

NATE AND ELOISE CAME TO VISIT

BY:

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By: Apostle Mark Carven Olds

PART ONE

JACQUI, MY WIFE, IN THE MIST OF OUR BI-WEEKLY TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS, REMEMBERED THAT NATE AND ELOUISE MADE INQUIRY OF MY WELL-BEING. THIS MARKED A MOMENT OF GOOD NEWS. THEIR INQUISITION WAS SINCERE AND NOT IN THE LEAST FRAUDULENT.

THIS COUPLE, ELEGANT AND GRACIOUS, WERE TREASURED FRIENDS. NATE WAS MY GOLFING PARTNER. ELOUISE NEVER COMPLAINED OF MY INFRINGING UPON THEIR TIME WITH AN URGENT PLEA FOR NATE'S PRESENCE AT A SUDDEN TEE TIME. ALWAYS THE GENIAL AND HOSPITABLE HOSTESS, SHE ONCE VOICED CONCERN OVER A 36 HOLE MARATHON NATE AND I STAGED ON THE LAST DAY OF MY VISIT TO THEIR FLORIDA HOME.

IN ADDITION TO A STALWART BOND, I ALSO SERVED AS ONE OF NATE'S MINISTERS. WE UNDERSTOOD FAITH RELATIONSHIPS. WE PRAYED TOGETHER.

NATE AND I SHARED A SOUTHERN BACKGROUND. OUR YOUTHFUL YEARS FACED AN APARTHEID AMERICA. NATE WAS NOW RETIRED, BEING MY SENIOR BY ^{A DECADE} ~~LESS THAN~~ OR SO. HE HAD SEEN AND EXPERIENCED MORE OF THE HISTORICALLY CHALLENGING ERA THAN I.

AFTER ROUNDS OF GOLF (A FOURSOME THAT INCLUDED ART AND FRANK, LONG TIME FRIENDS - I WAS THE YOUNGESTER IN THE GROUP), I WOULD LISTEN TO THE ACCOUNTS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT FROM THESE UNHERALED VOICES. THESE MEN ARE AMONG THE NAMELESS MULTITUDES OMITTED FROM HISTORICAL CHRONICLES, BUT NOT FACELESS AMONG THOSE ^{ASTUTE} ~~AND~~ ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE UNSUNG HEROES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND LIBERATION.

IT IS NOT OFTEN THAT A FRIENDSHIP EMERGES WITH SOMEONE YOU ALSO ADMIRE. OUR UPFRONT AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP CREATED AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN UNABRIDGED INSIGHT INTO THE INNER-WORKINGS AND ^{RECIPROCAL} ~~PROPER~~ INFLUENCES OF CORE (CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY). NATE WAS A PIONEER (HE RECEIVED A MBA FROM HARVARD AND STARTED A SUCCESSFUL MANUFACTURING PLANT.)

IN RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION PASSED ON TO ME BY JACQUI, I

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FORWARDED VISITING FORMS TO NATE AND ERICSE. WITH MUCH ANTICIPATION, I LOOKED FORWARD TO THEIR BEING ADDED TO MY APPROVED VISITING LIST. ONCE THE FORMS WERE RETURNED TO THE INSTITUTION'S COUNSELOR, I WOULD BE NOTIFIED OF THE ADDITIONS. I WOULD THEN CONVEY THE APPROVAL STATUS TO MY FRIENDS. VISITATION PRIVILEGES HAD BEEN EXTENDED.

I HAD AN EAGERNESS TO SHARE ELEMENTS OF MY VISION OF NATIONALISM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. NATION BUILDING WAS A VITAL PART OF THE MOVEMENT THAT NATE HAD LIVED FORTH YEARS EARLIER. ENTHUSIASM ~~WAS~~ ^{HEIGHTENED} AT THE PROSPECT OF TAPPING INTO THIS MOUNTAIN OF WISDOM. I DESIRED TO LAY OUT MY VISION OF NATIONALISM BASED ON FAITH, RATHER THAN ETHNIC OR RACIAL. I CRAVED TO PRESENT A VERSION OF NATIONALISM EVOLVING FROM COMMON NEED. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPERFECT AND IMPOVERISHED REPLACED ETHNICITY OR RACE.

IMPERFECT PEOPLE AND IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE FACE A LONG ROAD TO VICTORY. ANYONE WITH A BLEMISH OF ANY SORT IS IMPERFECT. ANYONE WITHOUT ALL THE ECONOMIC REVENUE TO AFFORD ALL THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE IS IMPOVERISHED.

IMPERFECT PEOPLE MAY HAVE CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS OR ARRESTS OR LACK VOCATIONAL OR MARKETABLE SKILLS. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WOUNDS MAKE PEOPLE LESS THAN PERFECT. LIFESTYLES, WHICH DO NOT FIT THE SOCIETAL NORMS, DEGRADE PEOPLE SUB-STANDARD. SOME FICTITIOUS CLASSISM RECIPE HAS SET AN ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND USABLE PLUMBLINE TO DETERMINE THE NON-PERFECT PEOPLE.

A SINGLE WOMAN WITH THREE CHILDREN BY THREE MEN MAY BE ON THE LIST OF IMPERFECT. HOWEVER, THAT DOES NOT DISQUALIFY HER FROM MAKING MONUMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HUMAN RACE. A YOUNG MAN, WHOSE EDUCATION LEVEL IS BELOW COLLEGE GRADUATE, CAN STILL BE A COMMUNITY PILLAR AND MENTOR.

THE CREDIT RATING OF IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE IS BAD OR NON-EXISTENT. THEY HAVE MADE MISTAKES - TRYING TO SURVIVE - WHICH COST THEM OPPORTUNITIES OF

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STABILITY. AS A RESULT, THE STATE OF IMPOVERISHMENT FURTHER COMPLICATES THEIR LIVES. RESTORATION MAY BE ONE HAND OF ASSISTANCE AWAY.

IMPERFECT PEOPLE AND IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE HAVE MORE HURDLES TO OVERCOME AND LESS RESOURCES TO GET THE TASK DONE. A MOVEMENT, WHICH WOULD EMPOWER AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE IMPERFECT AND IMPOVERISHED, MUST EMBRACE PROGRESSIVE INDIVIDUALS AND JUSTICE SEEKERS.

THE LONGER AN INDIVIDUAL REMAINS STIGMATIZED AS IMPERFECT AND STAGNATED AS IMPOVERISHED, THE LESS LIKELY SUCH A PERSON WILL PERCEIVE A REALITY BEYOND THEIR CURRENT STATE. LONG-TERM POVERTY NUMBS THE EMOTIONS AND DESTROYS DREAMS, MAKING IT EASIER TO ABIDE IN DESPAIR. HOPELESSNESS BLINDS. "WHERE THERE IS NO VISION, THE PEOPLE PERISH;" (PROVERBS 29:18A KJV)¹

PART TWO

NATE AND ELOISE CAME TO VISIT, BUT I DID NOT SHARE THE AFORE-MENTIONED THOUGHTS. THEY WERE REFUSED ADMITTANCE INSIDE THE INSTITUTION. TWO DAYS AFTER THE FAILED VISITATION, THE APPROVAL NOTIFICATION REACHED ME.

NOW THE BUREAUCRACY HAD ACTED. MY FRIENDS WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO GAIN ENTRANCE INTO THE INSTITUTION. THE ELAPSED TIME IGNITED FURTHER THOUGHTS TO VERBALIZE. I PONDERED HOW I HAD ALWAYS SHARED MY THOUGHTS WITH MY FRIEND. WHETHER HE WAS IN DAZO FOR THE SPRING AND SUMMER OR IN FLORIDA FOR THE FALL AND WINTER, I ALWAYS HAD ACCESS TO MY FRIEND. CURRENT BARRIERS OF ISOLATION AND INCARCERATION HAD SABOTAGED ~~THE~~ ^{OUR} SIMPLE PRIVILEGE OF SHARING IDEAS.

NATION BUILDING WOULD BE A POWERFUL DIALOGUE. NATE WOULD GIVE ME HONEST, HISTORICAL, AND INSIGHTFUL FEEDBACK. IT WOULD BE PERCEPTIVE AND THOUGHTFUL ENOUGH ~~TO~~ ^{TO} BUILD ~~TO~~ ^{TO} SHREWDLY. NATE'S APPROACH TO FAITH OVER NATIONALISM WAS CERTAIN TO BE SAGACIOUS.

FAITH, RATHER THAN ETHNIC ENTITLEMENT TO ACHIEVE NATIONALISM, IS NOT NEW. HOWEVER, IT IS VERY DEMANDING, REQUIRING EVEN MORE OF A COMMITMENT.

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THE FAITH OF THE IMPERFECT AND IMPOVERISHED HAS MANY CHALLENGES. IN AN EXORBITANT NUMBER OF INSTANCES, IT MAY EVEN BE NON-EXISTENT. A MOVEMENT LEADER CANNOT BE IMPATIENT WITH THIS SEGMENT OF SOCIETY. COMPASSION, ALONG WITH FAITH BUILDING, FAITH EQUIPPING, AND ~~RESTORING~~^{FAITH RESTORING}, IS MORE VITAL THAN PREPONDERANCE OF POLITICAL RHETORIC.

WITHOUT FAITH, THE WORLD REDUCES LIFE TO A LOTTERY EXISTENCE. ONLY A FEW WIN, MOST LOSE, WHILE AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER MUST CONTINUE TO PLAY TO KEEP THE PRIZE ATTRACTIVE. A MOVEMENT HAS TO INCLUDE RE-ORIENTATION FOR A PEOPLE LOCKED IN THE STRUGGLE OF SURVIVAL. ACTS BEYOND THE PROSAIC OUGHT TO BECOME AN EXPECTANCY. "AND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM, FOR HE WHO COMES TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THOSE WHO SEEK HIM." (HEBREWS 11:6 NASB)²

NATE AND ELOISE (A COUPLE OF INTEGRALOUS FRIENDS, AN HONORABLE COUPLE) MADE THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE PENAL COLONY A SECOND TIME. THEY CAME ON THE EVENING OF LABOUR DAY. AGAIN, I DID NOT SEE THEM. ON FEDERAL HOLIDAYS, VISITING HOURS ARE ONLY SCHEDULED DURING THE DAY.

MY FRIENDS, NATE AND ELOISE, YOUR VISITS TO ME HAVE BEEN ASTONISHINGLY GREAT AND MEANINGFUL. EACH VISIT ACCOMPLISHED PRECISELY WHAT YOU SET OUT TO DO, ENCOURAGE ME. YOU PROFICIENTLY BLESSED MY SPIRIT AND SOUL. AND, YOU DID SO WITHOUT LETDOWN OR SORROW ASSOCIATED WITH ^{THE} "ARWARDNESS AND DISCOMFORT OF A VISITING ROOM GOOD-BYE."

OUR FRIENDSHIP REMAINS STEADFAST. OUR FATHERS (NATE'S FATHER A BEAN PICKER ~~TO~~^{FROM} FLORIDA, AND MY FATHER A SHARECROPPER FROM NORTH CAROLINA) TAUGHT US THAT MEN LIVE COVENANT, FRIENDSHIPS FOR LIFE. OUR MOTHERS (BOTH WOMEN OF GREAT FAITH AND ABUNDANT LOVE) TAUGHT US TO PRAY FOR THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR FRIENDS. "A MAN THAT HATH FRIENDS MUST SHOW HIMSELF FRIENDLY; AND THERE IS A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER." (PROVERBS 18:24 KJV)³

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¹ NATION BUILDING: VOLUME I - THE PORTRAIT OF A MOVEMENT (THE TRANSITION TO NATION BUILDING) p. 29.

² NATION BUILDING: VOLUME I - THE PORTRAIT OF A MOVEMENT (THE TRANSITION TO NATION BUILDING) p. 30.