

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

On June 6th of 1968, I was sitting out on the porch of my home on State Street in Richmond, Virginia, in a predominantly black community called Fulton Bottom, enjoying a popsicle with my Sisters, Cousins and other neighborhood kids, while the adults watched us from porches. In those days the entire block would sit on their porches at night talking, playing and catching up on the latest neighborhood news. Suddenly, like the sounds of rolling waves I began to hear distant voices yelling, "Get inside, get inside"! I heard my next door neighbor Miss Betty yell "Oh my God...the KKK"! In a voice that let us know she was not playing, my Great-Grandmother told us "Get into the house now"! As I turned to go up the steps, suddenly there were big black cars rolling slowly down our streets. I could hear what sounded like firecrackers in the distance, and folks still screaming to get inside! As this motorcade of big black cars rolled slowly down the street, there were people dressed in what looked like white dresses to me. Some had guns, some hung from the cars, and others walked alongside with sticks. They all seemed to be angry; yelling, waving their arms and their guns and rifles around. By this time my Mother had come from inside the house, yelling for us to get inside, so I couldn't make out what the people in the dresses were yelling, but I knew they were angry about something.

My Cousins, Sisters and I huddled in the dark hallway, trying our best to be quiet. I will always remember seeing my Great Grandmother and my Mother standing in front of the open door defiantly - daring anyone to enter our home. My Mom had a small pistol and she held it behind her back as she stood there protecting her home and her children. I was amazed at her stance, and upset I had lost my popsicle in all the confusion. I was amazed at her tenacity to stand in total silence before a foe that outnumbered her, and confused, because I had always heard of the KKK, but in my young mind viewed them much like a child views a fairytale. Up until that point I had never seen them.

When things quieted it down we all huddled in front of the black and white TV and learned from news announcer that Robert F Kennedy had been assassinated, and we all cried silent tears.

It's been a while since those memories have surfaced, but the events in Charlottesville had them flooding back to me. And what was most interesting even after all these years steeped in truth teachings? I was still amazed and I am still confused.

Amazement that those who know truth and claim to live in peace now point fingers and say the same thing about the KKK and the neo-Nazis and all the hate groups that those groups would say about us. Amazed too because when we don't speak Our Truth and we operate from Fear, when we operate from fear, it's the fear that we are covered in, not the real us... And if the true me didn't show up, then my "I am" is covered up as well, so what makes me different from those who hide behind masks?

I remain confused because while I know we must speak up and stand for something, and I know that this is the time to stand in our truth. My confusion comes from how am I standing. How do I stand when faced with fear and hatred and bigotry from others, and caught between my own anger and fear? Hearing cries from all sides shouting, "I Matter!" The reply that wells up in me comes as a question. What matters most?

For me what matters most is to stand in love. I am choosing to draw from the memory of my Great Grandmother and my Mother standing silently and defiantly against hatred and bigotry to protect the children that they loved, and maintaining legacy of that truth, so that now today in 2017 I can relay it to you.

What matters most? Standing for Love.

Love that can recognize its existence even in the face of bigotry and hatred. Love matters. Because of love I exist, we exist. I stand on the shoulders of some great loves. We all stand on the shoulders of great loves; Great-Grandmothers, Grandmothers, Mothers, Fathers, Auntie's, Uncle's, teachers, artists, poets, presidents and kings.

I stand on the shoulders of the Living, Loving Presence of God, of my Divine Christ Nature.

I stand on the shoulders of Mary L. Thomas and Dorothy Carrington, the matriarchs of my family,

I stand on the shoulders of Myrtle Fillmore, matriarch of the Unity movement.

I stand on the shoulders of Ellie Neubauer, the matriarch of Unity of Bon Air.

I stand on the shoulders of Roberta Walsh, Ellie Gill, and Teena Hucul.

I stand on the shoulders of Rev. Joyce Fisher Pierce, and every other leader who has taught me what matters most is to stand in, for, and as love.

So dearest ones, if you're not sure what matters in all that's happening, I invite you to join with me in standing righteously, defiantly and passionately in Peace and Love.

In Joy and Love
Rev. Zita Correll, President
Board of Directors Unity of Bon Air