

sob. We hug awhile, then sing a few songs. There is a little toy vanity on the table, a gift from a retired doctor who has made it himself. It is beautifully crafted of wood with a large mirror set in the center. Tony pulls the vanity next to us, and we look in the glass together. "Look, Tony," I say, "Our eyes are the same color. I wonder in what other ways we are alike."

A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CIVIL EQUALITY

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We call upon all men, everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children. Anything less than this defeats our high ideal of the brotherhood of man.

Thus spake President Hugh B. Brown, for the First Presidency of the Church. But until every human being can enjoy the same civil privileges, President Brown's call will not be fulfilled. President Brown also said in his 1963 General Conference address

We believe that it is a moral evil to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full education opportunities and to every privilege of citizenship, just as it is a moral evil to deny him the right to worship according to the dictates of his conscience.

Yet these things are still being denied a large segment of our citizens. We may say, "I personally am not denying anybody anything." In that regard Edmund Burke once said

All that is required for the triumph of evil in the world is that good men do nothing.

Fundamental to a solution of the whole problem is a change of attitude. And perhaps the best way to change one's attitude is to become involved in the problems of one person or one family. In this way only does one come to realize the magnitude of the problems faced by a black American, problems he encounters *just because he is black*.

Mrs. Mildred Hatfield (not her real name) is a Negro from the South who could not read or write when my wife and I first met her. Since her husband's death her social security check has afforded her just over \$100 a month. In addition she works for several women a week in rotation. If she does not miss any work during the year she can make a maximum of \$3,000, which must support herself and her two sons — Warren, fourteen, and John, thirteen. For several years she lived with her boys in a dilapidated house owned by one of the area's more affluent and respected citizens. She kept the house neat and clean, but the owner would not keep it in livable repair; in fact, some cities would have condemned such a house. This affluent slum-lord asked \$150 a month rent; heat, water, and electricity ran the cost to \$200. This forced her to rent two of the three bedrooms, sharing kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Her renters were employed and able to pay normal rental rates but could not find other housing themselves.

In spite of her problems Mildred is a joyful person, cheerful, with a tendency to look always on the bright side. Tremendously appreciative of any kindness shown her, her main desire is to see her boys grow into useful, creative citizenship.

These boys had until three years ago attended segregated schools, where the instruction was not of high quality. Now that their school is integrated, they have difficulty keeping up with white students, but have so far managed with special tutoring. Warren has come under the influence of a dedicated white scoutmaster in an all-Negro troop and has almost reached Eagle rank. John, shy and quiet, is interested in music. His mother calls John "complex," which means that he is very sensitive and often aware that his black skin seems to make a difference.

My wife arranged for a volunteer from the Northern Virginia Literacy Council to teach Mildred to read and write. This has opened up new worlds for her. Finally, after several years of discouraging attempts, we were able to move Mildred into a Public Housing Authority "project." This has been both a blessing and a curse. It is in good repair, and it reduced her rent somewhat. But it is a tiny crackerbox row-house, lacking yard and basement, opening directly onto a crowded street in the all-Negro section of town. Each day the boys step out into the bedlam of this street. In spite of the best efforts of their mother, their scoutmaster (who lives twenty miles away), and other interested friends like ourselves, the boys cannot avoid difficult situations.

Two years ago we shared our Christmas with the Hatfield family. We really learned then, for perhaps the first time, how it is possible to look into a black face and see there a human soul created in the image of God. We learned that a black skin can house a fine spirit that will enrich the lives of others. We learned many other things, but the most important outcome of that visit was eradication of the prejudice that had long simmered in our hearts. The Hatfields brought Christmas to *us*.

During the recent civil disorders in Washington, D.C., we feared the riots might spread to nearby Alexandria, Virginia, where the Hatfields live. We called Mildred. "Let us come and get you. You can stay with us for the weekend."

"But I don't think I can find the boys," she answered. "I believe they have already gone to march in the streets."

"Go out and try to locate them," we told her, "and call us back immediately."

Luckily she was able to find her boys, who had begun to march in protest against the slaying of Martin Luther King, who had been for them a great symbol of hope. She was able to persuade them to spend a few days with us.

We all worked together for a while, the boys helping me in the yard, Mildred helping my wife in the kitchen. Then we picnicked, played badminton, talked. The boys taught our own son some valuable lessons in courtesy and helpfulness. Mildred shared with us some of her early experiences: "At times