

Yesterday was not an easy day for me after a root canal that turned out to be a bit more than I had bargained for. Today you get a short newsletter. Thanks for understanding. Jmax

I held over Jmax Bits Newsletter due yesterday in order to get permission to send you the following message I received from Libby Escobel, a loyal and active VCC member for many years. Her message gave me new insight into South Africa and the important part Nelson Mandela and Dr. Leon Sullivan played in its future. I hope you will find it helpful also. Thanks Libby and keep up the good work. Jmax

Message from Libby Escobel

"In the midst of decorating, shopping, baking and completing plans for the Holidays, Nelson Mandela died. His death interrupted the festivities and has created a sobering pause for reflection on the meaning and the impact of his life on the world. I am reminded of the Reverend Doctor Leon H. Sullivan who became a friend of Mandela while he was imprisoned and who played a significant role in his release from prison and a much larger role in changes in apartheid in South Africa.

Dr. Sullivan was born and reared in Charleston, West Virginia and graduated from West Virginia State College where he was a varsity basketball player until he suffered a foot injury. At 18, he was ordained a minister at the First Baptist Church in Charleston, and devoted his life to the ministry. He became pastor of churches in New York and Philadelphia, developed a shopping center in Philadelphia and implemented a jobs training program, Opportunities Industrialization Center. This program grew internationally and prepared thousands for gainful employment and a giant step out of poverty.

In 1971, he was appointed to the board of General Motors one of the world's largest corporations and this afforded him the opportunity to serve a larger population outside Philadelphia. As the only Black on the General Motors board, he insisted that they divest their investments in South Africa because of the treatment of Black South Africans. His aggressive action did not stop there; he began to pressure other corporations and institutions such as Harvard University to cease transacting business in South Africa.

He realized that he needed to develop goals for those on whom he was putting pressure. To this end, he developed the principles for doing business in South Africa. Those principles were: (1) "Nonsegregation of races in all eating, comfort, and work facilities, (2) Equal and fair employment practices for all workers, (3) Equal pay for all employees doing equal or comparable work for the same period of time, (4) Initiation and development of training programs that will prepare, in substantial numbers, blacks and other nonwhites for supervisory, administrative, clerical, and technical jobs, (5) Increasing the number of blacks and other nonwhites in management and supervisory jobs, and (6) Improving the quality of employees lives outside the work environment in such areas as housing, transportation, schooling, recreation, and health facilities."

Slowly but one by one, United States businesses and educational institutions divested their holdings and business transactions in South Africa leading to the "unraveling of apartheid. In the meantime, it was announced on February 11, 1990 that Nelson Mandela was being released from prison after having been incarcerated for 27 years.

Leon Sullivan received a multitude of honors and awards as a result of his ministry developing educational and technical training programs designed to help Blacks and poor whites worldwide and to improve their lot in society. He also received awards and recognition for his dedication to ending apartheid in South Africa. He died April 24, 2001 in Scottsville, Arizona.

I had the privilege to interview Dr. Sullivan a day after one of his return trips from South Africa and this is preserved on video tape in the West Virginia State (College) University Archives.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ and mourn the death of Nelson Mandela, I ask you to also recognize the dynamic leadership of Dr. Leon H. Sullivan in helping to change America as well as South Africa.

Here's wishing you and yours a Happy Holiday season and peace, happiness and good health in 2014."
Libby

Shirley & Marcy

A mother was concerned about her kindergarten son walking to school. He didn't want his mother to walk with him. She wanted to give him the feeling that he had some independence but yet know that he was safe. So she had an idea of how to handle it. She asked a neighbor if she would please follow him to school in the mornings, staying at a distance, so he probably wouldn't notice her. She said that since she was up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way for them to get some exercise as well, so she agreed.

The next school day, the neighbor and her little girl set out following behind Timmy as he walked to school with another neighbor girl he knew. She did this for the whole week.

As the two kids walked and chatted, kicking stones and twigs, Timmy 's little friend noticed the same lady was following them as she seemed to do every day all week. Finally she said to Timmy, 'Have you noticed that lady following us to school all week? Do you know her?'

Timmy nonchalantly replied, 'Yeah, I know who she is.'

The little girl said, 'Well, who is she?'

'That's just Shirley Goodnest, 'Timmy replied, 'and her daughter Marcy.'

'Shirley Goodnest? Who is she and why is she following us?

'Well,' Timmy explained, 'every night my Mum makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers, 'cuz she worries about me so much. And in the Psalm, it says, ' Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life', so I guess I'll just have to get used to it!'

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

May Shirley Goodnest and Marcy be with you today and always

I know you smiled! I sure did.

Jmax

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