

DEFENDING A TRUTH

CHAPTER 1

Thump, Thump. Thump!
George knocked on Shawanda's hotel door.

He waited.

As he waited, his mind raced back through the major events of the past few years and the past few days.

Having been brought into the knowledge of the truth about polygyny (which is a man having more than one wife), he now had three wives.

His third was Shawanda, a lovely elegant and yet tom boyish African American lady who had been a prize catch.

She had brought him much happiness and yet now she was perhaps about to figuratively drive a stake into his heart!

Thump, Thump, Thump!
he knocked again.

Again, he waited with no answer forthcoming.

Again his mind raced.

He had come along way. Before he was like most young men. He was interested in pretty, beautiful, and attractive ladies. All of his present three wives fit within those descriptions.

Now, however, he was considering a fourth. One who was somewhat overweight and one who tended to have an abrasive manner, especially where Shawanda was concerned.

Yet, God had begun to show him that it was not HIS purpose that George only fulfill the lusts of his flesh, but rather that he was placed on this earth to do God's will.

"God loves the lovely and the unlovely", he muttered to himself out loud.

"Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart." he found himself quoting from proverbs.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

He banged on the door much harder.

He was sure that she was inside but she was not answering.

The dilemma that he was facing was that Shawanda had threatened to leave, if he married Beatrice.

Not being appealing to the eye, it would be unlikely that anyone would choose Beatrice as a wife. No one, that is, except one reaching the level of maturity George was reaching.

Yet, he was torn, he certainly didn't want to lose Shawanda.

"Are you in there?" he called out.

Still there was no answer.

Angrily he grabbed at the door knob and pushed. It had been unlocked all the time.

George charged in, ready to take her to task for not responding when he stopped in his tracks. He was frozen for a moment.

The sight he saw brought an emotional blow that was no less real than if someone had hit him in the stomach with the fat end of a baseball bat!

CHAPTER 2

George stood frozen like a wide eyed deer caught in the glare of the headlights of an oncoming car.

The moment seemed like an eternity! He couldn't believe his eyes.

There in her room sat Gerald W. Robinson. This was the tall Afro-American man that had approached Shawanda in downtown Dallas.

"How...how could you?", George stammered.

"How could I what?!" Shawanda shot back at him, as she rose from her seated position on the bed to face George.

Mr. Robinson sat quietly in his chair with a smirk on his face.

Shawanda placed her hands on her hips and took a defiant stand with her feet spread about a shoulder's width apart.

"How ...how could you bring him here in your room??", George questioned with pain in his voice.

"Mr. Robinson and I are discussing business." She replies with a sly smile and a raised eyebrow.

George bit down on his lower lip as his eyes blazed. He then narrowed them as he eyed the one considered an intruder and a threat.

"You get outta here!", he yelled.

Robinson drew his head back a little and frowned, and then smiled broadly before answering, calmly, "I will leave when the young lady asks me to." he replied.

George took a step forward toward him, but Shawanda quickly stepped between them and put her hand on George's chest. "Muscles, wait a minute! ", she plead.

She paused and gulped and then turned to her guest.
"perhaps you had better leave now", she said softly.

Robinson rose slowly while keeping his eyes on George. he brushed past him and then paused at the door.

"Uh, Shawanda, when you are ready, give me another call." he said wryly as he exited the room.

"ANOTHER call?!" George yelled as he faced Shawanda.

"Yeah. I called him" she said as she poked her chin out at her husband.

It took all of George's abilities in self control to restrain himself from slapping her across the face.

How could his lovely third wife be starting an affair with another man, he questioned in his mind.

"Why would you call him?!", he asked out loud incredulously, as he threw his hands up in the air and then let them fall again back to his sides.

"Business!" Shawanda shot back the one word as she turned away from him and faced the window.

"Business? Business?". George repeated with a question in his voice.

"What kind of business?"

"Mr. Robinson has started an internet business that is destined to become a rival for E-bay." She answered.

"Yeah, Right!" George snorted with total disbelief in his voice.
We have plenty of money," he went on, " Why do you need to be in any business?" he questioned.

Shawanda whirled around,
What do you think, Mr. George Meadows?" She queried.
"Do you think I can be satisfied as window dressing for your ego, while you go around accumulating wives here and there?", she spat out with disdain.

" Why.. I .. uh.." George stuttered.
Shawanda interrupted him, " Don't you think that I can have dreams and ambitions of my own?" she asked as she narrowed her eyes and stared directly and deeply into his.

George moved closer to put his hands on her shoulders, but Shawanda jerked away and moved a step closer to the window, making it abundantly clear that she did not want to be touched by him.

" Look Honey Babe." George started again,

"Don't Honey Babe, me!", She interrupted again. "You knew that I did not want that Beatrice woman to be a wife of yours. You knew that we don't get along. And yet.." she paused " ..you STILL invited her to be a wife!?" As tears welled up in her eyes her snarled expression spoke volumes.

" LOOK, Shawanda," George said firmly, "I have to do what GOD wants me to do, even over what you want me to do."

" Oh, God is in it now? Huh?" Shawanda countered sarcastically, "Blame it on GOD!"

George turned and took a few steps toward the door before turning again. "Look Shawanda, if you want to do some type of business enterprise perhaps we can arrange something, only not here and NOT with him!!" he said sternly.

"Why not with him?" she questioned, as if she didn't already know, "And why not in Dallas?"

"We're leaving!" George stated.

"Going where?" She queried.

"New York" came the answer.

"Why?" she asked.

" I agreed to do a debate on TV there on 'Is Polygamy for Today' " he answered.

"A debate? On TV?" she interrogated incredulously.

" I thought we were going to keep a low profile. You go on TV and the world will know! We'll have no peace!" she lamented.

"You're not going on TV. "
he countered. "Only I will be on."

George thought he could solve two problems at once. He would get Shawanda away from her handsome mystery man and he would be able to preach the truth to a greater number of people by the power of the electronic media..

Still there was more drama waiting for him in New York than he could ever have suspected.

CHAPTER 3

George thought it best, having seen Shawanda's reaction to recent developments, that Beatrice travel with them and be around his family before they formally made any marriage vows. Needless, to say, there was to be no sexual relations until after verbal marriage vows were exchanged.

She must understand what she is getting into, he thought, and what better way than to experience everything except the sexual part, first hand.

So George and his three wives and one potential wife and Judy's two children and Charles all flew off to New York.

"Hey Po' wife come and sit with me." George invited.
What did you call me?" Beatrice beamed back with a furrowed eyebrow as she wondered what was a po'wife.

" A po' wife is a potential wife" George laughed.

"Well when do I get to be the real thing?" she purred as she snuggled up next to him.

Shawanda eyed them as she took a seat one row back and across the aisle of the midsized jet plane.

As the flight got underway, Shawanda leaned her seat back and closed her eyes as she contemplated all that had gone on and all that might go on.

She knew that she loved George although she no longer had the deep "in love" feelings that she had once had for him.

There was something exciting, flattering and inner tingling about having a handsome man, like Mr. Robinson interested in her. Yet, she knew that she had committed to be a wife to George. Should she have to deny herself because of that commitment, she pondered.

She opened her eyes and looked across the aisle. There was an empty seat next to Charles O'kinyi. she moved to it.

" Charles,"

"Yes"

" Why is it that you men can have as many wives as you can take care of, but we women are restricted to only one husband until he dies? It doesn't seem fair." She relented.

"Fair?" Charles repeated before beginning his answer. " What is fair in God's eyes is often different than what is fair in the world's eyes or even our own. "

He paused and turned to look her in the eyes to see if she was ready for more.

God has set up the rules for us as a reflection of spiritual things. We can therefore learn from the correct patterns what the spiritual dimension is like and how it operates." he continued.

"If for our short time here on this planet we will deny the works of the flesh and walk in The Spirit, we will receive great rewards.

Our obedience to God increases our righteousness. Righteousness leads to holiness and with holiness we can see God and we will rule and reign with him."

Charles had strung together several scriptures from Romans and Hebrews and Revelations to reveal truths to Shawanda.

"How do you come up with all that?" Shawanda asked with a puzzled look on her face.

Charles chuckled, "Its all in the book, my dear, it is all in the textbook, called the Bible."

"Well, obedience can be painful" Shawanda complained.

"Yes, I agree" Charles answered. "Our obedience can sometimes be painful, but the we must remember what it says in 2 Corinthians 4:17, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." He paused reflectively after finishing the quote.

"Now sometimes the afflictions don't seem light and sometimes they seem like they will be unbearable, but compared to the rewards we will receive they are nothing," he concluded.

Shawanda closed her eyes and tried to reflect on the things Charles had said. She was still in awe of how this simple African could have so much knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and the ways of God.

"Light afflictions," she muttered to herself.

There were afflictions coming in New York, but neither George nor his wives would consider them light.

CHAPTER 4

They landed at LaGuardia airport and were taken from there to their hotel by a stretch limousine.

After getting settled in there was a knock on George's door. Opening it, he was greeted by the host of the show, a Mr. Bob Greenberg.

"Well, well, well, how do you do?" he questioned as he marched in. Bob was a tall good looking man in his mid forties.

"I'm fine, and you?" George responded.

"Good, good, good. We are going to have a great show tomorrow."

"Who am I debating?" George asked.

"Well, George, does it matter?" Greenberg asked as he patronizingly placed his hand on George's shoulder and led him over to one of the chairs in the room.

"Well, no, I guess not," George stammered as he took a seat. "But what is the format and how much time will we have?"

Greenberg sat beside George in a chair adjacent to his and crossed his legs. There was a devious twinkle in his eye.

"I heard you gave quite a speech down there in Dallas," Greenberg interjected.

George could tell he was avoiding answering the question.

"What's the plan?" George questioned simply.

"Oh, may I meet the wives?" Greenberg countered.

"They aren't part of the show," George said firmly.

"Oh," Greenberg acted a bit startled. "Why not? It would make it so much more interesting."

"Look," George said firmly. "When I talked to your producers on the phone, I agreed to come and debate the question of whether polygamy was for today. I said nothing about having my wives be a part of anything!"

"O, alright!" Greenberg sniffed out disappointedly. Greenberg uncrossed his legs and walked across the room, pretending to be interested in some of the paintings on the wall.

"The panel will consist of you and three others," he said off handedly.

"Three others?" George questioned. "Who else is on my side of the issue?" George queried.

"Well, we've put together a diverse group that will each bring a unique perspective."

Greenberg spun around, beginning a smile now, trying to hide his nervousness. "There will be a lawyer, a social scientist, a theologian from a well known denomination and of course, you." he announced.

George smelled a rat, so to speak. It was not going to be a debate, it was to be a three against one attack!

"Wait a minute!" George protested.

"Listen, I've got to run" Greenberg interjected as he moved toward the door.

"Well can I bring my friend Charles O'kinyi to help out on my side?" George asked.

"No, no, no! That would be cumbersome" Greenberg replied. "Four is a good number. The Limo will be here for you two hours ahead of time to bring you to the studio. Be ready!" Greenberg waved as he disappeared down the hallway and around the corner.

George questioned within himself, was he ready for such a debate. A three on one?

He'd know for sure in twenty four hours.

CHAPTER 5

"Come in, George" Greenberg said as he entered the studio. "This is my assistant, Ms. Maxwell. She is going to take you to make up and then bring you to the set."

"Make up?" George protested, "I'm a man, I don't need make up."

"Calm down, my man" Greenberg said reassuringly as he placed his hand on George's back and directed him toward the makeup room. "It's for the lights, you understand. Nobody's going to know you're wearing anything. It'll keep any shiny spots from reflecting in the cameras."

George reluctantly moved toward the makeup room.

"Hello, my name is Charles' O'kinyi." The unassuming African introduced himself.

"Oh," Greenberg reacted, having not even noticed that he had come in behind George. "Well, uh, you can sit in the audience gallery" Greenberg said. "Joe" - Greenberg called out to another assistant - "Can you show this gentleman to a seat in the audience?" With that Greenberg was off in another direction.

George was nervous. He went over in his mind the most common attacks and the defenses. He wished Charles had been allowed to be with him, but it was too late to wish for that now.

From there things became a blur. Before he knew there they were -- all four panelists and the host sweltering under the hot studio lights.

"Ladies and gentlemen we have a hot topic tonight. Polygamy, Right or Wrong? Is it something for today or a relic of the past? Before we go on to the debate, let's watch this clip of one of our panelists arriving at the airport with his four wives!"

To George's shock and horror, there on the screen he saw himself and Juanita, Judy, Shawanda and Beatrice exiting the airport and getting in the Limousine as gasps went up from the audience.

"And here is George Meadows," Greenberg announced as all cameras went to George's face and collective boos could be heard from the audience.

"Well, what do you say, George?" Greenberg questioned. "Obviously, you have chosen a lifestyle that most of us would consider quite aberrant."

"Well, uh, I think . . ." George stammered awkwardly, having been caught off guard.

"This is the act of an egomaniac who takes several women to prove his superiority" a voice spoke out.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is our social scientist, Dr. Carl Stoker," Greenberg announced.

"Men like this prey upon needy women and bring them under a type of mind control" Dr. Stoker went on.

"That is so far from the truth!" George reacted. "You don't have a clue what you're talking about! Many men in the Bible had more than one wife. They weren't egomaniacs."

"Speaking of the Bible . . ." another voice spoke up.

"Excuse me, Reverend," Greenberg interrupted, "Let me introduce you to the audience. This is the Reverend Grossman. He is a professor at the famed Highest Saints Seminary. What about it, Dr. Grossman? Is this an acceptable lifestyle according to the Bible?" Greenberg questioned.

"No, it is not. While it is true that there were some like Solomon who practiced this in ancient Israel, God gave a specific commandment not to multiply wives" he stated authoritatively as he crossed his arms over his chest and raised his chin with an air of superiority.

"Yeah, in that same commandment, kings were told not to multiply horses too!" George retorted. "Do you think that God was saying a man could have only one horse?"

"Well, regardless of the spiritual or moral implications, it is illegal in the United States," another voice spoke up. "It's called bigamy!"

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is Attorney Bill Saperstein" Greenberg announced.

George leaned forward and spoke back to the attorney. "Don't you mean it is illegal to register more than one wife with the government?"

"Well, the fact is . . ."

"Hold on!" Greenberg interrupted. "Hold it right there. We have to take a break or a commercial announcement and then we'll come back. You can tell us the legal ramifications of what George is doing."

By the commercial break, George was sweating and hot. An assistant came up to mop his brow.

That was a rough round, he thought. But the show had only begun and there was much more of the hour-long show to go.

CHAPTER 6

"And we're back!" Greenberg announced. "Attorney Saperstein was about to elaborate on the legalities of such an arrangement."

"Yes," the attorney chimed in, "there is a precedent in a case in Utah where a man married and divorced each of five women. In all actuality, their lifestyle showed that he remained married to them all, and in fact the wives openly spoke of him as their husband, not ex husband, but husband.

The district attorney was able to get a ruling that he was in fact married to more than one woman, and he was sentenced to five years in jail." The attorney finished and pursed his lips together, feeling smug that his point could not be refuted.

"Isn't that a sad story," George reacted. "If he merely fornicated with five women, there would have been no charges. Yet because he was willing to care for and love them all, and help raise all the children, he is thrown into jail as a criminal.

It's amazing that our society that permits homosexuals and every other type of aberrant behavior will react in such a way to something that is biblical and good" George responded.

Meanwhile, his three wives and his wife to be were aghast.

"Can you believe it?", Shawanda shouted. "They showed us on television. Who gave them permission to do that?"

"I don't know, but there ought to be something we can do about it," Juanita replied.

"Maybe we can sue them!" Judy chimed in.

"Well, anybody can sue for almost anything" Beatrice joined in sarcastically. "But the question is whether we could win. Quite frankly, I doubt we have much of a case."

"And why not?" Shawanda reacted defiantly as she stood up and put her hands on her hips.

"Because George agreed to go on the show to talk about plural wives in marriage," Beatrice explained patronizingly. "That makes us fair game."

"Us? Us? Fair game?" Shawanda responded, raising her voice. "You're not even completely one of us yet." She jabbed. "And anyway, because George agreed to something doesn't mean we did."

"Shhhhh" Juanita hissed. "The commercial is almost over and they're coming on."

"This type of behavior will set women's rights back by at least 150 years," said the social scientist.

"What?" George reacted. "What nonsense is that?" he questioned. "This type of behavior as you call it allows more women to be loved, more women to have children, and more women more options. They no longer have to marry an alcoholic drunk, a wife abuser, or a drug addict to be loved and cared for."

"But we are all to be equal in the eyes of God!" the theology professor broke in. "How can we all be counted equal if a woman has half a man or a third or fourth of him while the man has two, three or four wives?"

"The Bible doesn't say we were equal" George quipped. "It says 'wives, submit to your own husbands.'"

A collective gasp went up from the audience.

"'There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male nor female in Christ Jesus,' it says in Galatians chapter 3" the professor responded with a superior air.

"But look at the context," George began.

"Sorry, we have to take another break for commercial announcement," the show host broke in. The lights dimmed temporarily on the set.

"You know, that was a bad place to break in. He's quoting that verse out of context" George complained.

"It's okay, it's okay," the host said. "The word is that the ratings are great!" he said excitedly.

"Well I want to come back to that," George demanded.

"Sorry, it's time for audience participation," he replied.

"Five, four, three, two, one" the floor director counted down as they returned from commercial.

George was frustrated. He had been assaulted by three so called experts, and now he had to face the ire of the audience.

CHAPTER 7

"And we're back!" Greenberg announced.

"We've been talking to George Meadows, an admitted polygamist, who has four wives!"

He paused as much as much of the audience booed.

"Now we're going to hear from the members of our audience, who can either ask a question of one of our panelists, or anyone can make a statement of their own opinion of such a radical lifestyle."

As George watched various members of the audience move toward the microphone, he wondered what kind of attacks would come.

The first woman was a middle aged brunette with her hair worn short. She also wore a chic skirted suit. "What method did you use to brainwash these women into thinking they couldn't get a husband all their own?"

"I haven't brainwashed anyone!" George began. "But statistics speak for themselves. Look at almost any church, and you'll find they have almost twice as many women as men. As Christians, they are not supposed to marry non believers. That requires that some of us Christian men marry more than one Christian woman, so that more of those that want a husband and children can have them."

The next to step up was a man who was dressed casually, and in his mid twenties.

"Hey, my friend," he began, "if you can get that many women to get it on with you, more power to you! But why did you choose that fat one?!"

The audience laughed. George prayed for wisdom

"Does God only love pretty women or thin people, or does he love us all? If we as Christians are supposed to be Christ like, isn't it necessary that we stop looking at the outward appearance and look at the heart?"

As Beatrice watched this scene, she grimaced a bit, but then a tear came to her eye as she heard George's answer.

Even Shawanda felt sorry for her, and passed behind where she was standing, and gave her a quick hug before passing on.

The new questioner spoke. "How much Viagra are you using to keep them all happy?" he laughed and the audience chuckled again.

"Marriage is about a lot more than just sex," George answered briefly.

"Are there very many like you here in the United States?" the next speaker asked.

"It is estimated that there are from 40,000 to 60,000 practicing polygamists in the United States" he answered.

There were a few more questions along a similar vein that George muddled through, and then finally the show was over. He wiped his brow, being glad that the ordeal was over, but still he knew that there would be a firestorm to face when he arrived home at his hotel room.

CHAPTER 8

As George and Charles rode back to the hotel, there was a long period of silence. Finally George broke the quite.

"They set me up!" he said.

"Yes the did," Charles responded quietly.

"It wasn't a debate, it was about sound bites and ratings" George lamented.

"Right again," Charles responded.

"They didn't want the truth, they just wanted to hold me up to ridicule"

"Yes, but although that is true, you did quite well under the circumstances." Charles offered.

"I don't like being under the circumstances" George complained.

"Then next time make sure you have more control of them before you agree to do it" Charles advised.

"Next time?" George questioned.

"Sure! You don't think that will be the last time you will have to defend the truth, do you?" Charles asked.

"No," George said shortly, as he drew in a deep breath and blew it out again. "No, I guess not."

"Next time" Charles went on with his thought "get the plan in writing. Know exactly who will be there, how much time you will have, and what rules they intend to use."

"Of course, you're right" George said resolutely.

"Next time . . ." he started the sentence, but then never finished it as he turned to look out the car window.

Next time would have to wait, for now there was a new storm brewing on his home front. George knew it was coming, and he dreaded it.

CHAPTER 9

"Why in GOD's name would you allow them to put our picture on television?" Juanita screamed at him uncharacteristically as George entered the hotel room.

: I didn't allow then.. "George began before being cut off in mid sentence.

" We were there on the TV screen! we all saw ourselves!" Judy threw in.

George rolled his eyes toward the heavens and drew in a deep breath.

Shawanda sat in the easy chair cross the room with her right leg crossed over her left and her arms folded. Her jaw was set firm and her head was lowered a bit, as she looked from underneath her eye lids.

George knew without hearing a word from her that she also was NOT happy!

"Look, Ladies.."George began before Betty came to his side in attempt to reassure

him that she was not against him.

"If Snookums allowed that, I am sure that he had a reason and had our best interests in mind", She said.

The other women all shot darts at her with their eyes.

It was obvious that since no verbal marriage vows had been exchanged, no sexual relations had occurred between George and Betty, that she unlike the others could not afford to get on George's bad side, lest he reconsider marriage to her.

In addition since she had been announced as a wife by the TV commentators, George would have difficulty denying her without denying them all.

Shawanda suddenly stood up and said out loud, what the others were thinking. " Betty why don't you button your lip and Butt out!" she yelled. " This is family business and you are not quite that! At least, not yet!" she stated flatly but firmly.

Betty opened her mouth to respond but first took a quick glance at George, who shook his head side to side, indicating that she should not escalate things.

Betty look at the faces of the other wives before blowing out a long breath and saying, "OK, OK, perhaps I will just go for a walk," With that she pivoted on her heels and grabbed up her purse and was out the door.

"Ok, OK, "George yelled out. "Calm down and I'll try to explain everything."

Each of the ladies took a seat and George began to explain what happened.

"Look, I didn't know that they were going to put you ladies on and I... Before he could finish the sentence the phone rang.

Ring... Ring... Ring.

He hesitated.
Everyone was annoyed!

"Ignore it! Shawanda demanded dryly.

"Yes, ignore it and go on" Juanita chimed in.

George could not ignore ringing phone.

It had something to do with something he had learned in childhood.

"You never know," he mother had told him, "When there might be a blessing on the other end, or it might be an urgent request for help in an emergency."

Ring...

George could not ignore it!

He reached for the phone.

Later some would think it was a mistake for that phone call would be the start of bringing him even more notoriety!

CHAPTER 10

"Hello!", he answered abruptly.

The three wives stood watching him in disbelief and in anger!

"Who is this?" George questioned.

The wives could only hear George's side of the conversation.

"What?!" George exclaimed. "I am NOT interested!"

George glanced up and seeing his wives' anxiousness he tried to hurry to get off the phone.

" No thanks, Good Bye!"

He said, but before he could hang up the caller said something else.

"What?! You are doing What?! Don't bother! Goodbye! " he said again.

"No thanks, I wouldn't do it for twice that much!" George said firmly.

knock ...Knock

Some one was at the door. Judy went to answer it.

" Hey Kitten", Betty said, as she forced her way in.

The ladies were temporarily distracted from listening to George's end of the phone conversation.

Shawanda bit her bottom lip and turned her head.

Juanita spoke up. " Betty, you haven't been gone ten minutes. We haven't finished our conversation yet." She announced with an annoyed expression on her face and exasperation in her voice.

"NO! Even If you pay me twice as much. I am still refusing!" George announced to the caller.

Betty marched over to George, "Twice as much as what?" She questioned.

"Ten grand!" George blurted out hurriedly, hoping she would back off with the answer.

"Ten Grand!?!!" Betty exploded.

"I'll do it for Ten grand!" she said excitedly. Here give me the phone" She demanded as she snatched from George's hand.

Everyone was shocked by her actions, and so much so, that they were all temporarily frozen in their places with their mouths dropped open.

Meanwhile, Betty began talking on the phone.

"OK You'll give me twenty thousand to do what?" she demanded to know.

"Debate?" She asked incredulously.

"How long? she questioned.

"Give me that phone!" George demanded as he recovered from the shock of her actions.

"Two hours?" Betty repeated as she stiff armed George away and turned her body to keep the phone in her hand and out of George's reach.

"He'll do it!" She answered and If he doesn't then I will!"

"Good"

"Bye!" With that Betty hung up the phone.

Shawanda shook her head as she walked toward the door. "Now I have seen it all." she muttered.

˘ Betty, who do you think that you are?" Juanita asked.

"Hold it!" George shouted. " I will deal with this!"

Betty rolled her eyes and puffed her cheeks and blew out a long breath.

"OK, Snookums , if you want to deal with me then do it." she said as she spread her

feet apart and put her hands on her oversized hips. " But do it quickly because the man says he'll be here in less than a half of an hour!"

"What?!" They all exclaimed simultaneously.

CHAPTER 11

A Chorus of voices joined in, in real anger, disbelief and disgust!

"Who does she think she is?" Shawanda said as she threw up her hands in disgust and then let them fall back down again to her sides.

"Why would you do that?" Judy asked, incredulously.

At the same time Juanita marched toward her and said, " Lady, you are way outta line!"

"Wait A minute!" George yelled. Everyone get out!"

All movement stopped. they were all stunned by George's command.

"Everyone but Betty!" he said.

Reluctantly but quietly the three wives moved toward the door and exited.

"Well Snookums," Betty began in her sexy sweet voice.

"QUIET!" George demanded. "Don't say another word!" he said sternly as he looked her directly in the eyes.

Betty was stunned but started to open her mouth only to be stopped by the widening of George's eyes. He raised a finger to reinforce that he wanted no verbal response from her at that moment.

"Sit down!" George ordered.

Betty sat.

"Listen woman, if you want to ever be a wife of mine... He paused. He bit down on his bottom lip and waited to make sure he had her FULL ATTENTION.

"Don't you ever again usurp my authority to make a decision!"

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?" he demanded to know in a voice that was louder than the one he usually used.

" Oh Honey poo.." Betty began as she batted her eyes.

"NO! Just BE QUIET!" George demanded. "I want a YES, or a NO." he paused, "DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

Betty allowed all expression to drop from her face. "Yes." she said quietly.

George stood over her staring into her eyes for a long time. Finally, he blew out a long breath of air and turned from her and marched toward the window.

"Now who is coming and Why?", he threw back over his shoulder.

"The man with the contract. " Betty replied simple.

"Contract? Contract?" George repeated himself.

"Yes, the contract guarantees you the twenty thousand dollars for two hours work!." she said sarcastically. "And..." she added, " If you can't use that type of money, then I can! Give it to me!"

George eyed her but said nothing.

"Well Mr. Meadows, " Betty took a professional tone as she stood up." you are not my husband yet! Therefore you don't get to tell me what I must do!"

" George slowly turned, his brow was furrowed and his mouth dropped open. He had gotten used to a certain amount of insolence with Shawanda, but this Betty was beyond belief.!

" I will debate for the money!" Betty said simply

"You?" George questioned incredulously. "You aren't ready!" You can't do it!" he said.

Betty began to nod her head up and down. " I 'll bet you that for twenty thousand I sure will try!" she said determinedly.

George shook his head as he began to pace back and forth.

Knock..Knock

"What is it? George called out, annoyed by the interruption.

"It is Mr. Peabody." came the response from the other side of the door Mr. Peabody, who is that? George questioned in his mind as he marched toward the door. However, it was not Mr. Peabody that would get his attention but someone else..

CHAPTER 12

George moved quickly to the door and snatched it open.

"Who are you?" he questioned abruptly as he stared down at the diminutive man who was only about 5 feet 5 inches tall weighing approximately 140 lbs. He was dressed in a pin striped Brooks brothers suit, a long sleeved white shirt, and a maroon tie. He wore horned rimmed glasses and smiled as he reached into his shirt pocket and pulled out a check.

"Here it is, Mr. Meadows" he said with great flourish as he brought out the check for \$20,000.

George took the check, looked at it, folded it in half, and then shoved it back in to the man's suit coat breast pocket.

Only then did George notice the tall blonde female standing a few feet behind him.

She also was dressed very professionally. She was wearing a black pin striped skirted suit with a white blouse, her hair draped gently over her shoulders. She stood holding a laptop computer in her left hand, and although she wore a beautiful smile on her face, it faded a bit as she was surprised at George's actions.

George refocused on the man. "What did you say your name was?"

"I am Joseph Peabody," he replied. "I represent T.J. Thornbush College, and . . ."

Before he could go on, George interrupted him. "Well, Mr. Peabody, I'm busy right now, and you'll have to come back in ten minutes." With that, George shut the door in the man's face.

Betty, who had been seated, jumped to her feet again. "Why?" she screamed. "Why would you do that?" she moaned.

"Because," George said as he turned toward her with an angry look on his face, "We must finish some much more important business," he said gruffly.

Then softening his voice, "please sit down, Betty" he said.

Betty started to say something, only to stop when she saw George's eyes widen, indicating that he wanted her to only listen.

"Betty," he said slowly and calmly as he took her hands in his own. "You must learn some very important things . . . IF . . . IF . . ." he said it twice for emphasis "you want to be my wife."

Betty looked him directly in the eyes. She smiled a slight bit. She nodded her head and waited to hear what he had to say.

"I am the head of my family. Now I love my wives, all of them, and if I marry you, I'll have the same Agape, that is, godly love, for you. I won't hit you or abuse you in any way. I will do my best to love you like Christ loved the Church. Do you understand?"

"Yes" she responded simply.

"However, Betty," he went on, "you must promise me to never usurp my authority again. Can you promise me that?"

"O Snookums," she responded as tears came to her eyes. "I'm so sorry, but it seems you are throwing away a chance for thousands of dollars when . . ."

George raised his finger to interrupt her.

"It doesn't matter about the money," he said softly. He paused. "Order in my family is far, far more important than money." He paused again. "Can you understand that?" he asked as he searched deep into her eyes for an answer beyond her verbal response.

"Yes, I understand, George," she said softly but sincerely.

Knock knock knock. It was obvious that Mr. Peabody had come back to the door. George was annoyed, but felt that he was now in a position to deal with that annoyance.

CHAPTER 13

"Ok, Ok, Come in , Mr. Peabody." George said as he opened the door.

"Uh Betty, why" he called out to his hopeful "bride to be", "Why don't you find the other ladies and share with them what you have learned."

For a brief moment Betty was startled. She had hoped that she would be in on he meeting, but it was now obvious that he was not going to allow that.

"Yes, dear," She said sweetly, with a smile as she left the room.

George could not quite tell whether she was sincere or whether there was slight hint of mockery in her tone, but he couldn't worry about that right now, he had to deal with Mr. Peabody.

Betty knocked on Juanita's door. As the door was opened Betty could see that the others were in there as well.

"Here comes Miss Boss lady!" Shawanda called out in mockery of her.

For a moment Betty's eyes blazed. She was about to counter but then thought better of it.

"Ladies, let's sit and talk calmly and quietly." Judy suggested.

"Yes, let's do just that." Betty agreed as she moved to sit in one of the chairs at the table.

"Let me share with you what George and I have agreed on." she said.

Shawanda snapped her head around, "Always have to be in charge ,don't you?" she muttered under her breath.

"What was that honey?" Betty questioned, " I couldn't quite hear you."

"Uh Nothing, HONEY BUN, " Shawanda replied with a forced smile and a sweet tone in her voice, once again mocking her adversary " Please tell us of your agreement." she encouraged, as she sat down in the nearby easy chair.

As Juanita sat in the other chair at the table, Judy sat on the edge of the bed. And all waited to hear what Betty had to say.

Meanwhile George and Mr. Peabody and his dutiful executive assistant sat in George's room.

"... there you have it, Mr. Meadows" Mr. Peabody concluded.

"NO!" George said sternly.

"Why not?" Mr. Peabody asked.

"Listen, I've just been ambushed by that TV Shyster and I don't want that to ever happen again!"

"Ok, I understand, " Mr. Peabody interrupted," " but this would be quite different. This is for college and graduate students. This is for educational purposes and not for entertainment."

As George sat in his easy chair he turned his head away and scratched his chin as he

thought.

As he turned back, the blonde "bombshell" crossed her long beautiful legs. he couldn't miss the sound of her nylons rubbing against each other as her skirt rose a few inches above her knee in the process.

"Mr. Meadows?" Mr. Peabody questioned, trying to get his attention again. George pulled himself away from his distraction.

"Why did you bring her with you?" George asked.

We have the contract in the computer and she will make any changes that you would like or rather that we can agree on."

With that Ms Ward, as George was to find out her name later, uncrossed her legs ,lifted the Notebook computer to the table and prepared to type,

George couldn't help but notice that now her three inch heels were together and flat on the floor and her back was perfectly erect which made her breasts seem to protrude a bit from underneath her suit jacket, as he was seeing her from the profile.

knock.. Knock..

Again, was shaken out of his distraction by the knock at the door.

With irritation in his voice, he responded loudly.

"WHO IS IT?!! "

TO BE CONTINUED

CHAPTER 14

"It's Charles," came the muffled sound behind closed doors. Finally, there was an interruption that George didn't mind. George sprang to his feet and quickly opened the door.

"Come in, my friend," he greeted him with a warm smile and a hug.

Then, turning to face his other visitors, he began the introduction. "Mr. Peabody and Ms. Ward, this is my agent Charles O'kinyi,' he began. Charles snapped his head to the left to look at George, and raised an eyebrow to ask silently what was going on.

"Charles," George continued as he walked his friend toward his guest, "this is Mr. Peabody from . . . What was the name of that College?"

"T.J. Thornbush College," Mr. Peabody filled in. "Yes, that's right," George went on. "And this is his personal assistant, Ms. Ward."

"Now listen, Peabody," George said as he looked down at the shorter man, "if you want me to do any speaking or debating or whatever, you have to get all the details ironed out with my agent here."

"In the meantime, why don't Ms. Ward and I go for a walk."

The blonde bombshell looked surprised, but after looking at Mr. Peabody, and receiving a slight nod from him, she rose gracefully, tilted her head slightly, and smiled. "Why that is a lovely idea," she replied.

Meanwhile, the three wives and the potential wife of George continued to talk in Juanita's room.

"Look, it seems that George thinks he has heard from God that you are to be one of his wives," Juanita said. "But if so, you can't act that way."

"I know, I know," Betty responded defensively, "I told you that Snookums and I have worked all that out!"

"Right," Shawanda said sharply. "And I suppose we are all to believe that you are going to change a lifetime of bad habits just like that!" She concluded with a snap of her finger to emphasize her point.

"Listen," Betty began again, "I think George is a wonderful man, and . . . Well . . . It was just . . . I couldn't bear to see him make a mistake of turning down that much money!" she tried to explain.

"But honey," Judy began to interject, "you can't know much about George yet. Do you know that because of his real estate and stock investments, he is a very wealthy man?"

"Well, I knew he had to be in decent shape, but is he so wealthy he can turn down \$20,000 for two hours work?"

"YES!" Juanita and Judy responded in unison.

Meanwhile, Shawanda walked over to the window and looked out into the courtyard.

"Girls!" she yelled out. "Look at this!" Shawanda commanded.

With that, the other three women rushed to the window to see what it was that had attracted Shawanda's attention. There in the courtyard was a couple strolling along and talking casually.

"Is that who I think it is?" Shawanda asked rhetorically.

They were all shocked to see George strolling along with the blonde bombshell!

CHAPTER 15

Meanwhile, back in George's room, Charles O'kinyi and Mr. Peabody were still negotiating the terms of George's appearing in a debate on the college campus.

So, it is clear then that Mr. Meadows will only agree to debate, IF there is a definite time limit.

Secondly, no more than one rest break which is to come half way through the debate.,

Thirdly. There will be a moderator to help make sure that it does not become a shouting match, but rather a debate of the facts.

Charles paused to reflect on what else he should include, but Mr. Peabody jumped in.

"Yes, we can agree to all those terms" he said, as looked up toward the lap top computer that had been left on the table, but we must have the right to video tape it and put it on DVD's for future students" he said firmly.

Charles rose from his chair and paced toward the door and back before answering.

I don't know about that," , He said slowly, " My friend has just been burned by the Television studio. I am not sure that he will want any cameras around."

Mr. Peabody stood from his chair and extended his hands out with his palms up in a pleading gesture. "Come Now, Mr. O'kinyi" he began, "We're paying twenty thousand dollars! We must have the right to preserve the event!"

"uh, .". Charles began, " Give me moment," he said as he glanced out the window at the sunset.

He then moved back to the easy chair and slumped down and closed his eyes.

"Can you believe this? Shawanda asked as she and the others watched George who was some two floors below in the courtyard, stroll around with the Blonde next to him.

"Who in the world does he think that he is? She exclaimed with desperate exasperation in her voice. "Oh NO! NO! NO!!! I am going to give him a piece of my mind!!!!"
She nearly screamed as she headed for the door.

"WAIT!" Juanita shouted., "Let me go with you." She pleaded.
Shawanda stopped in her tracks and looked back at Juanita. She bit down on her bottom lip and slowly turned back to face the other women., who now all had their backs to the window and were all concentrating on her.

"What is it with white men and blonde women?" she questioned rhetorically in exasperation.

Betty's eyes widened at the remark which she thought bordered on racism.

Judy moved quickly to Shawanda's side and placed her hand on her arm. "Perhaps we should let Juanita handle this" she suggested.

Shawanda snapped her head to the right and frowned at Judy, "Why?" she asked.
" Because you're afraid I might tell that white tramp to find some other man to mess with?"

Juanita took a step toward Shawanda, "Let's not make this a racial issue, it isn't one!" She said firmly.

Shawanda frowned and raised the corners of her mouth into a sneer. "Well, maybe, just maybe, I am feeling a little out numbered!" The African American woman said with disgust.

She raised her finger and pointed at Juanita. "Okay, You handle it, IF you can. Then IF YOU can't, I WILL deal with BOTH of them!", she spat out.

With that she exited the room slamming the door behind her.

Juanita took a deep breath and puffed her cheeks as she blew it out.
"Wish me luck. I've got to try to put out a fire before it burns the whole forest," She muttered reflectively.

As she moved toward the door the other two ladies watched in silence.

CHAPTER 16

"Well, Mr. Meadows, What do you think it is that attracts so many women to you?" Ms Ward asked.

George smiled for a moment and looked down at the grass beneath their feet as they sat together on a stone railing that ran parallel to the walk way of the court yard.

"Well.. uh.." He halted trying to think of something that wouldn't sound too proud or boastful.

"Oh, come on, " Ms Ward encouraged softly, with eyelids now half closed, "Don't be modest. Tell me, what is it?"

George reflected back at how he had acquired each wife and Betty who was not yet a wife.

He could tell that this elegant lady was flirting with him and yet he wasn't sure if that wasn't just her job, to help get him to sign the contract to debate or whether there was a real attraction.

"Aw, I just think, I am a common guy that got lucky." he finally blurted out.

"And HOW lucky!" she said with a chuckle and broad smile.
Mr. Meadows" she began again, before he interrupted her,

"Please, call me George."

"Oh, alright, George" she responded," And you can call me, Robin."

"Robin, that's pretty" George replied.

"Yes, it is my middle name, the one I let friends use." she said as she patted him on his knee.

"Well, I see you have another friend!" Juanita said loudly as she walked up unnoticed.

"Hello," she continued as she extended her hand to the other female. "I am Juanita, his first wife. Will you be joining our harem", she asked sarcastically.?

Robin blushed and stood up awkwardly. "well,.. I .. uh. How do you do?" she sputtered out. "uh ..no., I.. uh I was just uh.. interviewing your husband" she said

embarrassed at being discovered and feeling guilty about the flirtations.

"Oh, I see," Juanita responded. "You don't look like the type of woman that could put up with your husband being in bed with you, maybe once a week."

"Juanita!" George called out her name to stop her as he grabbed her by the arm.

"Yes, dear?" she replied, as she looked up lovingly at him.

George's eyes blazed. He was embarrassed by her words and actions and yet didn't want to make more of a scene.

"Uh ..Perhaps, I had better rejoin Mr. Peabody and see if he has something for me to type." Robin said as she turned and walked away hurriedly.

"What was that all about?" George questioned after Robin was out of hearing range.

"Why, what dear?" Juanita asked innocently.

"You know what!" George spat out.

"Well, if you really want to know.." Juanita began as she stepped back and spread her feet apart and put her hands on her hips, " I am trying to keep you from losing Shawanda!"

"What?!" George exclaimed.

"Yeah, she could see you from the window. You know she has a shorter fuse than some of us. She is about two inches from leaving your sorry self!"

"Oh boy!" George said as he exhaled a long breath and mopped his brow with his left hand. With that he flopped back down on the concrete wall.

"Oh boy, is right!" Juanita went on as she stood above him. " Don't you have enough problems with all the upsets about being on the TV and with Betty trying to be your new mother ?" She paused and then went on, "Why would you start some romance with ANOTHER woman?! WHY???" her voice had gradually increased in volume until she was almost at a scream's pitch.

"Look Honey, things just happen!" he began, "I have talked to Betty and.." before he could finish his statement, Juanita interrupted him. "Well you had better talk to Shawanda!"

It was true that Shawanda was not pleased but neither would George be when he found out her method of retaliation!

CHAPTER 17

"Oh , I am glad that you are back, Mr. Peabody said to Robin as she entered and Charles stepped aside after opening the door.

Although she had tried to compose herself, she was still red in the cheeks from blushing with embarrassment.

Mr. Peabody noticed but said nothing about it. " You are just in time to type the final changes needed in the contract", Mr. Peabody said.

"Yes, I think that we have it." Charles said. " It will be a two hour debate with a ten minute break. There will be a moderator and George will be given some background on his ONE opponent ahead of time. You may video tape it but it is not to be used for Television and you will issue TWO checks. One is to Mr. Charles Meadows for twenty thousand and the other to The South Nyanza Kenyan Orphans Fund.

Yes, yes, I think we have it all down . " Mr. Peabody replied.

"I'll have a printed copy faxed to the hotel office tonight. He can sign both copies and return one to me tomorrow." Mr. Peabody concluded eagerly.

"Yes, of course I will have to get Mr. Meadows approval of our terms, but if he agrees then we have a deal. We will get the signed copy back to you within three business days."

Mr. Peabody was taken aback. He had hoped to have the entire deal signed by the end of that day.

"Surely", Charles said, as he smiled broadly showing his white teeth which contrasted with his dark skin, "You would NOT expect him to agree without some time to think and pray about it would you?" he asked.

Mr. Peabody wrinkled his nose and then pressed his lips together before replying, " Oh Alright!, If it has to be that way then it has to be" he said, resigning himself to waiting longer than he expected.

In short order Robin had put the finishing touches on the contract in the lap top computer and closed it.

As they exited they almost bumped into George who was just now returning to his room.

"We hope to see you in a month or so for the big debate" Mr. Peabody called out to

him as he went on his way.

"So you were able to work out a deal?" George asked his friend Charles.,

"Perhaps," Charles replied. "He'll fax some copies and you and I can go over them and see if you agree."

"Hey, if you worked it out, I am sure it will be OK." George replied to his friend showing the degree of confidence that he had in him.

"George, I three in an extra five thousand for the orphans fund in South Nyanza," Charles confided.

"And he still went for it?" George asked. "Great!" he added without waiting for a response.

George sat on the edge of the bed for a moment before leaning back and covering his eyes with his arm. " friend, I have got problems" he revealed.

"Yes, it seems that you have been having a lot of those lately." he chuckled.

" Hey, that is not funny!" George said sharply as he raised his arm enough to see Charles out of one eye. Charles was sitting on one of the chairs near the table that was near the foot of the bed. He now remained quiet.

"Apparently, the ladies saw me from their window while I was with Robin, that beautiful blonde, in the courtyard." George revealed.

Juanita came out and embarrassed the poor girl and then told me that Shawanda is on the verge of leaving me.!" he confided.

"What am I going to tell her now. I never realized that having several wives would be so complicated!"

He paused.

"What should I do?" he asked his friend Charles.

Ok, George, listen," Charles, who was ten years senior to George, began.

"You must remember that you are married to American women. Yes, they have broken tradition and involved themselves in a plural wives marriage with you, but you must remember that they still have a great amount of American indoctrination!"

" They have been taught that they are equal to men and have the same rights as men. You know as well as I, if not better, that every source of information, whether it be from

the government or education or the media or the religious institutions constantly reinforce these concepts."

He paused to let that sink in and then continued, "Women in America are trained to think that they have right to be jealous." he paused again..

"So, although they may intellectually understand that they shouldn't be jealous, those carnal feelings will still emerge from time to time. You, my friend, must learn to be wise as a serpent but harmless as a dove."

"Harmless as doves" George repeated the last portion of the scripture that came from the book of Matthew in the Bible.

Charles continued, "You have a mix of personalities that will have to be meshed into one family, to become a cohesive unit. IF you add wives too quickly, you will destroy the whole thing!"

"But", George began his protest, "I wasn't marrying the lady, I was just talking to her!"

"But! " Charles countered, "They know that you add wives when you please and they probably don't think that their feelings are being considered!"

"Yeah, you are probably right" George admitted reluctantly.

"But you know..."

He was cut off in mid-sentence as the door flew open and Judy and Juanita rushed in without knocking!

"SHE'S GONE!!!" Judy cried out.

"WHO??" George demanded,

Shawanda!" Juanita answered.

"Gone where? George asked sensing the urgency in their voices.

"She left a note!", Judy began tearfully.

"She's gone back to Dallas!"

The End Of Part One

To be continued

PART 2

Chapter 17

"Gone to Dallas!?" George repeated not quite willing to believe his ears.
"Why?" he asked weakly not really wanting or expecting an answer.

His eyes glazed over for a moment as he sat frozen from such horrible news. He closed then and then reopened them with fire in his eyes., A slow snarl appeared on his face as one side of his mouth curled upward and his brow furrowed.

His knuckles grew whiter as he gripped the arms of the chair in which he was sitting. His imagination ran wild as he envisioned Shawanda in the arms of her would be African American suitor from Dallas!

The suddenly he sprang to his feet and bolted toward the door.

"Wait!" his friend Charles cried out.

"Wait for what?" he retorted as he glanced back his friend while still moving toward the door.

Just as George grabbed the hotel door knob, his friend Charles caught up to him and put a reassuring hand on his buddy's shoulder.

"Let's Pray." Charles said simply.

"PRAY?!" George echoed as he turned his head to look directly into the eyes of his mentor.

"Yes,... Look.." Charles went on. "How will you catch up to her?" he paused and then continued. "And even If you do, what will you say that will change her mind?"

"She's my wife!!! " George spat out angrily. "Now she is running to that Dallas fella!" He lamented.

"Yes, perhaps" Charles replied calmly, " But if you are successful in stopping her this time, what about the next time? You can't keep her caged in like some wild animal! She has got to want to stay with you!"

George looked down at the floor. His other wives stood silently not knowing what to say and therefore saying nothing.

He bit down on his bottom lip and then turned his head from side to side before looking up at Charles again.

George drew in a deep breath and let it out before responding. "Okay! Let's pray!"

Charles fell to his knees and then George and the others followed suit.

"Oh God," Charles began, "Our precious Heavenly father, you know us and you know our hearts. You know George's situation and you know Shawanda's heart. Father we would ask that YOU show Shawanda what she should do. Help her to live up vow of being faithful wife to my brother, George." he paused and George jumped in.

"Lord,.. I ..uh.. know I haven't always made the wisest decisions. I ask for your forgiveness where I have been wrong. Lord you know that I love Shawanda as I do each of my wives. Please Lord, change her mind and send her back to me." he took a deep breath which gave Juanita a chance to join in.

" Lord, we have all made our share of mistakes at one time or another. We have each been moved more by the flesh than by your spirit. weak forgiveness for that, Lord." She paused and then continued. "My husband, George here is good man at least most of the time. Lord, you know it would break his heart for Shawanda to leave and marry someone else. Please, lord Jesus, don't let that happen. Amen"

They all opened their eyes and gradually moved to their feet.

"I need to be alone for a while.", George said. " Please excuse me while I go for a walk."

George felt a void in the pit of his stomach. He walked down the hall and then instead of taking the elevator he took the stairs to the next floor and walked the length of the hall.

He paced back and forth and finally found himself walk past the front desk and then out the door of the hotel

As he did, he noticed a cab pull up and stopping several yards in front of him. Out stepped Shawanda, pulling her suitcase behind her.

His eyes lit up! "Shawanda!" he called out to her as he ran towards her. Shawanda glanced up, as her name was called. Seeing George rushing toward her, she dropped her bag and flung herself into his arms.

They kissed deeply.

The moment was precious, exhilarating, stimulating and rejuvenating. yet it would not last long and would be in stark contrast to the moment that followed.

CHAPTER 18

Suddenly she pushed him away. "Wait a minute!" She shouted as she took two steps back and then began to circle him.

"You big Lunk head!" she shouted. "I.. I don't know why I even came back!" she relented as she stopped and spread her feet a shoulder's width apart and put her hands on her hips.

George grinned like a Cheshire cat and muttered, "I do" as he thought about the prayer that they had prayed

Shawanda extended her arm and held up one finger and began to wave it side to side as she talked. "You, Mister," she began as she frowned and then raised her left eyebrow, "You are a real scoundrel!"

She put her hand back on her hip and pulled her chin back, " And what is this with the blonde chick?"

George bit the inside of his jaw with his teeth to wipe the smile off of his face. He figured that he had better treat this seriously, If he was to have any chance at saving his relationship.

"Hey, she was just asking some questions." he said innocently with widened eyes.

"Oh right!" Shawanda spat out. " And you expect me to believe that!?"

"Well... uh.." George stuttered, as he tried to figure out the best thing to say, but Shawanda jumped in again.

"You can't handle what you've got!" she snorted, "And you gonna try to add to it?!" she asked incredulously and yet rhetorically.

"Listen, let's go inside." George responded as he tried to calm her down. He had noticed that several people nearby had stopped to watch this verbal altercation.

"Oh let's go inside now, huh?" Shawanda poured it on. "You were not thinking of being out of the public eye when you were marching around with Ms Blondie blonde, were you?"

George winced. He knew Shawanda could pour on sarcasm if and when she so wanted. If he hadn't believed that he deserved some of this he would not have let it go on so long. Although it was embarrassing to him, he felt she needed to air her grievances. She deserves that much therapeutic help, after the heel I have been in her eyes, he thought.

"Look, Shawanda my dear, " he finally said, " How about you and I go for a walk by the ocean on the boardwalk." he offered.

Shawanda paused and cocked her head to the side and asked, "JUST you and me?" She raised her left eyebrow again.

Yes, JUST YOU and me. " George reassured her.

"OK". She said slowly, "Let me go and change and I will be right back."

George watched the sway of her hips as she walked briskly away and toward the hotel lobby, not knowing that the boardwalk would not be the romantic adventure that he had planned but rather another time to defend his beliefs.

CHAPTER 19

Shawanda changed from the skirted suit and hose and heels to jeans and a sweater and tennis shoes.

Her demeanor had changed when she reappeared and George was pleased to have the opportunity to "mend the fence", so to speak.

After haling a cab they were off to the ocean and the boardwalk near its edge.

As they walked, George held her around the shoulders and Shawanda placed her arm around his waist.

The sky was dark and the stars were beginning to come out and twinkle in the night sky as the clouds began to clear away. They passed several other couples who were also walking arm in arm or with hands around their partners waists, as they were.

The moon was nearly full and the evening was one which many would describe as romantic. Nevertheless, the peace and calm and serenity would soon be broken as two women coming from the opposite direction saw George.

"Hey, aren't you the guy that was on T.V.?", one cried out.

"Oh yeah," the other lady responded. "He is the bigamist!" she spat out.

"And you" The taller woman said as she glanced down at Shawanda , "You must be one the wives!"

Shawanda's eyes narrowed., "And what of it?" Shawanda demanded to know as she stepped forward toward the intruder.

George pulled her back, "Look ladies it has been a long day and I don't want to get

into it!" he said apologetically.

"Why on earth would you put up with a man that you can't have exclusively as your own?" The shorter one asked as she directed her attention toward Shawanda.

"Oh no, you didn't!" Shawanda started.

"Dear, let me handle this." , George begged.

"DEAR, she shot back at him too sweetly, indicating her sarcasm. "This is my fight, I will handle it!" she insisted.

George stepped back and smiled within himself. These poor ladies had no idea into what they had gotten themselves.

"Do you know me?" Shawanda demanded to know. "NO! you don't!" she answered her own question without waiting for an answer.

"Do you know what he has done for me?" She questioned. "NO! You don't!" she answered herself again.

"Well.. I never.." the shorter one huffed.

"You're right! " Shawanda jumped in, " You never should have gotten into my business!" she said as she raised her voice.

"We'll just be going." The taller woman who was in her mid forties suggested as she took a step to move away.

Shawanda dashed in front of her to block her path.

"Where is your wedding ring?" Shawanda asked seeing that neither woman wore one.

"What?" she asked as she leaned her head forward and tilted it to the side, turning her ear towards them.

"Neither one of you could find a good man that wanted you, huh?" Shawanda dug at them.

George spoke up, "Honey, that is not nice!"

"Not nice?!" she repeated as she whirled around to face George. "Was it nice of them to interrupt our walk?" she questioned.

The women once again began to move away and again Shawanda quickly moved to block their path like a cat playing with a couple of mice.

"Don't you know that it is sinful behavior!" The taller woman threw out at her.

"Sinful?" Shawanda mocked, "OK, IF it is sinful then you tell me what scripture says that it is!" She opened the palms of her hands towards them and then paused.

"IS there one?" She queried. She paused again. " I am waiting!" she said sarcastically.

"Can you quote 1st Hesitations 3;6, where it says "thou shalt not marry a man who already has a wife?" Shawanda mocked them hoping that they knew that there was NO book of 1st Hesitations in the Bible.

The women glanced at each other realizing that they had been trapped and that neither of them could think of a scripture that prohibited a man from having more than one wife.

"NO!" Shawanda went on, "Because there is no book of 1st Hesitations but you know that , don't you?"

"Yes, we know that." The shorter one sighed.

"But everyone knows that it is wrong!" the taller of the two added.

"EVERYONE KNOWS?" Shawanda said continuing her mocking tone of voice. "Uh.. let me see. she paused, "How do they know?"

"I will tell you" she went on without waiting for an answer. "They know because it is their culture! It is NOT scripture ! It IS culture!" she paused again and narrowed her eyes. "It is Romanized Western Culture!"

George stood back with his arms folded amused by the whole scene. He laughed within himself, as he thought, "Look at my woman go!"

He secretly enjoyed the encounter, but he was soon to face a dilemma that would be no laughing matter.

CHAPTER 20

The debate on the college campus was set for two weeks away. George wanted to be well prepared. His mentor Charles O'kinyi drilled him daily on the most common

arguments that were used in an attempt to refute polygamy.

On some nights his wives would pose as questioners from the audience, since the format on which they had agreed also included a time for the audience to ask questions.

George was determined to be well prepared and went to the internet and to the public library for access to historical documents.

In the mean time, he had to still consider the matter of Betty. Both Betty and Shawanda had been on their best behavior with neither of them seeking to distract him as he prepared for 'The Great Debate' as they were now calling it.

Even so, two evenings before the face off, Betty couldn't resist going to George with his own brand of temptation.

As George sat in the easy chair in the hotel room, Betty came up behind him and began to massage his shoulders. "AAAHH, that feels good he said as he felt her fingers massaging the tightened muscles in his neck and shoulders.

Betty leaned forward placing her breasts against him and whispered into his ear, "If you would go ahead and marry me now, I would give you a full body massage and not miss an inch!"

George involuntarily smiled at the thought, as he pictured what she meant.

"Yeah, I know that.." he hesitated, "I..uh.. think that I need to get this debate out of the way so that I can really pray and see what would be best for us all."

"Oh, Snookums", she cooed, "You need to relax." the door opened as she was finishing her statement. "I could relax you like nobody else could" she bragged.

Shawanda having heard the statement stepped in the room and glanced at Betty.

Betty, not expecting her, involuntarily took a deep breath. She had never been afraid of matching wits with Shawanda but she also did not want to chance aggravating George.

Oh, So you're going to be the master love maker, huh?" Shawanda started with a sly smirk on her face.

Betty bit down on her bottom lip she tried not to retaliate but she couldn't help herself. "Well, I know this" she replied, "A man just like a woman needs a slow hand and an easy touch.!"

"Oh" Shawanda began her response as she moved sideways stepping and crossing her feet with her arms out to the side and her palms up facing the ceiling. "You.. Who..Uh.." she hesitated on purpose, as she rolled her eyes toward the ceiling, "who has

never had sex before, are going to claim to be the best lover he has ever had? she concluded incredulously.

"Ladies!" George interjected sternly,

"Well, I know that I will be more concerned with my man's pleasure than my own!" Betty fired back.

Shawanda glanced at George for a moment, questioning with her eyes, to see if George had revealed anything about their times of intimacy.

"Wait a minute!" George said strongly as he stood up. " Betty, we have a rule. We do no talk about our sex lives! What I do with each wife is completely private and CONFIDENTIAL and NO ONE and I mean NO ONE shares anything with anyone else!"

He paused and looked Betty directly in the eyes." IS THAT CLEAR?!" he demanded to know.

Ok, ok Snookums" Betty said in a softened tone as she swung her hips back and forth taking several steps to reach him.

"You set the rules, Hon," she said as she gently placed her hand on his chest.

Shawanda rolled her eyes again as she watched Betty's move and then decided to make a move of her own. Coming up behind George she placed her arms around his waist and placed her body and the side of he face against his back. She then closed her eyes and made a quick decision. " Muscles," she said, as she let go and moved to his side. she then tiptoed and kissed him on the cheek. "If you want to add Betty as a wife, you can. It is Ok, with me." She then quickly pivoted and began to move toward the door.

Betty, resented the tactic and couldn't help but o respond verbally once again.

"Did he need you permission, Dear?" she questioned.

Shawanda had reached the door and opened it. "No, he didn't. " she said cryptically, "Even so, he'll feel better about it now that he knows that I don't care." with that she exited and closed the door before Betty could say another word.

George bit down on his bottom lip he didn't like Shawanda saying what she did, even though it was true.

He took Betty by the shoulders and looked her in the eyes. "After the debate!" he said, "I will make a final decision , after he debate!"

George realized it was no longer his decision but God's. Even so, he was determined to seek God for the right answer, AFTER THE DEBATE.

CHAPTER 21

The evening of the debate finally arrived. Juanita and Judy decided to wear wigs and sunglasses as a disguise and to arrive at different times. Hopefully, this way no one would recognize them as two off George's wives.

Shawanda and Betty, however, went as they were without disguising themselves in any way.

George stood backstage, peeping through the curtain periodically, watching the small auditorium, that seated a little more than a thousand persons, fill to capacity.

There were two lecterns on stage and a table on the floor in front of them where it was planned for the moderator to sit.

He took a deep breath, as he glanced at his watch. It was fifteen minutes before start time. His stomach grew queasy and there was a large lump in his throat. He paced back and forth and then peeped through the curtain again. Finally, he spotted his good friend Charles O'kinyi seated near the aisle in the center row.

George drew a deep breath as he turned away and reflected back a few years. Isn't it strange, he thought, how contact with one person can mushroom to touch the lives of many.

Like a pebble thrown into a lake, the ensuing ripples reach far and wide.

"If, If" he half spoke to himself out loud, "If I can persuade some people here, How many other lives will be affected?".

George glanced down at his watch again and then at his dress shoes and his navy blue suit, which he had chosen purposely. Somewhere he had heard that people wearing dark suits had greater credibility.

Taking his handkerchief out of his pocket he wiped the sweat from his brow and then looked down at his watch again.

Seven minutes remaining.

Just several years ago he was a monogamously married man with no concept that he would ever be married to three women at the same time, while he considered marrying a fourth.

"Wow!" he whispered to himself, " One never really knows what the future will

bring."

George walked to the water fountain backstage and took a drink.

This time he was going up against an intellectual. This time there would be a set time to respond. This time, he hoped he was up to the challenge!

CHAPTER 22

"Ladies and gentlemen" the announcer began, "We welcome you to the main event of the night!" Amazing, George thought to himself realizing that the announcer was doing a takeoff of a boxing style promotion. George was a little surprised at the antics and yet he had to realize that he was being introduced by a young college student.

"In this corner" the mocking announcer went on and then chuckled, "UH.. I mean on this side of the stage we have the challenger, Mr. George Meadows.

"BOOO -BOO" much of the crowd shouted out.

Thinking that this was supposed to be an intellectual crowd, George was disappointed. It seemed that the crowd had already chosen sides and they certainly weren't on his.

"Mr. Meadows has four wives!" He shouted, "Believe or not!" the announcer paused. "And he is here to try to convince us that there is nothing wrong with that!"

George stood nervously behind the lectern, wishing they would hurry up, so he could get on with the debate.

"In the other corner.." he chuckled again, obviously amused by his ability to sound like a boxing ring announcer. " Or rather on the other side we have our very own anthropology professor, Dr. C. Gordon Stewart.

George looked across at his opponent who was a man in his mid forties wearing a mustache and a goatee. He had a trace of gray hair on the sides of his head and he wore a gray wool suit. He also held a pipe in his hand which he occasionally stuck in his mouth. George surmised that it was more of prop than anything else since there were "No Smoking" signs up all over the building.

"Ladies and Gentlemen , it has been determined ahead of time by the toss of coin that Dr. Steward will begin first with an opening statement."

" To my fellow faculty, students and friends, it is my pleasure to address this aberrant throw back to a primitive society. Polygamy or more accurately Polygyny , which as should know, means one man with more than one wife. is not only repulsive to the sensibilities of modern mankind, it is an affront to women's rights and all the forward progress made by women in an enlightened age!"

His speech was interrupted by thunderous applause.

"Surely" , he continued, " No thinking man or woman can seriously consider such practices as viable, enviable or even something to be tolerated in the twenty first century!"

More applause followed his second section of his introductory statement.

"One thing the United States has championed not only here but around the world is EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS!" he said raising his voice at the end of the sentence for emphasis. Looking across at George and then back at the audience, he continued once again.

"A world in which a man can have several women but in which a woman can only have on man is inherently unequal and therefore unfair! It would be unfair to all of the feminine gender."

More applause followed.

Leaning into the lectern with his right elbow and half turning toward George, he raised his left eyebrow, as if to say, "Try that on for a start."

Realizing that it was his turn, George cleared his throat.,

"Uh..Hum.. well. He began, "I am not here to talk about the rights of all people. I am not here to talk about equality of the sexes. I AM here to talk about LOVE and COMPASSION and Doing the right thing!"

A low rumble went through the audience coupled with quizzical expressions on many faces, as they waited for George to explain himself further.

" I serve The Lord, Jesus Christ!", He went on, "He says I must love The lord my God with all my heart and all my soul and with all my mind and with all my strength." he paused a moment and then continued, "he says I MUST LOVE my neighbor as myself. He paused again as the audience quieted.

He had already deviated from his planned opening statement and decided that he might as well go on speaking extemporaneously as The Holy spirit would lead him. "Help me Lord", he prayed silently.

"Statistically, we know that there are more women than the are men. Amongst Christian people this is even more true. In a "Monogamy Only" society many of these women will be doomed to never having a husband!" He paused again to let that sink in.

"Or, he went on, " OR they will try to steal a husband from another woman! Then he leaves the first woman to become her husband. This leads to the break up of homes, divorce, sexual immorality, prostitution and homosexuality!"

"BOOO ... Boo came the response from a few in the audience.

"Sit down, you homophobe!" someone in the audience called out.

"George forged on, "Isn't it obvious that what we have is NOT working, when in our culture over 50% of the marriages end in divorce?!"

I won't say that polygyny will solve all of societies ills, but it will go a long way in helping solve some of the problems!

George stopped. There was some light applause from a few in the audience but most remained silent.

Only ten minutes had passed and there was another hour and fifty minutes to go, minus the ten minute break in the middle.

George noticed that there were several in the audience that were videotaping the event. That is Okay, he thought, at least it won't be on television or be publicly broadcast.

How wrong he was!

"Although it is not my purpose to argue religion here . . ." his opponent began with a smirk " . . . but since my worthy adversary has raised the issue, it has been the hallmark of Christian civilization to believe in not only monogamy but the gradual raising up of women to be the equals of men.

This is something in which we lead the world! It is something to which every society and culture should aspire!"

"IF," he went on, "IF A woman is required to be faithful to only one man then certainly the man should be required to be faithful to only one woman! This IS equality. This is monogamy."

"Does not your own Christian Bible say that God is no respecter of persons? Does it not go on to also say that there is neither Jew nor Greek neither bond nor free, neither male or female in Christ? Of what could that speak other than equality. equality in marriage is monogamy!"

He paused to let his point sink in before continuing. "How could anyone come to any other conclusion?"

"My opponent has spoken of an imbalance in the numbers between men and women. But let us consider that there will always be an imbalance in society. Some are born rich. Others are born poor. Some are born with a high I.Q. Others are born with lesser natural intelligence."

Polygamy will not solve all of the imbalances in life! Instead, it would relegate a number of women to virtual slavery!" He pounded his fist on the lectern as finished that statement to emphasize the gravity of it.

"I tell you that it would be a backward step toward the oppression of women as it was centuries ago. It is time that we look forward and demand that we as a people and a society and a nation look forward and upward as the guiding light to all other nations!"

George squirmed a little, he could see that his opponent was a skilled debater. He was playing to the sentiments of the women's liberation movement and was therefore almost guaranteed to have the support of many of the females in the audience.

"The professor continued once more, " We can not afford to go back to primitive mankind's struggle with hunger and lack of necessities and excess children!

We MUST move forward and not backward!" he proclaimed.

George wrote notes as fast as he could. How would he be able to counter all the points the professor was making, he wondered.

The professor continued on in the same vein for a while and then finally it was George's turn to speak.

Silently, he asked for wisdom from God.

Grabbing the lectern with both hands and licking his lips for a moment, he then looked at the audience and boldly opened his mouth while praying that The Lord would fill it with the word that he needed.

"In this audience, I suspect that we have people with various beliefs and backgrounds. he began, " Some of you may be Athiests, some are probably Roman Catholics others are protestants and there are probably some Jews and some Moslems and Mormons as well as few others that are in non of the other categories.

The only way you will be able to understand what am saying is, if you are willing to step inside the belief structure that I have.'

He paused and then continued, "We as Christians take the Bible to be our plum line. Everything that society says or does is to be placed long side this." He held up his Bible. "This Bible, that we believe to be the word of God, is that by which we are to live. ."

I am not against equal pay for equal work! he said with a slight sneer in his face as he turned to the professor., "However," he went on, "I do believe that man has a special position apointred by God as the head of the home."

"Can a man be head of his home the way that our society is presently functioning?" Let me address the male faculty members. statistically at half of you have been divorced. as he looked around he could tell that he had hit a nerve and a number of men had been though that experience.

"Many of you did not want a divorce, but your wives were not happy and they got it anyway. In the process you lost half of everything that you owned. You lost the opportunity to see your children every day, and you lost a good portion of your future income that is now being paid out in child support and alimony. All this, even though you did not want the divorce! Is that right?"

There were a number that nodded in agreement, and a few that even said out loud, "You got that right!"

"Now there are others of you that got divorced because you loved another woman. If you were honest, you'd say that you would rather have continued to keep and love the mother of your children while you also loved the other woman. BUT! . . ." he said loudly, and then, pouring his dramatic effort into it, he said "Our society does not allow

for that!" He pounded his fist on the lecturn.

He paused, smiled, and looked around. "But my Bible does, because God does allow for that!"

Several women booed George, but he could see that there were men in the audience who agreed with him. A rumbling went through the audience.

"Okay, okay, let me talk to the women for a minute. How many of you students have older female relatives or friends who have never gotten married? Maybe they wanted to at some point, but they weren't the prettiest or shapeliest and they never got chosen. They never had children. Some try to cover the pain, but it's still there, and some know it."

George could see in the faces of many that they knew women like that.

"There are others in this audience whose mothers were left and abandoned by fathers who fell for prettier or women. Your father dealt treacherously with your mother. The Bible condemns that in no uncertain terms. One is not to divorce the wife of his youth in order to marry another woman. But some follow our society's rules rather than the word of God. Your dad thought 'I can't have both' so he chose one. Had he known the truth he would have kept them both. Had your mother known the truth rather than being forced into society's false mold, she may have rather welcomed the other woman as a sister wife than face old age in loneliness and bitterness."

George could see now that he had struck a nerve. Some of the women were even silently crying.

"When society's institutions are failing, it's time to look for a change. Marriage in the Western World is failing. If we look to the Bible, we see that it has the answers. Some of you that are Jewish know that many of the Patriarchs had two or more wives. You that are Moslem know that your religion allows up to four wives. Those of you that are Christian who believe the word of God and believe that it has the answer for us must believe that polygamy is a part of the answer."

There was a smattering of applause from several different locations throughout the auditorium. George assumed that his wives had started it, but it was more than just them.

His time was up, and his opponent was chomping at the bit, waiting for his chance to counter his arguments!

CHAPTER 24

"Let me point out to my misguided opponent" the professor began his rebuttal., " That not many of the people here, are caught up in all the religious mumbo jumbo of which he speaks."

Booo's came from various parts of the audience.

Steve was surprised but pleased that there were those that did not like their relationship with God being called religious mumbo jumbo.

The professor looked up wide eyed, shocked that there would be any booing of him;

"I..Uh.." he stuttered briefly, obviously having lost his train of thought. "Uh.. We can't go back to the primitive societies of centuries ago..", he proclaimed, "Civilization has advanced by leaps and bounds over what it was in so called Biblical times". he paused and looked at George. "Are you asking us to go back to that condition?" he asked rhetorically raising his voice triumphantly.

"In primitive societies the women were dependent upon the men for provision and protection. Today our women are as educated as the men! They can work any job or do any occupation or profession that the men can."

"Today modern man no longer believes in keeping women barefoot and pregnant so that they are dependent.

There was some light applause after that statement.

Encouraged by the response from the audience the professor forged on." When you force a woman to be one of many wives you place her in a position of inequality. That which is not equal is not fair! One thing this country is based on is fairness. That is fairness, for all its citizens."

"You on the other hand, are promoting a lifestyle that is greatly unfair and dare I say it is therefore Un-American!!! He pounded fist on the lectern once again.

There as more applause and it was louder this time.

George became concerned. What could he say that could counter this attack?

It was George's turn again. This would be the last chance before they took a break. Some of the audience can relate to some of the things I am saying, he thought but others are certainly on the professor's side.

"Oh Lord, " he prayed under his breath, "Please give me wisdom to win over more of the people.

"You keep talking about primitive societies " he charged as he began speaking aloud, "the thing that we must remember is because a group of people do not have the means, money and mechanisms of Western society does not make them primitive!" he stated boldly.

The Moslems believe in the Koran and Allah, who they say is the Creator, of the universe. They also believe a man can have at least four wives. Are you calling the Creator primitive? Are you calling those that believe in the Koran primitive?

The Jews believe that the Creator is Jehovah, or Yahweh. Their book is the Torah. It gives rules on having more than one wife. Are you saying that their Creator is primitive?

The Christians believe in the God of Abraham and are grafted into the Church through Jesus Christ. They therefore also have a Jewish heritage. In addition, Jesus depicts Himself as the Bridegroom coming back to marry five wise virgins. Are you saying that Jesus is primitive?"

George could see that the professor was rattled. There had to be Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the audience as well as a few atheists. George had cleverly put the three religious groups together, giving him an advantage.

George went on. "No, professor," he wagged his finger back and forth as he had seen Shawanda do many times, "there is a major difference between primitive tools and primitive people.

"I would contend to you, dear professor, and to our audience here, that a God who can place a billion billion stars in the sky, and a God who can write the encyclopedia of your makeup in the nucleus of a single cell is far from primitive!"

"No, He is not primitive, He is far, far more advanced than any of us or all of us together! If that great God gives us instructions on life, we ought to pay a lot more attention to that book of instructions than to anything else."

George paused. He looked around at the audience. They had grown quite. He had their attention.

"You know, professor, most people can't even program their VCR's. Do you know why? Because they don't want to take the time to read the instructions and follow them. When a society is failing, do you know why it is?" he asked rhetorically. "It is because that society failed to read the instructions of the Creator."

"IF they did!" he paused again.

"If they did read it, they would know what the fundamentalist Mormons know. They would know what the Muslims know. They would know what the Jews know. They would know what the Christians who study their Bibles know." He paused again.

"It is perfectly all right for a man to have several wives, and it is perfectly okay for a woman to marry a married man."

He stopped. There was applause. Not thunderous, but much more than there had been previously.

The break had come. George sighed with relief. The relief would be short-lived, for the professor was prepared to come back with a blistering attack.

CHAPTER 26

"My dear Mr. Meadows here believes in something he can't see, can't feel, can't taste, can't hear or smell," the professor began mockingly. "Not only does he believe in this dreamed up fantasy called God, but he believes that God has written instructions to live by in a book. Amazing! Simply amazing!"

"Boo, boo . . ."

"Yeah . . ."

"Boo . . ."

There were a few scattered boos in the audience mixed with a few cheers.

"If this book is supposed to be holy and perfect, may I ask why are there so many contradictions?" said the professor.

"Why does one religious holy book differ from another so called holy book?"

"How can you suggest to reasonably intelligent people that some ancient writing gives you the validity to violate the norms of modern society?"

George was again writing furiously, trying to keep up with all the questions that were being thrown at him, and at the same time praying that he would be able to answer

them.

The debate had taken an entirely different direction than George had expected. He had expected it to be talking more about the patriarchs and history, but instead he was embroiled in a confrontation over the existence of God and the Bible being God's word.

He had found empathetic hearers on many of his points, but he also realized that the professor was good at pouring water on his fire and offering disdain with an air of superiority that was influencing these young adults.

George was suddenly awakened from his thoughts when he heard . . .

"Besides that, you're breaking the law! Any good citizen will obey the law of the state or the nation of which he is a part. You have taken it upon yourself to break the law!"

"We owe it to our students as a part of their education that a good citizen is a law abiding citizen."

George could hardly believe his ears. Why was the professor needing to revert to such a weak tactic?

He was about to smile at the whole line of thought until he saw several uniformed policemen walk in at the same time through several doors at the back of the auditorium.

CHAPTER 27

Visions of the Utah man who had had five wives and was then prosecuted and put in jail came to George's mind. Was this the plan here, he wondered.

It was his time to respond.

"Mr. Meadows!" he heard his name being called. "Mr. Meadows, this will be your final response before questions from the audience.

"Um, um, yes . . ." he stammered. "I must focus!" he thought.

He turned to look at the professor. "That is an old, worn out argument that holds no water with any thinking person."

George felt something rise up within him . . . A holy boldness. "There were molecules long before man could see the molecules. There were atoms since God created the universe. But it has been in relatively recent history that man has been able to prove their existence."

"To say that if one cannot experience something with his five physical senses that it therefore cannot exist is arrogance to the highest degree."

There was scattered applause.

"What about spiritual senses? You wouldn't know about that, would you?"

"Of course not! Why? Because the natural man cannot experience spiritual things."

"You see professor, regardless of how intellectual or educated you think you are, you and I are both dunces compared to God!"

"My holy book - as you called it - the Bible, speaks of men like you. It says, 'thinking themselves to be wise, they became fools.'" There was more applause.

"In fact, let me read what it says." George was growing even bolder. He opened his Bible and flipped the pages until he found the passage, and then began reading from first Corinthians chapter one.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence."

"So let me just say, I believe in the wisdom of the word of God. I believe the Bible is His word, and I try to follow it. I love all my wives, I think there is nothing

wrong with having them and doing good by them." He paused. He bit down on his cheek and then pounded his fist on the lectern as he made his final statement.

"So if people don't like it then that's too bad! I really don't care!" With that he folded his arms and tossed his head up into the air.

At first there was silence followed by a smattering of applause, and then gradually it grew louder and finally into a roar of applause. George dropped his hands to his side and blinked. He could hardly believe what was happening. Many of them there stood on their feet as the applause continued.

"We'll take a short break before the questions from the audience," the announcer said.

George thought that the tough part was over.

Still, he was concerned about the uniformed policemen as even more of them began to fill the room.

CHAPTER28

"Professor," the questioner spoke into the microphone. "Is it your contention that a woman should not have the liberty to live with a man that has other wives?"

George was surprised that the first question was not directed toward himself.

"No!" "H . . h . . he . . ." The professor stuttered. "She would certainly have the right to but she shouldn't do it! It is a degrading of women. It is a form of slavery. It says that women are less than men," he declared.

"It is not degrading! When it is . . ." George started before being interrupted.

"Uh excuse me, Mr. Meadows," "We are now in the question and answer session. Please wait until a question is addressed to you, sir," the moderator chided.

"Oh, sorry" George mumbled.

"Mr. Meadows" the next questioner began. "Don't you think that it is sexist for you to have several wives when your wives are only allowed one husband . . . You?"

"Sexist?" he responded. "If sexist means I am against the opposite sex, that is certainly not true. I love the opposite sex!" he said, beaming a wide smile.

There was laughter and light applause in the audience.

“No! I don’t think it is sexist! There are more women than there are men. Some of us men need to marry more than one woman to fulfill their needs. So having a plural number of wives is not against them.” He paused. “It is decisively for them!”

Again there was laughter in the audience.

The next questioner stepped to the microphone.

He was a male student with long hair and wearing sunglasses. He peered over the top of the glasses and asked . . .

“Hey professor, tell the truth, wouldn’t you like having a little variety in your sex life? You could have that if you had several different wives like he does, couldn’t you?”

There was laughter from several in the audience and a few hand claps.

“NO.” the professor answered abruptly. “I am perfectly happy with my one lawfully wedded wife,” he said with a sneer.

The next question was for George.

“How do you . . . uh . . . decide who’s turn it is or who you’ll be with on a particular night?” a girl asked hesitantly.

“Usually my wives decide that, but occasionally I do. It really hasn’t been a problem.”

The questioner continued. “Wouldn’t it become a problem if you added more wives?”

George stiffened. The question had direct bearing on what he was now facing as he considered adding Beatrice as a wife. All his wives were in the audience, as well as Beatrice.

The wrong answer would be disastrous.

CHAPTER 29

There were more questions in a similar vein, which George took to be somewhat frivolous. Then came a question that put him on edge.

“Mr. Meadows” came the address from a well dressed thirty-ish woman. “As you know, there was a man out in Utah who had five wives and was jailed for bigamy. Don’t you think that by coming out publicly, the same could happen to you?”

George's heart began to beat quickly. He could feel the pulse in his neck throbbing. Was this it? Was this the setup?

Were the uniformed policemen who had come in and were standing by the entrances there to arrest him? He took a deep breath and swallowed hard. He looked down, and then for whatever reason he glanced to his right, where he saw the professor was standing with a smile on his face, looking like a Cheshire cat.

Then his eyes caught something beyond his adversary. There, standing just offstage behind the curtain, was another uniformed police officer. He turned away and looked to his left, thinking maybe he could make a getaway by going in that direction.

No!

That path also had a uniformed policeman standing there.

There's no use in making a rush for it now, he thought. I may as well try to answer the question.

"Well ma'am, with all the sexual freedom we supposedly have, and with all the people living together with no kind of lifetime marital commitment, it would be ludicrous for the government to waste time, money, and effort to prosecute me for a crime that I am not committing."

He paused, took another breath, and went on. "You see, I am not a bigamist. To be a bigamist, one must have registered two or more marriage licenses with the government." He paused.

"I have never done that" he said firmly. "My first wife has such a license, because I did it before I knew any better.

However, my other wives are covenant wives before God only. The government is not involved, and therefore has no say!" he stated boldly.

"If they go after me, then they need to go after every other person who is having sex without government permission."

He grew bolder as he talked.

"If our society is so oppressive that we now need the government's approval to live our lives as we desire in the pursuit of happiness, according to the great words of the Declaration of Independence, penned by the famous patriot, Thomas Jefferson, then it is a sad day indeed!" George had spoken out with such boldness that it even shocked himself.

CHAPTER 30

Finally it was over. They each received scattered applause. George headed toward the south exit as he stared at the grim looking policeman in front of him. Just as he was about to pass him the policeman stepped into his path.

“Mr. Meadows” he began sternly in an official sounding voice. Then he smiled broadly and shook his hand. “I like your style. Several of us on the force were called in for security, and also . . .” he leaned close and whispered in his ear . . . “the professor called in a favor” he divulged.

“I think he wanted to intimidate you and throw you off your game. But you hung in there, and a lot of what you say makes sense.” The officer pivoted so George could continue walking as he walked alongside. Charles approached as they neared the rear exit.

“Everything okay, buddy?” he asked as he looked from George to the policeman and back again.

“Just fine,” George said. “How did I do?”

“Not bad. Not bad at all.”

The policeman stopped at the entrance as George entered the parking lot. George’s wives and Beatrice had all reached the rented cars first.

Looking ahead as they walked, Charles asked “What have you decided about Betty?”

George walked several more paces before responding.

“I think I’m going to make her number four,” he said. “Yep . . . She’s number four.”

“Well congratulations again,” Charles called out as he slapped his friend on the back.

George thought ahead. What would living with four wives be like? Could he do it? He questioned within himself. Time would tell. However, even George would be surprised at the answer.

The End