Deep bond of love

Many of our older friend people who had been the backbone of the mass meetings of the Movement-embraced us. While many of the people who struggled with us in Montgomery developed an attitude of reverence toward my husband, some of the older women shared a kind of spiritual affection for him which was akin to that held for "favorite sons."

The deep bond of love which we shared was movingly expressed by Mother Norman who said, "I love Dr. King like my own son. His own mother couldn't possibly love him any more than I do!"

She also referred to me as her daughter. I shall always remember the time when I gave a benefit concert for the Montgomery Improvement Association. She stood up at intermission clapping proudly, saying, "that's my daughter!" On that farewell evening when she came up to say good-bye to us, she handed me a ash tray which she had made. The base of it was a tin top form a half-gallon jar, encased by soft drink bottle tops strung on wire, with the same arrangement for the handle. She said, "I know you don't want this junk in your house, Mrs. King." Deeply touched, I replied, "I will always keep this ash tray in a special place in my house. I hope you will come to visit us in Atlanta someday so you can see it.'

Mother Norman died before she had a chance to visit us, but her ash tray is the one that is most used in our house. I keep it on the counter in the family room near the telephone. Of the many gifts we received on leaving Montgomery, this was perhaps the most meaningful one.

The parting was so beautiful, so deeply touching; we felt exalted, yet unworthy of their admiration. We left Montgomery with the knowledge that our experience there had been so meaningful that never again would anything quite like it happen to us. We felt we had grown and developed, as had the Movement. So much had happened to prepare us personally for the years ahead, and, at the same time, the Movement had developed to such a point that its direction had been charted and its growth and maturation assured by the foundation that had been laid in Montgomery.



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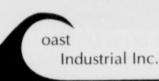


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"The belief that God will do everything for man is as untenable as the belief that man can do everything for himself. It, too, is based on a lack of faith. We must learn that to except God to do everything while we do nothing is not faith but superstition."

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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