nelson had tried to steer clear of rainfall. Last week's event, the peace rally and concert, was planned for that Saturday, but [heavy showers](#) forced the veteran lawmaker to forego those plans. Yesterday, the showers came again, but Mr. Nelson pushed through with the function nonetheless.

Following a brief march that began at the Castle Burke entrance, event-goers gathered at the Agriculture Fair Grounds located in Estate Lower Love, at a stage erected north of the Rudolph Schulterbrandt Market Building. The turnout was poor; with only a handful of people attending, but Mr. Nelson remained undeterred, telling The Consortium that if the

territory wants to see change, everyone must be involved.

"I've learned not to expect, just do," Mr. Nelson began, referring to the low turnout when asked if he was expecting a better showing. "I realize that many people don't want to accept the responsibility to be the change, so I just do, hoping that enough comes out to be an evangelist for peace," he added, language he would later use to describe his new-found destiny.

Officials and performers took to the stage throughout the afternoon, as well as some incarcerated individuals, who spoke of choosing paths away from criminal behavior had they known better. Mr. Nelson, optimistic throughout the event, said those who criticize his efforts as being useless, should step up to the plate themselves. And instead of incessantly complaining, applaud those who are trying.

"I could have been sitting here as a menace of society today," he said. "I think they ought to appreciate the efforts of those of us trying to do good. If they had ran into me 25 years I'm here doing my part because



Senator Terrence "Positive"

Nelson being interviewed by News 2. Image Courtesy: VIC.

As the concert proceeded, a variety of activities were performed, including the forming of a peace circle, where attendees joined hands and sang along to Michael Jackson's Heal The World. The peace circle was followed by what was deemed as casting away of negative energies, which saw participants writing their troubles on a piece of paper, and then casting that piece of paper into a small fire that was ignited by the event's organizers. The exercise was to give oneself a new start, according to Mr. Nelson.

"My expectancy here and during these events and rallies that we're going to have, is I'm taking on the role of an evangelist for peace, and these initiatives are helping me and the group of us to do so. We're reaching out, talking to people, and hoping the things we say connect with the hearts of the people to 1), be responsible for the change they want, and 2), stay away from violent acts and other unhealthy living."

But the senator, along with other members of the 31st Legislature, the Virgin Islands Police Department and Mapp administration officials, have been criticized for not

recognizing that the problem of violence amongst the territory's youth must be addressed on multiple fronts -- proper education, parenting and influence -- to name a few. Yet, Mr. Nelson countered by stating that words do have power.

"You're right, rallies can't solve those problems," Mr. Nelson admitted. "However, at a rally, something that someone says might connect," he added, making mention of the prison inmates who spoke about making the right decisions if only they were given guidance.

"I don't believe there's a magic wand. A lot of our societal problems are broad and big, but most of the times it starts with self-motivation. I was born in poverty. In the scheme of things, if you look at the math and statistics, many of us here are born in poverty. So, and violence and



Event-goers forming a peace

circle.

"We go to church every Sunday and the preachers keep preaching hoping that the word would connect. Well, that's what we're doing here, spreading the peace message in the streets," he said.

And Mr. Nelson sees his peace efforts and trying to right the many ills affecting the territory's youth as going back to square one; when his vision was solely set on creating a vibrant future filled with opportunities for the incoming generations.

"This is a return to focus for me," said Mr. Nelson, a former educator. "When I got involved it was for the children. Trying to figure out government, get to know the finances, you sort of lean away to try and address the broader issues. But now I'm getting back to the root. We've got to save the children if we're going to save the community. Because eventually a lot of us are going to be too old, and they're the ones who are going to take our spot."

The event went into the night with various performances from multiple bands, groups and individuals.