

Speaking A Truth

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Chapter 1

"Yeah, you're right" George answered as he sighed and shook his head from side to side.

George looked out over his Hillside estate and reflected on the past four years. His family grown in an unusual way. Unusual, that is, by American standards. But now he was in the South Nyanza district of West Kenya.

He had left his comfortable American lifestyle of luxury for a new belief, for a cause, for a calling.

He, as a white, was somewhat of an oddity in this area, but he was glad to have his friend and fellow minister Charles O'Kinyi to assist him in adjusting to a very different culture.

Charles, who had been born and raised in Kenya, had come to the States some years back, and it was through his influence that many things began to change in his life.

"Hello, my brother," Charles called out as he opened the front gate of the compound.

George smiled and waved back as he answered "Jambo." It was a Swahili greeting which meant essentially the same as the English "hello." Of course, Charles's accent in using the word was always quite a bit different from George's.

It's strange, George thought to himself, how one life can touch another and change it in so many ways. He watched as the tall dark sleek mid forty-ish African marched his way. George moved to meet him.

As the two approached, there was a hearty handshake and a traditional African hug where one's head was placed to the right side and then a partial release and then to the left side.

"Are you ready to go to the meeting?" George asked.

"Oh no, my brother" Charles replied. "They said they start at 10:00 which

means it won't start till 11:00 or so" he chuckled. "Really, my brother, you must learn to understand Kenyan time" he teased with a big smile.

"However, since we've been invited to speak this morning let us go out into the field and prepare by praying for an hour or so."

"Uh . . . yeah . . . sure" George responded. He was still secretly amazed at how much time in prayer Charles O'Kinyi would put in before sharing the Word of God. Yet he knew that many American pastors never put in the time in prayer and it was reflected in the powerlessness.

The two men walked and prayed in the Spirit and with the understanding. Of course, since Charles spoke Lua, Swahili and English, he was always praying in more ways than George.

The two had decided to leave their families at home. Although they were invited to speak, they weren't sure whether the congregation would be receptive or hostile.

Hostility toward their message was common and this time would not be an exception.

Chapter 2

There were many in South Nyanza that practiced the lifestyle that Charles and George preached, but still there were those Churches started by Western denominations who preached against it.

Since this particular denomination had been very hostile, George and Charles were very surprised to receive their invitation.

“We wish to invite our American brother George Meadows to share with us,” the pastor said as he extended his hand toward George, inviting him to come to the platform.

Since Charles was the more experienced in both the lifestyle and in defending it, the pair had determined that George would speak first.

“Praise the Lord! -- my brothers and sisters,” he began.

He had expected a warm response to his greeting but instead the whole congregation of three hundred or more sat silently, coldly staring at him.

“We need to apologize for the missionaries that have come from the West and preached their tradition as the gospel.” George thought he noticed a few raise their heads and look at him more intently. “The requirement to be monogamous to be saved is not in the Bible!” George said strongly. He saw them widen their eyes and some looked at one another, surprised at what they were hearing.

“That requirement is not in the Bible . . . it was added as part of the Church tradition” he went on as he began hearing murmuring in the audience. George felt that maybe they were warming to him now.

Just as he was about to go on, a man in dark clerical garb with a white collar stepped into the side door and onto the stage. All the people immediately stood up. Behind the first man came several others who were similarly dressed but obviously of lower rank.

“Are you saying it’s alright for men to commit the sin of adultery by having sex with another woman besides his first wife?” the leader demanded to

know.

George was unnerved. He had not expected this. He felt outnumbered and alone as he looked desperately to Charles O'Kinyi for help and yet he questioned in his mind if even Charles O'Kinyi could turn this disaster around.

Chapter 3

Charles sat there on the platform without moving. He tossed his head up slightly to indicate that George should answer the man.

George turned fully toward the man, who was obviously a bishop in this denomination. “Well . . . uh . . . I believe that it is not adultery to have sex with your own wife,” he stuttered.

“What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:32?” The bishop demanded to know angrily as he marched toward George.

George stepped back a step away from the podium and the bishop stepped up to it and spoke something in their native language. When he did everyone sat down, and he began to address the congregation in their own language. George stepped back again and turned once again toward Charles. His eyes pleaded for help.

Charles smiled at George for a quick moment and then began translating what the bishop was saying.

“If any man preach any other gospel, you shall not receive him.”

The bishop paused and looked back at Charles when he heard the interpretation. He was not pleased, but after a moment he turned back to the congregation and went on.

“We know what is right and what is wrong. When someone comes in even from America and tells you to sin, what should you do?” He questioned but did not expect an answer, for he answered himself. “The Bible says, ‘receive not such a one into your household, neither bid him God speed, lest you be partakers of his evil deeds.’”

George retreated to his seat. What he thought had started out so well now was a total disaster. Why? Why, he thought to himself, why isn't Charles helping me? Finally he could wait no longer. He turned to Charles -- who was still interpreting -- “Why don't you say something?” he pleaded.

Charles smiled slightly while continuing to interpret and placed his hand on

his friend's arm to calm him.

While George continued to hope that Charles would stand up and say something, he had no idea that things would get even worse.

Chapter 4

“The Scripture says” the bishop went on “a heretic after the first and second admonition reject.”

The congregation began to respond with a word in their own language. George assumed that it was something similar to how the Pentecostals in America would respond in between the sentences of a preacher with a hearty “Amen.”

“What should we do?” the speaker questioned.

“Reject them!” the audience responded in unison.

“What should we do?” the bishop asserted again.

“Reject them!” came the even more enthusiastic response.

“What should we do?” the speaker, who was now more of a cheerleader, said for the third time.

“Reject them!” they all shouted in unison.

The bishop went on in his own language. Charles O’Kinyi stopped translating and closed his eyes. This frustrated George even more now, because now he didn’t know what they were saying. Yet, he knew that when Charles began to meditate on the Lord in this manner, he shouldn’t disturb him.

After a few moments, another minister on the platform began translating into English again.

“Sometimes the devil will send us a challenge. It is a challenge to see if we will walk in the will of the Lord or can we be drawn away.”

He paused.

“My brethren, please don’t fall into the devil’s trap!”

The bishop paused and looked back at Charles and George. Charles eyes remained closed, but sensing the pause and a moment to break in, he began with a song.

“Give me a clean heart, so I may serve thee
Lord fix my heart, so that I may be used by thee
For I’m not worthy of all these blessings, these blessings,
these blessings,
Give me a clean heart, and I’ll follow thee.”

The congregation was quieted as they were both shocked and intrigued by his singing out.

After finishing the song, Charles O’Kinyi stood up and began to speak.

“Praise the Lord!” he began loudly as he raised his hands toward the heavens.

“I’m pleased to be in the presence of a wise man who believes in the Word of God,” he began.

The bishop took a step backward, folded his arms, and furrowed his brow, suspicious of the statement.

“Bishop, I know you believe in following God and being a doer of His Word. Is that true?”

The bishop nodded tentatively, still unsure of why Charles was beginning with such approval.

“The Bible says, ‘Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,’ doesn’t it, bishop?” Charles asked.

“Yes . . . yes . . .” the bishop answered tentatively and yet knowing he could not disagree with a direct quote from the Word.

“And,” O’Kinyi went on “Jesus said in John chapter 8 ‘If you continue in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.’ Is that right, bishop?”

The bishop nodded once again as he unfolded his arms. He put one hand behind his back and thrust the other in his pants pocket.

“As you know, bishop, and I’m sure most of these fine Bible scholars in your congregation here also know, the Bible says in Proverbs 18:13 ‘He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.’ So I am and pleased that you are all willing to hear both sides of the matter before coming to a conclusion and bringing a judgment.”

George was glad that one of the other ministers was interpreting so he could get the full gist of all that was being said. “Brilliant,” George whispered to himself. “Now the bishop has to listen!”

“When I studied this matter,” Charles O’Kinyi went on, “I started with the Old Testament, because as we all know, 2nd Timothy 3:16, 17 says ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.’”

The bishop started to say something and began to open his mouth, but Charles O’Kinyi continued to speak. “The first man in the Bible who had more than one wife was Lamech before Noah’s time and God never condemned him for having two wives,” O’Kinyi stated.

“But Lamech was a murderer!” the bishop threw in.

“Yes, this is true,” Charles responded calmly, “but his being a murderer had nothing to do with his having more than one wife. Having more than one wife did not make him a murderer any more than not having any wife made Cain murder Abel when he did. Wouldn’t most of you agree?” Charles said as he turned to the congregation for confirmation of his logic.

Various members looked back and forth at each other and seemed to nod approval.

Charles went on. “The next man that the Bible explicitly states had more than one wife was Abraham.”

He paused for a brief moment, letting that fact sink in.

“Did God ever condemn Abraham for taking Hagar as a wife?” Charles

continued.

“God told Abraham to send Hagar away!” the bishop stated flatly as he let a broad smile cross his face, thinking he had now trapped O’Kinyi.

“Yes, but why?” Charles asked the rhetorical question. “Because,” he went on, not waiting for an answer, “Hagar got out of line and began to mock Sarah and Isaac.

“Isaac only had one wife, but Esau had three and Jacob eventually had four. Did God ever condemn Jacob for having four wives? No!” He stated emphatically. “Even Moses had at least two wives,” Charles stated.

“No!” The bishop spoke up, thinking he had to stop him on some point and find error, since the people were now listening intently. “He married Zipporah, who was an Ethiopian, otherwise known as a Cushite,” the bishop stated confidently.

“I can certainly see why you would think that, bishop, because I used to think that myself. However we see that Zipporah was Midianite and Midian was a descendant of Noah’s son Shem. However, the Ethiopians or Cushites are descendents of Noah’s son Ham. So the wife spoken of in Numbers 12 is different than the wife spoken of in Exodus three and four.”

In addition to that, in Judges chapter 4 we see that Moses had a father in law who was a Kenite.” He paused briefly and then went on. “That means he had a father in law who was a Midianite, a father in law who was an Ethiopian, and a father in law who was a Kenite. And therefore Moses had at least three wives.”

Charles O’Kinyi paused again and looked at the bishop a moment before looking back at the congregation.

“Now of course those that prefer to be of the ‘monogamy is the only right way’ position may suggest that perhaps each wife died and then he married another in succession, but the Bible doesn’t say that. It’s possible, I’ll admit, but the Bible doesn’t say that.

The bishop rocked back on his heels. He looked puzzled. Now he was unsure of his facts. Never had he run into someone who knew his Bible so

well.

“The Bible says,” Charles went on, “that ‘Gideon had many wives.’ Did God ever condemn him for having many wives? No!”

Now George had to struggle to keep from chuckling out loud. O’Kinyi had done it again. The congregation was showing rapt attention.

Still it was not over yet, and the bishop would soon retaliate.

Chapter 5

“Now we come to David” Charles O’Kinyi went on speaking even more authoritatively now. “David was called a man after God’s own heart. There are only two sins of David recorded. Once was his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah which involved adultery and murder. The other was when he numbered Israel.

David had about twenty one wives. Did God ever rebuke him for having many wives?”

He paused and looked around. Every eye was on him now and every ear was attentive.

“No!” he shouted. “In fact when God speaks to him through the prophet Nathan while rebuking him over the Bathsheba incident, God says ‘I gave you your masters’ wives and if that had not been enough I would have given you even more.’”

He paused again. There was a shocked look on some of the faces.

“If God gave David wives,” O’Kinyi continued, “Then it could not have been a sin to have several wives or you would be accusing God of participating in the sin!”

There was a gasp in the audience.

The bishop now had both hands thrust down in his pants pockets. His lips were pursed and his brow lowered.

“We’re not under the Old Covenant” the bishop said forcefully.

“Yes, we have a Covenant that is better than the Old but should we not fully study the Old as well as the New?” he questioned.

“God gave his own rules for having more than one wife in Exodus 21:10” Charles went on. “It says, ‘If he take another wife, her food, apparel and duty of marriage he shall not diminish.’ If God was against it He certainly wouldn’t set up rules for it, would he?” Charles asked.

“But let’s go on to the New Testament” he continued without waiting for an answer.

“Jesus never said that it was wrong for a man to have more than one wife. He said a man must not divorce his wife to marry another. The subject is divorce, and Jesus explains that it is wrong to do so to replace a wife with another. He never indicated that it was wrong to add another wife! And . . .”

Charles was about to continue when the bishop broke in with his own question. “What about 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6?” The bishop asked. “They clearly say a man should be the husband of only one wife!”

Every one quieted waiting to see if O’Kinyi had an answer.

Chapter 6

“Praise the Lord! Bishop” Charles responded calmly, “I am glad that you are bringing that up. Some of the modern translations of the bible might say husband of only one. But it doesn’t say that in the Greek.”

He paused a moment to let that sink in while looking around at the people.

“In the Greek there is no ‘only’ in there. There is no ‘only’ in the King James Version either. The word for ‘one’ in the Greek is ‘mia,’ and according to Dr. Strong it can mean one, first, or one x other.”

He paused again.

“Some Greek scholars point out that this word in other places is translated as the article ‘a’ and should be translated that way in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6. This means that it really says “husband of a wife.” In other words, a married man. The context proves this” he said not pausing now “for it says ‘if a man know not how to take care of his own household, how shall he take care of the house of God.’ If a man is not married and has no children, then he has no house to take care of and no experience. And that is the gist of the statement!”

He paused again.

The bishop’s eyes were ablaze. It was obvious that he had never run into anyone so well versed in the subject. “But there is not one person in the entire New Testament that had more than one wife!” he said emphatically. “Can you show me one?” he questioned as he grew bolder and moved toward the podium again.

Charles O’Kinyi stood his ground. “That, dear bishop, is a good question. There is one. A very important one who marries more than one. In fact he marries five! In Matthew 25 we see that the Bridegroom takes in the five wise virgins.”

He paused for effect.

“Yes, we know that Jesus is the Bridegroom and these wise virgins are to

depict those believers who have oil in the lamps and in their vessels, which is another subject. But he marries five. That is a plural wives marriage. If it were wrong, he could have made the same point by using two virgins, one wise and one foolish, with the wise one going in!”

Charles stopped. The bishop stunned speechless.

“May I recommend, bishop, that we all go back and study the subject some more, for truly I’m sure everyone here wants the right answer on this subject.”

With that Charles O’Kinyi spun on his heels and headed back to his seat as he sang “Give me a clean heart . . .”

The service was quickly dismissed with everyone being admonished to continue to study the word.

Charles and George slipped out the side door quietly but there were many who smiled and waved at them when they knew the bishop wasn’t watching.

“Let’s go tell our wives what happened.” George chuckled.

“You mean my two and your three?” Charles laughed.

Chapter 7

“You should have seen him in action!” George exclaimed at the dining table. Charles sat at the other end of the long dining table and his two wives, Rachel and Elizabeth, sat to his right. Across from them sat George’s three wives.

“Man, I tell you, Charles was brilliant!” He boasted on his good friend.

“Well, we would have liked to have seen it for ourselves” Shawanda said cryptically. “If you had just let us go” she said in a half faked pout.

Shawanda was George’s newest wife and the only African American. In addition to being the youngest, she was also the one with the freest spirit and she was the least used to the concept of submission.

“We weren’t sure it would be safe” Charles pointed out.

“What?” Juanita, George’s first wife questioned. She, like George, was thirty five years old. “do you mean that we would not be safe among people calling themselves Christian?”

“Well, I don’t think any of them would have purposefully attacked you, but even so called Christians can sometimes be unpleasant if they disagree with your lifestyle. I am sure you know that by now,” Charles added.

“Having been through all we have” Judy jumped in, “I think we can handle about anything.”

Judy was George’s oldest wife in chronological age, although second in sequence. She had been widowed when her husband was killed by a drunken driver. She was five years older than George but he had taken her in, and her two kids when he married her.

Charles’ wives remained silent as usual. They were native Kenyans as was Charles. Having grown up in the rural areas of Kenya they had learned about respect for a husband and almost never opposed him in any way in front of others.

“Let’s remember,” Charles added “that if there was good done it was by God’s grace.”

Ding! Ding!

There was a ringing of the bell at the front gate of the compound.

“I wonder who that is” George remarked, as he and Charles went together to answer it. Upon opening the gate they saw an older man standing there.

“Brother O’Kinyi” he said enthusiastically. “We are so grateful for the truth you have brought us. There are some of us who would like to worship with you next week.”

“Really?” George questioned.

“Yes, my American brother, when are your services?”

“Come at 10:00” Charles answered.

“Asanti! Asanti Sana” the man answered with a gracious thank you very much and waved slightly as he backed away.

“Hey, that’s interesting!” George remarked with a thumbs up sign after closing the gate.

“Yes,” Charles responded thoughtfully before adding “We’ll have to be careful, though.”

“Why?” George questioned.

“They see you as a rich American” Charles answered. “It’s possible they may be looking for a financial gain more than anything else.”

“Oh,” George replied, “he seemed so sincere.”

“Yes, maybe” Charles answered as they headed back toward the house. “We’ll see, we’ll see.”

Chapter 8

Sunday morning the sky was clear and the weather at a pleasant 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Having decided to meet outside, they set up chairs and benches under the big tree near the front gate. Ten o'clock came and went and still it was only their own families present.

“Well, I guess he wasn’t so sure or he changed his mind,” George remarked.

“Perhaps,” Charles said with a knowing smile. “But it could also be that they are on Kenyan time rather than American time.”

“Yeah, that’s right, I forgot” Judy put in. “Everybody around here is a half hour to an hour late for everything.”

“We tend to be task oriented as opposed to time oriented” Elizabeth said quietly.

“Bless that wonderful name of Jesus” Shawanda sang out. The others joined in.

“Bless that wonderful name of Jesus, Bless that wonderful name of Jesus, It’s like no other name I know.”

Several songs and twenty five minutes later the old man walked through the open gate and began singing along. By the next song, ten others had joined them.

“Praise God,” George began speaking. “We want to thank all of you here for coming. It is a blessing to see and meet some of our neighbors.”

As he spoke more people came through the gate. They were now coming in clusters.

“Praise the Lord! God is a wonderful God who has many great things for us,” George went on.

There was now a steady stream of newcomers.

“This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!”

George continued.

George paused, and a man stood up. “Yes, do you have a testimony?” George asked.

“We have come today,” he began in a heavy accented English “because of our Brother O’Kinyi as well as you, my American brother, who have stood for the truth of the word of God, even when it goes against Western tradition.”

He paused and cleared his throat and continued.

“The missionaries came decades ago and separated our families, called us heathens, sinners and adulterers. Many of our women, our mothers, were put away from their husbands. The children in those families suffered great hardship. I know, for I was such a child. My father had three wives. I was the child of the second wife. My father was told that he could not go to heaven unless he left my mother.”

The man’s eyes watered as he paused again.

“Many others suffered in a similar fashion.”

George waved for the man to come to the front of the crowd since he was obviously going to give his own speech. As he moved to the front, he continued to speak.

“Today our churches usually have about a two to one ratio of women to men. Then our Christian women are told that Scripture says they are not to marry unbelievers. So many are without husbands. Those that have dared to marry a man who already has a wife have been ostracized by the church.

“You, my dear brethren, have brought us truth from the Scripture, and for that we thank you. It means our men can marry more than one woman without guilt or shame. It means our women can have husbands to love them, care for them and protect them. And it means we no longer need to fear going to hell for living out what is right and godly.

“My brethren,” he said as he turned to bow his head slightly toward Charles

O’Kinyi and George Meadows, “we thank you!”

With that he strode back to his original place. As soon as he did, another man stood up. “I am the principal in the secondary school” he announced. “I want you to come to our school and teach these truths to our students” he said.

“Yeah, sure” George responded enthusiastically, not realizing there would be great opposition to that invitation.

Chapter 9

Having been advised that he should not drive a BMW or Mercedes in this part of Kenya because of the type of attention it would draw, George had purchased a used Toyota, to 'fit in.'

As they approached the school, they noticed a crowd of adults standing in front. Several wore clerical collars. One carried a placard reading "Protect the morality of our children."

"Stop." Charles ordered before they got to the front of the school.

"Why?" George wanted to know.

"It might not be a good idea to go in there today," Charles replied.

"But we have an invitation from the principal" George retorted.

"That doesn't matter" Charles said matter of factly. "There could be trouble."

"Well, I'm going in" George responded defiantly as he pulled the car to a stop and exited the vehicle. Seeing George's move, Charles had no choice but to go along.

George strode confidently toward the front door, only to see the clergy begin to close ranks and bar the entrance. A group of other men and women began to chant something in Swahili, which George would later learn meant "Keep the sinners out!"

"Come on," Charles spoke up. "Let's go."

"Why?!" George protested.

Whack! A tomato hit George square in the face. He turned with fury in his eyes, only to be met with an egg that splattered across his chest. Charles was now tugging his friend and brother in Christ toward the car as other fruits and vegetables flew in their direction. Managing to dive into the car, they both backed away as fast as possible.

“What’s that all about?” George queried angrily.

“Well,” Charles chuckled, “I guess some people didn’t like our message.” He chuckled again before continuing. “At least you can say that you have been persecuted for Christ’s sake” he finished with a laugh at the sight of his friend wiping tomato off his flushed red face and egg off of his chest.

“You think it is funny, huh?” George shot back, before bursting into laughter himself.

They headed back to their compound and yet both would be a bit surprised at the next turn of events.

Chapter 10

The ding of the bell at the front gate early on a Monday morning was a surprise. Shawanda headed toward the gate to see who the visitors might be, but was stopped by George, who feared it might be another hostile attack.

“Wait, honey, I’ll check it” he called out.

“Relax, I’ll get it” she called back.

“NO!” he shouted. Shawanda stopped dead in her tracks and gave him a curious look. He had never shouted at her like that. Her eyes and her face spoke volumes.

“Why are you shouting at me like some kid?” She said with her body posture and facial expression.

George ran to her, grabbed her around the shoulders, and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek to ease the tension.

“It could be trouble” he said as he went on past her. “I’ll take care of it.”

Opening the gate, he found a young man in his early thirties. He was short and thin.

“Hello, Elder George” he said politely.

“Hello,” George responded cautiously.

“May I come in for a moment?” he requested.

“Yeah, I guess so” George answered. “I am John Ogongo, sir” he began. “I am here to invite you to speak at our church next Sunday morning and evening.”

“Who, me?” George reacted with surprise.

“Yes sir, would you kindly accept our invitation?” John Ogongo asked.

“Well, uh, sure, I guess so,” George replied, being a bit pleased that he was being asked to be the speaker rather than Charles O’Kinyi.

“Uh, what topic would you like me to speak on?” he asked.

“Whatever you like,” John replied. “Whatever you like” he repeated.

“Alright . . . where is your church?” George asked.

“I’ll meet you here and ride with you to show the way. It is only about 30 kilometers from here,” John answered.

Charles had stepped into the front yard of the compound and caught the tail end of the conversation. Charles walked back to the front door of the main house with his arm around Shawanda.

“Hey I’m guest speaking for their church Sunday,” George said excitedly.

“Be careful” Charles stated matter of factly.

“Hey, what are you worried about? That John fellow seemed nice enough. It shouldn’t be a problem,” George stated. “Besides,” he went on, “if you are worried about me you can come along” he suggested.

“Who would handle things here?” Charles asked quietly.

“Oh, yeah,” George said, “I temporarily forgot about our growing congregation. Aw, I’ll be okay” George shrugged.

“Perhaps,” Charles said. “I’ll pray that you’ll be okay, but there is more than one type of trap set for Muzungas in our country.”

“Muzungas? What’s that?” Shawanda jumped in.

“White men” Charles answered.

It wasn’t a physical threat that was to occur but there was a reason that George was invited to speak to this particular church and it had absolutely nothing to do with his speaking ability.

Chapter 11

“Well, I am going with him!” Shawanda announced at dinner.

“I don’t think he should go at all.” Juanita (George’s first wife) responded.

“Wait a minute!” George interrupted. “I’m not some child to be protected! I’m going!” He announced staunchly.

“Yeah, and I’m going too!” Shawanda threw in.

“Maybe we should all go” Judy (George’s second wife) suggested.

Charles’ two wives remained silent. Their background generally had not even allowed women to eat at the same table as the men, much less argue with them.

Charles spoke up. “I’ll send one of my wives with you. Perhaps Rachel should go. She can act as a translator and help you be aware if there are any, well . . . let’s say underhanded subterfuge going on.”

“Subterfuge??” George questioned. “With Christians?” he mocked.

“We certainly hope not.” Charles said as he smiled at George’s antics. “Still it sometimes pays to be careful. Jesus said, ‘Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.’”

“Oh, alright then,” George relented. “I’ll take all three of my wives and one of yours. Won’t that be a sight.”

“Yeah! Two white women, a brown one and a black one and you!” Shawanda laughed. “The big white man! Ha!”

The others chuckled at the thought of the colorful parade they would bring.

“What’s that word, Charles?” Shawanda asked.

“The Muzunga” Charles replied with a wry smile.

The first meeting went well. George preached on faith. The eighty some people in the congregation all seemed wrapped up in what he was saying. Each time George said Praise the Lord, they would all respond in unison with “Amen.”

In the second session George became bolder and talked about plural marriage. He told of the history of the Church and how after the counsel of Trent monogamy became the rule of the day.

No one seemed alarmed and so he went further and talked about the many biblical patriarchs that had had a plural number of wives and how God had never condemned any of them other than Solomon for marrying women from outside of Israel.

After the end of the second meeting George was feeling good. Everyone was shaking his hand. They invited them to stay for dinner. “Sure,” George answered with a broad smile as he basked in this much better atmosphere of acceptance.

Dinner was served in the usual African way. Ladies brought in pots of rice and greens and chopped beef and liver and gipatti, the soft taco style bread. Then one came with a wash basin in one hand and a kettle of hot water in the other. She went around the room starting with George, who was the guest of honor, and allowed each man to wash his hands as she poured the water from the kettle over his hands into the wash basin.

They sat and ate. Not much was said, but George had been taught by Charles that it was not the Lua custom to talk while eating.

George wondered how his women were doing since they were outside or in the kitchen, but he assumed they were fine.

After the meal the same women came back again to allow the men to wash their hands again. “We would like to speak with you for a moment, brother” the young pastor said.

He stood along with two others and led George astride where they sat under a tree in four chairs that had been placed there for them.

“My brother,” John began, “we have many widows and many orphans

whose parents have died of aids . . .” he paused as he tilted his head slightly to the side and assumed a pitiful look on his face. “Could you please help us?” He asked, almost begging.

“Well, uh . . . I . . uh, sure I want to” George began haltingly, not sure what to say or even how much they were asking for.

“We want to build an orphanage and a school for the children and of course we need to buy food for the widows” John went on.

George rocked back in his chair as his eye widened and glazed over. Now he realized they were not asking for twenty or thirty dollars. They were asking for thousands.

Was this why they had really invited him, he asked himself. Rachel appeared from the house and said something in Lua, loudly from the distance. The men looked up, disturbed by the interruption. Rachel moved closer in a curtsy type of moved, and spoke again in the language that was a total mystery to George. Then she turned toward George.

“Brother George,” she said in accented English, “your wives required your presence immediately” she said as she looked at him with intensity.

“They do?” George said, relieved to have the interruption. “Uh, excuse me men, we’ll have to continue this later.”

With that he rose from his chair and hurriedly followed Rachel to the back of the house where his wives were. “What’s up, girls?” George asked as he saw them sitting and talking to the other ladies.

“Judy needs to go home right now and you need to take us all” Rachel spoke up again.

“I do?” Judy questioned with a puzzled look on her face.

“Yes!” Rachel responded firmly.

They all took the hint and climbed into the vehicle and started toward their own compound.

“What’s going on?” Shawanda demanded to know.

“They were about to ride the Muzunga” Rachel explained.

“What’s that?” Juanita wanted to know.

“That’s when they get a white man alone and tell him how poor they are and try to get him to commit to donating big American dollars toward their cause.”

“That’s why they asked me to speak?” George questioned incredulously.
“They didn’t really want the word, they wanted a Muzunga for his money?!”

“This thing runs deep in our culture” Rachel explained. “This is why Charles sent me. Just in case they might try something like this.”

“Well if that is the way they want to play, I think I’ll just plan to fly to America and preach there!” George said defiantly.

The conversation continued on even as they reached the compound.

“Hey Charles,” George called out. “Why didn’t you warn me?”

“About what” Charles asked calmly.

“About the Muzunga doctrine” George replied.

Charles smiled knowingly, “That is why I sent my wife with you,” he said, pausing before continuing. “I had hoped it wouldn’t happen, but now that it has, you can learn from it.”

“Learn what?” George questioned.

“One of the most important lessons that every non African needs to know when they come to this continent to minister” he said.

Chapter 12

“The Average American,” Charles started, “makes more in one day than the average Kenyan makes in a month. So any American, even a teacher or a nurse or a fireman, is rich by comparison.”

He paused again to let that sink in.

“A poor family in America” he continued “is defined as a family of four living on less than twenty two thousand dollars a year. That is over one million five hundred thousand shillings per year.”

He paused again.

“So even a poor person from America is a millionaire here. So if you are an American you are rich and certainly a rich American brother would want to help a poor Kenyan brother in need, wouldn’t he?” Charles questioned.

“Sure” George replied. “You know one. You know my heart. I don’t mind giving or helping. I just don’t like the idea that they will pretend to like my teaching to get money out of me!” He retorted.

“Yes, I now understand that” Charles said as he rubbed his chin and looked down at the floor for a moment.

“You have to understand the history to understand the people” Charles continued. “You see, when big ministries came to our land two and three decades ago, they brought big money. They paid for the travel and food of many of the leaders to make the meetings and then they paid many to be pastors and helped build buildings and supply P. A. equipment and so on. So it has come to be expected that you ‘Muzungu’ will do that!” Charles finished with a grin.

“Well how are we to know when they really want the Word and when they really just want our money?” George questioned.

Charles tilted his head slightly to the side before replying “Doesn’t that give us a chance to practice our ability to discern the spirits?”

“Aw forget it!” George stated as he waved his hand and rose to his feet.
“You’ve always got some spiritual answer for everything.”

“Honey,” Juanita called out to her husband George, “We did get a letter from Aaron today asking us to come and share with his new church in the states.”

“Really?” George questioned. George thought back about his old friend. Aaron and his wife Cheryl had made the decision not to move to Kenya with the others. Instead they had moved back to the Midwest and started another church.

“Does he want us to come and teach on plural wives in a family?” George asked teasingly.

“Hmmm, I doubt that” his first wife responded. “But then again, he knows what we believe and he invited us all!”

Chapter 13

The KLM flight from Nairobi to Amsterdam was uneventful. George and his three wives and Judy's two kids all slept through most of the eight hours and twenty minutes of flying.

Charles O'Kinyi and his wives Rachel and Elizabeth had remained behind to take care of the compound and their growing church organization.

"Hey, let's have some fun!" Shawanda said mischievously. "Since we have a five hour lay over, why don't we pick a resting area and then each of us wives will sit and cuddle with our husband one at a time."

George smiled as he began to get the picture.

"So, one will be with me and when she gets up to go to the bookstore or somewhere another will come and so on."

"Yes," Shawanda said with obvious glee in her voice, "and we can watch the expression in peoples faces as they wonder what's going on."

"Is that nice?" Judy questioned.

"Well, lets consider it a testimony" Shawanda countered. "We can show that many woman can love the same man and one man can love many women."

George chuckled and shook his head. He really enjoyed the playful youthfulness of his third wife and he didn't want to stifle her imagination.

"Okay," he said, "Let's do it and see what happens."

As they departed the plane they separated themselves. George found the gate for the next flight and took a seat where he would easily be seen by many others coming to the area as well as those just passing by.

Juanita was not as gung ho as Shawanda over the idea but nor was she as resistant as Judy, who was George's second wife. She approached George bent over and kissed him full on the lips and then sat down beside him as he put his arm around her shoulders. She lay her head on his chest and

wrapped an arm around his waist.

There were several other airline passengers in the area who obviously saw them but so far hadn't thought much of it. After five minutes, Juanita arose. "I'll check the bookstore for a magazine and see you in a few minutes love" she said cooing and then walked away.

A minute later and his red headed second wife made her appearance, sat down on the other side of him, and kissed him on the cheek and then put her arms around him.

George smiled at the reactions of those that were watching. A few raised their eyebrows and widened their eyes. As his second wife left he chuckled to himself at the thought of what was yet to come.

Shawanda came striding toward him. She wore a navy blue skirted suit which was hemmed just below knee level, her hose was dark and she had on three and 1/2 inch navy blue shoes. She stopped directly in front of him and then bent her right knee as she lifted her right heel off the floor while maintaining her weight on her left leg.

She poked her left hip out to the side and dropped her left shoulder a bit. Then very demurely she asked "Where has my honey been?" She cooed "I have missed you my dear."

With that she bent over from the waist placed her left hand on George's right shoulder, lifted his chin with her right fore finger and then she passionately French kissed him in the mouth.

Even George was a little uncomfortable with such a great display of passion in public and yet at the same time he somehow enjoyed the attention it was bringing.

Shawanda pivoted around and sat in George's lap.

The faces of the audience now showed obvious shock and amazement. Many stared at George wondering if he were some rock star who was going unrecognized by them.

"Can I have a little money, big daddy?" Shawanda cooed.

“Oh yeah, sure, hon,” George said trying to fit in the act. With that he took out his wallet and handed Shawanda a \$100 bill. Shawanda jumped off and strutted away.

“Hey, my friend, what have you got going for you?”

A few other men edged their way a little closer so they could also hear his answer.

“Oh those women?” George asked innocently. “They’re just my three wives,” he said matter of factly.

“All three?” the man exclaimed.

“You don’t look like a Muslim and they certainly don’t dress like Muslim women” he reacted. “What are you, a Mormon?” he questioned.

“NO! George reacted sternly. “I’m a Christian.”

“What?” the man replied with a scowl on his face. “Well, I have never been too religious but I know that Christians aren’t supposed to have more than one wife,” he stated.

“Really,” George replied, “and who made that rule? Was it God, the Bible, or some religious organization?”

The man was taken aback; he looked somewhat puzzled.

“Have you ever read the Bible?” George asked as he decided to help him understand.

“Well, not really,” he started. “Well a bit as a child in Sunday School” the man said.

“Do you remember that many of God’s servants had more than one wife?”

“Uh . . . uh . . . like who?” he questioned.

“Like Abraham, Israel, Moses, Gideon and David and many others . . .” George replied. “And God never condemned any of them” George stated finally.

“Wait a minute,” the man said as he rolled his eye up to the ceiling as if trying to read something there. “I think I remember king David got into trouble over having sex with what’s her name.”

“Bathsheba George stated.

“Yes, that’s right” the man said excitedly, thinking he had made a point.

“David had at least six wives before Bathsheba, and the Bible says God gave him wives.” George said firmly.

“Really?” the man said with a puzzled look on his face.

George smiled “My name is George Meadows, what’s yours?” he asked as he extended his hand.

“I’m Robert Trueblood” came the response as they clasped hands in a firm handshake. “What religion did you say you were?” Trueblood asked.

“None!” George reaffirmed. “I am a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I study His word and seek to do His will and I try to avoid the traditions of men.”

“Well George,” Trueblood began, “I can appreciate that. Here’s my card, please contact me when you get back to the States.”

George took the card and put it in his shirt pocket and gave the man his own card, not thinking too much more of the incident. Little did he know that Robert Trueblood would play a major part in the events of his near future.

Chapter 14

The rest of the trip back to America was uneventful, but the four had fun replaying and laughing about the reactions of the other passengers as these three lovely women were all adoring the same man. After going through immigration and customs lines they were all excited to see Aaron and Cheryl waiting for them at the airport.

“Tell me about your church,” George said to Aaron after they all got settled into the van.

“Well, we’ve started from scratch,” Aaron began excitedly, “and we’re still small. Our congregation is only about 50 when everyone is there and we meet in a room that we rent in one of the local hotels. But George, I tell you,” he went on, “these people are excited, committed disciples of Jesus Christ . . . ”

“We decided not to pull our punches from the very start,” Cheryl broke in. “We emphasized that we wanted to work with people that were truly serious about following God and His word.”

“And so far,” Aaron broke back in, “they seem to be truly serious and committed.” He ended with a broad smile.

“So you want me to give them the real test of how truly serious they are, is that it?” George questioned.

“Well . . . uh, sort of . . .” Aaron hedged.

“What happens if they all quit when they find out George has three wives?” Juanita asked.

“Then we’ll know” Aaron answered simply.

“What about your income from the church?” Judy questioned. “Wouldn’t that be affected if most of them found out that you believe in polygamy and left the church?”

“We have jobs to take care of our own needs” Aaron shared. “Cheryl is

working as an executive secretary at a firm here in town and I'm managing a shoe store. We didn't live as well as we once did, but we're doing okay. So if some quit, so be it."

George slid down in his seat and crossed his arms over his chest and smiled to himself. He relished this opportunity to share this truth as he wondered what would be the response of this newly formed church.

Chapter 15

As Sunday morning arrived George found himself pacing back and forth in his hotel room preparing for his sermon. He was strangely nervous. Why? He questioned himself for a moment, until he realized that his backup, Charles O’Kinyi, was not there. Before, if he had a problem, O’Kinyi had always been there to bail him out, but now O’Kinyi was some 8000 miles away.

He tried to review all of his Scripture in his mind and to think of the correct answer to any questions that might come up. His wives came in one by one and each added a word of encouragement.

“Perhaps,” he began now that all three of his wives were present, “Perhaps we should not let on right off that you are all my wives.”

“What are you saying, Muscles” Shawanda jumped in “are you all of a sudden ashamed of us?”

“No,” George answered, “but if Aaron hasn’t already told them maybe it would be better if I taught on it first before introducing you as wives and throwing them all into shell shock!”

“Okay, okay” Juanita added, “I see what you’re saying. We’ll go in separately and initially no one will know.”

They followed the plan. George went to the meeting room first. A few moments later Juanita came in. Then Judy and finally Shawanda.

Shawanda looked around at the many white faces and finally saw a black couple with a little boy about five years old. She went over and introduced herself, glad to see she wouldn’t be the only one of her color there.

The service began and George sat thumping his Bible with his finger nervously. He felt sweat pop out on his forehead and reached for his handkerchief in his back pocket. Aaron leaned over and put his hand on his arm to reassure him.

George felt like butterflies were in his stomach. Why am I so nervous he

thought. I've spoken on this in Kenya and I didn't feel like this. He prayed silently, "Lord, help me today. Without you, I can do nothing. Please Lord, give me wisdom."

Chapter 16

“My brothers and sisters, we have with us today an old friend of mine,” Aaron began his introduction. “We have covered a bit of ground together and we’ve had good times and rough times together. Brother George Meadows is a man who studies the word of God and he is a doer of the word. Let’s greet him with an Amen as he comes to bring us the word of God.”

“Amen” the crowd said in unison.

George stood up and looked out at the congregation which was seated in chairs that had been arranged in a semicircle. The church had about 18 women and about 10 men. The rest were children of various ages.

“Praise the Lord! My brethren,” he began, “Today I want you to be like the Bereans in Acts 17 who received the word from Paul, the apostle, with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see if what he taught was so.”

He paused and then continued. “The Bible says “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

He paused again. He was amazed at the Scripture coming popping into his mind one after another.

“In second Timothy, we read “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is good for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness.”

He grabbed the microphone off the stand and began to move away from the lectern that was holding his Bible.

“A few years ago, some things happened that changed my life drastically. An African friend who was to lead us on a missionary trip to Kenya asked us a question. He asked how we would minister to a wife in a plural wife family. Well, you can imagine we were all shocked.”

He paused as he could see some widen their eyes and others look at each other in disbelief.

“Of course, our basic answer was to tell them to repent and get saved,” George said.

He saw many nod their heads.

“But my friend Charles O’Kinyi made us study the word of God. Do you know what we found?” He asked rhetorically, not expecting an answer.

“There were many men in the Old Testament that had a plural number of wives. And God never said it was sin!”

A few of the congregation rocked back in their chairs and folded their arms indicating they were not necessarily agreeing with what was being said.

George forged on. “Lamech had two wives before Noah’s time. Abraham had two and then after Sarah’s death he had at least three more. Jacob had four wives. Moses had at least two and maybe three. Caleb had two. Gideon had many wives and David had at least twenty one.”

He paused again and looked around the room. His three wives were in different areas of the room and he knew if he looked to them he would get a thumbs up sign or an agreeing nod.

“Did you know,” George began to say as he moved to the other side of the room, “that God gave rules on having more than one wife?”

Many looked back and forth at each other with looks of surprise.

“Yes, that’s right -- and in some cases, it was considered the honorable thing to do, to take another wife.”

George noticed that many had questions in their eyes as they looked past him where Aaron, their pastor, was sitting.

“Yes, I know how you feel,” George went on, “I felt the same way when I first heard these things. They couldn’t be right! Every institution in the West says that monogamy is the only right way. The government mandates

it. The schools teach it. The religious institutions claim it is the truth, and the media reinforces it. But!”

He paused for dramatic effect.

“But those are not our guidelines. Our guideline. Our plum line, if you will, is the word of God.”

At that he lifted up his Bible and pounded it back down on the lectern.

“Look at this church,” he said, “two thirds are women. Many of you aren’t wearing wedding bands so I assume you’re not married. The Scripture in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 6:14 says “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.” So if you can’t marry an unbeliever, many of you would never be married. But if a man is allowed to have more than one woman, you can be.”

A heavy set woman sitting in the front row began to smile at George.

“Well, perhaps I’m getting through to at least one person,” he thought, not knowing that that woman would be the cause of a great deal of consternation.

Chapter 17

“Yes, I know what you’re thinking,” George continued. “Some of you are thinking that even if this was allowed in the Old Testament certainly God prohibits it in the New Testament. I thought the same thing.”

He went back behind the lectern. “Let’s open our Bibles and see what it really says. Turn to 1 Timothy 3:1, 2. It says “If a man desires the office of a bishop he desires a good work, let him be above reproach, the husband of one wife.”

George looked up and paused.

“If we take this as it seems to read on the surface this would be a prohibition for anyone who desires to be an elder or overseer, which the word bishop means, from having more than one wife. Okay, if it means that, then it would infer that anyone else could have more than one.”

He paused again and looked around the room as he let his statement sink in. He smiled at his next thought.

“So any of you men who don’t want to be bishops or deacons can have an extra wife or two if you want.”

George saw several of the married women either elbow their husbands sitting next to them or slightly kick his shin. It was very obvious that the married women were not liking this teaching.

“But wait, let’s go deeper” George continued. “If you study the Greek, you’ll find that this word for one is 'mia' and it is also translated in other places as ‘first’ or ‘certain’ or as the article ‘a.’ Some Greek scholars believe this should be translated as the article ‘a.’ In which case even elders and deacons can have more than one wife.”

A rumble went through the congregations as several people began whispering to one another. George forged on boldly.

“Think of it. Many of God’s leaders of people in the Old Testament had several wives. Why would God all of a sudden change his mind and say that

it is no longer a good idea? Well, I say he didn't change his mind. I believe the translators mistranslated this Scripture. Furthermore, if you look at history you'll find that the Catholic Church issued an edict prohibiting plural numbers of wives in a marriage in 1563 at the council of Trent."

Again heads turned and a rumble went through the congregation.

"So there it is, I challenge any of you to disprove what I've said. I have given you the truth. The question now is, what will you do with it?"

George grabbed his Bible off the lectern and went to return to his seat, but unbeknownst to him he wasn't finished yet. Or at least the congregation was not finished with him!

Chapter 18

Aaron stood up. "Praise the Lord. I realize this may be a shocking revelation to many of you. Perhaps if you have questions, brother George can answer them for you."

A slightly built woman in her early thirties immediately stood up. "Pastor, I want to know, is he a Mormon?" she asked.

George rose from his seat and stood beside Aaron at the lectern.

"No ma'am, I am not a Mormon. I am an Evangelical, Pentecostal follower of our Lord Jesus Christ" he answered.

Another married lady in her forties stood. "Well, in our marriage vows my husband Thomas said he would keep only to me so long as we both live. Are you saying he can break that vow?"

George took a deep breath. "Lord help me. Give me wisdom" he prayed silently.

"Well, sister, I would guess that when he made that vow, he made it in ignorance, not knowing that he had other options. Now that you and he know better, I'm sure that if God wanted him to have another wife you would release him from it, wouldn't you?" George answered, ending with his own question.

The woman's eyes narrowed as she plopped down on her seat. "Come on, let's get out of here," she ordered to her husband, making sure she said it loud enough to be heard. Her husband reluctantly stood to his feet, shrugged his shoulders at Aaron as if to say "what can I do" and then obediently marched out behind his wife.

Now the heavy set woman who had been smiling at George stood up. "So do you have more than one wife?" She asked in a cooing voice as she batted her eyes at George.

"Well . . . uh . . . yes." There, he had said it.

“Juanita, will you come up darling?” he asked s he held his hand out toward her. “This is my first wife” he announced.

“Judy, dear, please come on up” he said. Juanita stood beside him on his left and Judy soon joined him on his right side and slipped her arm around his waist.

Eyes widened again and eyebrows were raised as people in the congregation looked back and forth toward each other.

“And . . .” George went on “Shawanda is my third wife” he announced.

Shawanda followed his cue and moved toward the others. An involuntary gasp went up form the audience. Shawanda wasn’t sure if it was because she was an African American or because she was number three or both.

“Do you have any more?” the heavy set woman, who weight over 250 pounds, asked.

“No,” George answered simply with a smile.

She then quipped with a bright smile as she thrust one hip out to the side. “Can I be number four?”

Chapter 19

“Could you believe how bold that woman was?” Shawanda asked at the table at Ryan’s restaurant.

“Well, it certainly shocked me,” Juanita responded, as she poked her fork in one of the many delightful desserts offered at this smorgasbord restaurant.

“Looks like she got your message” Aaron chimed in.

“Well are you going to add her as the fourth?” Cheryl threw in playfully.

“Perhaps you should seriously consider it” Judy said softly.

“What?” Shawanda and Juanita responded almost simultaneously.

“Well, look at her” Judy said as she placed her fork down on her plate. “She’s overweight and not that attractive. Who else is going to marry her?” She asked.

“Now wait a minute” George protested, “I may feel sorry for her too, but I can’t just marry every available woman that comes along.”

“Right!” Shawanda came back in. “And besides there would be even less time for . . . for us.”

“What would O’Kinyi say about it?” Judy asked.

They had all come to look at Charles “O’Kinyi as their spiritual leader for he often had the wisdom of God. But now he was thousands of miles away in Kenya.

“Hey, let’s just drop the idea for now.” George suggested, trying to get himself off the hook.

“Yoo hoo!” A voice called out. They all looked up to see the very woman they had all been talking about.

“Her name is Beatrice Marseilles” Aaron whispered to George.

Beatrice came sashaying over, swinging her large hips back and forth. Moving to a position behind George she bent over and laid her breasts on his shoulders, while she looked around at his wives who sat at the table.

“I see you have a harem of little skinny girls, can you handle a full figured woman?” She asked.

Shawanda’s mouth fell open. She had an expression in her face that said, “No, she didn’t say that.”

But say it she had.

Shawanda bit her lip, shuddered, and then, not being able to control her emotion, she erupted to a standing position with her hands on her hips and began a verbal tirade.

“Just a minute lady, who do you think you are? How are you going to come prancing in here with your over sized self and just Bogard your way into our family!”

“Honey babe!” George called out to Shawanda with his pet nickname for her. He gave her a stern look, indicating she should not go any further.

“Oh, she has claws!” Beatrice said mockingly. “Does she bite too?”

“That’s enough, sister” Aaron said as he interjected himself by rising and steering the intruder away from George and his wives.

Back at George’s hotel room, Shawanda was still furious.

“Can you imagine the nerve of the big buffalo?!” She exclaimed.

“Now Shawanda, calm down,” Judy said soothingly.

“Calm down, calm down?” Shawanda yelled. “No body comes around and talks to me like that!”

“Okay, we all know that she was wrong,” Juanita interjected, “but it doesn’t do any good to keep fuming over it.”

Shawanda, who was pacing back and forth, stopped for a moment and shot darts out of her eyes at Juanita.

“She wasn’t talking to you!” She retorted, “you have no reason to be upset. It was me!”

“Honey babe . . .” George started to say before being interrupted.

“Don’t honey babe me!” Shawanda shouted at him. She stood with her feet spread apart and her hands on her hips. None of them had ever seen such rage come from her.

“You didn’t defend me, George!” she shouted as she pointed her fingers at him.

“I . . . uh . . .” George sputtered a moment, trying to find the right words.

“She’s hurting” Judy said calmly.

“You’re doggone right I’m hurting!” Shawanda threw out.

“No, not you, sister Beatrice,” Judy replied.

“She’s hurting?” Shawanda exclaimed with shock in her voice. “She’s hurting?” She questioned again. “No, I am the one that was offended!”

“Yes, but because she’s hurting” Judy said calmly.

“Well, I didn’t . . .” Shawanda started but was cut off in mid sentence.

“Wait, let Judy explain” George said firmly.

There was a knock at the door. George answered it. “There have been complaints from some of our guests about noise coming from this room” the hotel manager stated.

“Okay, okay, we’re sorry” George apologized. “We’ll hold it down . . .”

Shawanda now stood with her arms folded across her chest. She lowered

her chin and peeked out of the upper part of her eyes, as she bit her lower lip.

“That sister Beatrice is overweight and she has probably been made fun of all her life. She’s not attractive to men and therefore has no husband. She’s hurting” Judy explained.

“Well, that is not my problem” Shawanda exclaimed.

“Shhh” Juanita hissed, raising her finger to her lips to indicate that Shawanda should lower her voice.

Shawanda rolled her eyes at her but did comply and lowered her voice.

“Her solution” Shawanda said in a mocking tone “is to diet and exercise, not to verbally attack me!”

“The solution may be” Judy came back boldly “for George to marry her.”

“What!” Shawanda yelled. “We don’t want her in our family!”

“It’s not really your decision, is it, honey babe?” George said.

“What! Please! I don’t believe this! You bring her in as a wife, and I’m outta here!”

With that Shawanda walked briskly to the door, opened it, went out and slammed it shut. Bang!

The others sighed in silence, knowing they now had a crisis on their hands.

Chapter 20

George started toward the door to go after her.

“Wait, George” Juanita called out, “why don’t you let her cool off for awhile.”

George paused for a moment with his hand on the door knob before finally letting go of it and turning around. Juanita moved toward their husband.

“Of course you do know that she’s right, that any addition affects the rest of us.”

George bit his lower lip and then was about to speak when Judy spoke up again.

“Well, initially I didn’t want Shawanda to be one of your wives. Did that stop you?” She paused even though she certainly did not expect an answer to this rhetorical question. “No. You pursued her anyway and eventually I adjusted.”

“Ahem” Juanita began clearing her throat, “Let’s say we all adjusted.”

“Yes,” Judy replied, “but it wasn’t your choice and it wasn’t mine it was his,” she said as she lifted her hand to point toward their mutual husband.

“Ladies, ladies” George broke in.

“Let’s not get riled up about this. I . . .” before he could finish his thought his cell phone rang.

“Hello!” he said, abruptly answering the inconvenient annoyance.

“Praise the Lord” came the response on the other end of the line.

“Charles?” George said excitedly. “What’s up?”

“Everything is fine here,” Charles answered. “But I felt of the Lord to call. What is happening there?”

“Ah, brother, I’m glad you called. We have a mess on our hands,” George said.

“Why? What’s wrong?” Charles inquired.

“Satan is working overtime, trying to break up my family. Uh, listen . . . it is too complicated. I need you to come and help us out with some wisdom. Will you do that my brother?” he asked.

“Sure, arrange to have a plane ticket waiting for me at the airport and I’ll be there as soon as possible” Charles answered.

Charles O’Kinyi was a man of faith and wisdom. George knew that if anyone could help out in this situation, he could.

“Well, George, that is fine that Charles is coming but I still think we should have a say in who is added to the family” Juanita insisted.

“Well, dear,” George began again before being interrupted.

“Do we vote on it?” Judy said mockingly. “And what Scripture is that?”

Juanita snapped her head sharply and eyed Judy coldly. She was surprised. Judy had never opposed her openly like this.

“Listen, I am the one who agreed to let you come in and be his second wife!” She exploded.

“Why did he need your permission?” Judy questioned softly.

Juanita’s eyes now blazed as she took a step toward her sister wife.

“Because in our marriage vows he promised to keep only unto me!” Juanita blurted out and then paused. “He needed my permission to break that vow!” She said triumphantly as she threw her head back.

There was a pause.

George was taken aback, shocked at the whole interchange and then Judy

spoke again softly.

“So you’re saying that his vow to you was more important than his vow to be obedient to God?”

“What . . . I . . . uh . . .” Juanita stuttered, shocked that the usually quiet and submissive Judy would challenge her in such a way.

“The Bible says in Ecclesiastes if you make a vow to God that you must not break it!” Juanita blurted out.

“And suppose God disallows the vow?” Judy responded, still speaking softly with her head down.

“What do you mean?” Juanita snapped.

“The Bible also says” Judy began her quiet response “that if a wife makes a vow, her husband can disallow it and it shall not stand.”

“And what does that have to do with the price of tea in China?” Juanita demanded to know, not understanding the connection.

Judy looked up from her seated position and directly into Juanita’s eyes. “George is seeking to be a part of the bride of Christ. As such he is betrothed to Him. If Jesus didn’t approve of the vow when he said it, then it does not stand.”

She paused.

“We know that Jesus didn’t want George to remain monogamous so obviously He didn’t approve of the vow.”

She paused again as Juanita took a step back. Juanita’s mouth fell open at what she was hearing.

George thought he needed your permission to break the vow, but in actuality, he never did!” Judy said as she stood up and threw her palms up as if to say that the point was obvious.

“Well . . . I . . . never . . .” Judy stuttered again. “George, I am going to my

room!” she screamed.

Out the door she flew and slammed it behind her with a bang.

Judy . . . uh . . .” George started before being interrupted by the phone.

Ring, ring.

George’s cell phone was ringing again.

“Hello!” he said abruptly.

“Oh, yes” he said.

“What? Where? Well, uh, yes, I guess so.

Fine, bye.” He hung up.

“We are going to Dallas, Texas” he exclaimed.

“Really?” Judy questioned. “All of us or just you and me?”

A clouded frown came over George’s face at this point, he couldn’t really be sure.

● The End -

Of Part I

Chapter 21

“Dallas? What’s this I hear about going to Dallas?” Shawanda questioned as she strode into George’s hotel room, slamming the door behind her.

“Before we get into that,” George began, “let’s clear the air on some things left from yesterday.”

Shawanda whirled around and spread her feet apart and put her hands on her hips in a defiant posture. She lowered her chin and looked up from underneath her eyelids.

“I had hoped that after you slept on it, you’d think about what disaster it would be for you to marry that woman and change your mind!” She said slowly and deliberately.

“Whether I do or don’t or who I choose to marry or not marry has to be my decision dear, don’t you see that” he said softly as he moved toward her. As he came close he attempted to place his hands on her shoulders.

“Don’t put your hands on me!” she snapped as she knocked his arms away with her hands. With that she whirled around and gazed out the window.

“Look, honey babe . . .” George began again before he was interrupted by a knock at the door.

“Who is it!” he snapped out harshly with irritation in his voice.

“It’s Judy and Juanita” came the answer from the other side of the door. George turned and blew a breath of air out of his mouth.

“Come in, come in” he responded.

As his other two wives entered the room they sensed the tension in the air. “Is everything all right?” Judy asked tentatively.

“Is everything all right ?!” Shawanda repeated as she turned her head and shoulder enough to see Judy and Juanita. “I really don’t think so!” She said

mockingly with a snarl on her face.

George took a step back as he blinked his eyes. This was a side of his third wife that he had never seen before.

Suddenly, Shawanda whirled around to face George and the other two wives. “What do you two have to say about this?” she questioned as her eye went back and forth from one woman to the other.

“Do we have any say in this weird family?” she asked. “Or is George here going to be little Mr. Kingpin with his harem of slave women?”

George winced as he heard her words. “Please, honey dear, sit down” he pleaded.

“Don’t honey dear me now!” Shawanda retorted angrily. “if you really want that big slob to come and be one of your wives then maybe you don’t want me!”

George rose from the seat he had taken and raised his own voice a bit. “Dear, you know that’s not true.” He said sternly. “You know that I love you!”

The other two women stared in shock, not knowing what to say or what to do.

George turned to Juanita and Judy with a pleading look in his eye. “Perhaps you’d better give us some time alone to work this out” he suggested.

Judy turned toward the door to leave, but Juanita hesitated.

“What’s the matter!” Shawanda jumped in again. “Don’t you want them to know just where they stand?” she questioned. Her head now moved from side to side as she waved her finger at George. “When I came into this family, I thought I would be the last wife you’d need,” she stated flatly.

“We all thought that” Juanita said quietly.

“Perhaps, perhaps, none of us knows what God has planned for our lives Judy added hesitantly.

“Yeah, but is it God?” Shawanda questioned. “Or is it his flesh?” She said as she turned side ways with her body and turned her head back for a moment to sneer at George. “Maybe, just maybe, it’s his ego!”

“Ego?” George questioned as he raised his voice.

Shawanda turned her head back at him and then lowered her chin a bit.

“Yes, ego, you can spell that P-R-I-D-E!” she shouted loudly.

“Listen, Charles is coming to meet us here . . .” George began before being interrupted.

“And SO!!” Shawanda shot back at him. “I appreciate Charles, but he ain’t God!” she announced.

They were interrupted by a knock at the door. All were perturbed by the interruption, but would have been much more than that if they knew the person on the other side would only exacerbate the situation.

Chapter 22

Juanita went to the door and looked through the peephole. “It’s sister Beatrice” she reported as she turned and raised her eyebrows.

George then threw his hands up and let them fall again in exasperation. “Tell her we’re busy right now” he said with irritation in his voice.

Juanita opened the door only a slight bit to deliver the message, but when she did, Beatrice pushed it further open and forced her way in.

“Good morning, everyone!” she said cheerily.

Juanita’s mouth dropped open. She also now was being seriously irked by the brusqueness of this woman.

“Speak of the devil!” Shawanda said wryly as she rolled her eyes up toward the ceiling and began to turn her back toward the intruder.

“No, deary, I am not the devil, although I may bring him out in you!” Beatrice shot back.

“What?” Shawanda shouted as she turned back with her eyes wide at such an incredulous remark.

“Don’t you know what the word says, Missy?”

Shawanda’s mouth dropped open, amazed that anyone could be so brazen, but before she could respond Beatrice went on.

“Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope that the love of God . . .” she paused a moment to let that last phrase sink in. “That the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts.” Beatrice paused a moment and smiled like a Cheshire cat.

“Sister, this is not a good time!” George intervened, placing himself between Shawanda and Beatrice, but facing Beatrice.

“Oh, okay Snookums,” Beatrice responded, “I just dropped by on my way to work to invite you and your . . . uh . . . family by for dinner tonight.”

“Well, I don’t know, if that is such a good idea right now” George hedged.

“What’s the matter, honey?” She questioned. She cooed as if talking to a baby. “Won’t your wives let you?”

George was now taken aback. His manhood had been challenged.

“NO!” he said sternly. “It’s not that!”

“Oh, so you are indeed head of your household then?” She queried, knowing she was placing him into her trap.

“Yes, I’m the head . . .” George began before being interrupted again.

“Have you made previous arrangements?” Beatrice questioned, as she smiled at him and glanced out the side of her eyes.

“No, but . . .” George began again only to be interrupted once more.

“Then come to my house and eat a real down home cooked meal and get away from this hotel food” she urged.

“Well, okay . . . we’ll be there” George relented.

“Good, I expect all of you.” She sang over her shoulder as she bent back to see Shawanda who was still eyeing her coldly. As she moved toward the door she slipped a piece of paper with the address on it into George’s hand and then tiptoed a bit as she pulled his neck down so she could kiss his cheek.

“Have a good day!” she sang out as she left and closed the door gently behind herself.

“The nerve of that woman!” Shawanda mumbled.

“Yeah, I have to admit, she’s got guts all right!” George commented as he turned to see how his other wives had taken all of this.

Shawanda plopped down in a chair and folded her arms over her chest. “I know you do not expect me to go there!” she stated firmly.

George was caught in a quandary. If he forced Shawanda to go, there might be sparks flying around the dinner table. If he didn't have her go but allowed her to stay at the hotel, it could look like he was not the patriarch who was in control of his family.

Chapter 23

“Hey, let’s go for a walk,” Judy suggested to Shawanda. Shawanda looked up from her seated position and hesitated before answering.

“Good idea!” she responded finally. “It’s a bit stuffy in here.”

The two sister wives walked along the streets of the shopping district. Occasionally they stopped to gaze into the windows of various shops but for a long time neither said anything.

“It’s hard, I know” Judy said quietly.

Shawanda didn’t respond as the pair continued to walk.

“You think you’re going to have a certain amount of time with your man and then it looks like even that small amount of time might be reduced” Judy continued.

Shawanda swallowed hard, eyed Judy out of the corner of her eye, but said nothing.

“As Christians we know we should love our neighbor as ourself. We say amen when that is preached. We agree with it when we read it in God’s word, but . . . but living it out is sometimes hard.” Judy stated and then stopped talking.

They walked another half of a block before Shawanda said anything. “Yes, it is hard!” she said simply.

They continued to walk.

Silence continued for a long time. Finally they decided to make a right turn to head a different direction.

“If . . . if . . . she wasn’t so obnoxious!” Shawanda said dryly.

“Yes, I know” Judy responded. “It’s easy to love the lovely, but not always

so easy to love the unlovely.” She paused for several steps and then continued. “But God loves her.”

Silence for a few more steps.

“Our duty is to grow into the type of love that God has.” Judy paused again. “At least that is my goal, and I’m sure it’s yours too!”

Shawanda bit down on her lower lip and finally responded after a time. “I hate to admit it, but I know you’re right.”

Chapter 24

As they arrived at the small house, Judy warned her two boys to be on their best behavior.

Ding dong, Ding dong.

Presently Beatrice appeared at the door.

“Hello Snookums” she said to George as she gave him a big hug and a kiss on the cheek. “Come in, come in” she said warmly.

George stepped aside to let his wives and Judy’s boys go in first. Each greeted Beatrice cordially. Shawanda was the last before George to enter.

“Oh, she did come Beatrice remarked to George while looking at Shawanda.

Shawanda forced a smile. “Yes, sister Beatrice, I am here too. Thank you for the invitation.”

Beatrice was taken aback by the change in Shawanda’s demeanor, but was not yet sure whether it was sincere or a trap. She decided to be cautious and test the waters further.

As they moved briefly through the front room and toward the combination dining room kitchen they smelled the aroma of pot roast, sweet potatoes, greens and home made bread.

“Here, Snookums” she said to George. “Have a seat at the head of the table and let’s see . . .” -- she paused and put her left forefinger to her chin - “how would you like to arrange your wives?”

“Well, why don’t you sit next to George?” Shawanda broke in. “And Judy and I can sit on the sides of the table and Juanita wouldn’t mind sitting at the opposite end, I’m sure” she said with a demure smile.

“Hey, hey, that’s a change in attitude, what did you do, big daddy?” she said, speaking to George. “Paddle her to put her in her place?” she asked.

“No!” George said sternly, “I don’t whip my wives.”

“Okay, okay, Snookums, I was just teasing” she said with a broad smile as she bumped George with her right hip.

Meanwhile Shawanda closed her eyes and bit her bottom lip. It was taking every ounce of control she had to not burst out with another tirade against this woman.

The boys were placed at a card table nearby and everyone sat down to a very delicious meal.

As they were moving on to peach cobbler smothered with vanilla ice cream, Shawanda tried again to be friendly.

“I must say you are a wonderful cook Beatrice, how did you learn to cook so well?” she asked.

Beatrice rocked back in her chair. Everyone held their breath for a moment. It was obvious that Shawanda was trying but it was also obvious that Beatrice continued to try to bait her. Each adult at the table wondered if Beatrice would say or do something that would be the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Chapter 25

Beatrice closed her eyes a moment and then opened them again. “I grew up in a household where my mom and my grandmother who lived with us, loved to cook. I used to love to taste all the cooking and cakes and pies,” she began.

She paused, looked down at herself, and then up again as she continued speaking. “I guess that’s the reason I am the size I am.” She chuckled a bit at the end of that statement.

She gazed up at the ceiling as she remembered her childhood days and then continued. “When you’re seven and eight and nine, you don’t care about boys, I used to love to play cook and stayed in the kitchen most of the time.”

She paused again. The smile left her face and she began to frown.

“Then the attacks of the other kids began.” Her eyes moistened. “I was called fatty, and fatso, and tub of lard and a number of other things that kids so cruelly call those of us who didn’t fit in.”

A tear began to creep down her cheek, but she quickly wiped it away with her finger. She looked at each of the others at the table. Juanita and Shawanda looked down at their plates. They were thinking of their own childhoods and how they had been a part of the tormentors of children who were on the heavy side. They had gone along with the crowd, buckled under peer pressure and caused intense emotional pain to little obese kids and never considered the possible harm they were doing at the time.

They each sensed that their guilt would be obvious in their faces and therefore tried to hide it by looking down or away from Beatrice.

“All the skinny girls with big breasts got the star athletes. Other girls got the left overs, and we more . . .” she paused and smiled at her guests “more full figured ladies were left with only our imaginations and fantasies.”

George groaned within himself. “I’m sorry you had such a tough childhood,” he started to say, then was interrupted by the ring of his

cellphone.

“Wh . . . excuse me,” he said as he got up and walked away from the table.

“Hello? Yes, okay. Fine, we’ll be there.”

That was Charles, he announced as he came back to the table. His plane will be coming in tomorrow morning. He was able to fly standby and got an earlier flight than he expected.

“Who’s Charles?” Beatrice questioned.

“He is a friend of ours from Kenya” George responded. “One who often has the wisdom of God.”

Still he secretly wondered whether Charles’ wisdom would bring pain to some of his wives or would it be able to resolve things in an amiable manner.

Shawanda had been on the verge of leaving and Judy’s comments had put a wedge between herself and Juanita.

He prayed that Charles O’Kinyi’s wisdom would bring them back together and not drive them apart.

Chapter 26

George and Juanita were at the airport to meet Charles O’Kinyi. The plane was to have arrived at 10:05. It was now nearly 11:30 and still their good friend and spiritual leader had not come through the arrival gates.

George nervously glanced down at his watch again.

“Don’t worry” Juanita consoled him, “You know it’s a lot more difficult for foreigners to get through customs and immigration these days.”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right” George muttered.

Just then O’Kinyi came through the doors with a hand bag over one shoulder and carrying another suitcase.

“Praise the Lord! My brethren” he said with a big smile as he saw his old friends.

“Praise God indeed!” George responded. “How are you?”

“I am blessed” came the familiar reply.

As they settled into their rented van, George began to apprise Charles of the various things that had gone on.

Charles sat quietly in the front passenger seat, staring at the road ahead but saying nothing.

“Well, what do you think?” George questioned after completing the story.

“It’s not important what I might think” Charles began slowly. “What is important is what the Lord thinks.”

He paused and glanced over at his friend with a slight smile.

“Let me pray. I need to seek the mind of Christ,” he said simply. With that, he closed his eyes and slid down in his seat, and said nothing more until they arrived at the hotel. As the trio walked into the hotel room, George noticed that his other two wives were there and waiting for them.

Where are the boys?” George asked.

“Cheryl took them to their house to play, so we wouldn’t have any interruptions” Judy explained.

“So Charles,” Shawanda began. “What is your opinion?” she stressed the word opinion, fearing that he might not agree with her.

“Do we, as wives, have a say in what happens in our family, or does George get to be a little dictator with his harem of women?” she questioned.

George winced at her characterization but bit his lip and remained silent.

“Or,” Judy jumped in, “should George function as the head of the family as the Bible says he should or should he give in to requests for gender equality to be politically correct and try to avoid strife and turmoil?”

Shawanda narrowed her eyes at Judy for a moment, and then all eyes were turned toward Charles as they waited for his answers.

Chapter 27

George offered Charles the most comfortable chair in the hotel room.

Charles took his seat, thought for a moment and then smiled before he began speaking.

“George has shared with me a bit of the discussion and debate that has gone on” he began. “Since then I have been praying about and seeking God’s wisdom on what to say and how to say it. We must remember that Satan seeks to steal, kill and destroy. His method - or should I say one of his methods - is to divide us in order to conquer us.”

Charles paused and looked around the room and into each of the eyes of the others there. Everyone was attentive. He went on.

“Satan is clever enough to even use Scripture to divide us or to try to get us off track. You remember that he tried to use Scripture to get Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the Temple.”

Charles paused again to let that sink in and then continued.

“In the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, we read that a man must love his wife as his own flesh. Of course, for those of us with more than one wife it means we must love each of them as our own flesh. We must love and cherish our wives. This means we must be willing to hear what they have to say. We must be willing to consider their thoughts and emotions. We must adore and appreciate them.”

As Charles paused again, George poured him a glass of water from the pitcher that sat on the table near his seat. Charles drank a sip of water and then continued.

“A man who loves his wives as his own flesh is not going to run roughshod over them. He is not going to be a dictator throwing his weight around unnecessarily and trying to control his wives’ every thought and action. No! A man who follows God loves his wives. I believe George is a follower of God, don’t you?” He asked.

“Yes” Juanita whispered quietly.

Judy nodded her head affirmatively.

Shawanda took a deep breath and then glanced over at George and back at

Charles. “Yeah, he tries” she grudgingly admitted as a slight smile creased her lips.

“A man’s word is very important,” Charles went on. “In Numbers chapter 30 and in Ecclesiastes chapter 5 we see the need to keep a vow unto God,” Charles said. “Unfortunately, Satan has used that in America and the West to trap men into unscriptural vows as they marry, saying ‘I will keep only to you so long as we both shall live.’”

He paused and shook his head.

“All of you know by now, that that is not scriptural for a man to vow.” He paused again for effect.

“Yet it is in almost all the marriage vows in the Western world!” George added.

“Yes, perhaps” Charles went on, “that is why Jesus said let your yes be yes and your nay be nay and anything more than this cometh of evil.”

“So perhaps” Judy began to add “perhaps Jesus knew that Satan would use the vows in marriage to hurt women.”

“Yes, exactly!” Charles confirmed. “Among other things as well,” he added.

“So sometimes we hit a crossroads where to obey one Scripture is to contradict or go against another Scripture. What then is one to do?” Charles asked rhetorically, and yet paused for effect.

“They that are lead by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.” He quoted from Romans 8:14. “As you all know the word sons there in the Greek signifies mature sons. Wives are told to submit to their husbands, not vice versa, so on the surface it would appear that George could choose to marry Beatrice regardless of what any of you think.”

Shawanda drew in a deep breath and began to clench her teeth.

Charles went on, “But because he loves you, all of you, I’m sure he will take into consideration what your thoughts and feelings are on the matter.”

Shawanda relaxed a bit.

“George” Charles called his name sharply and turned to face him directly. “You must make absolutely sure that you have no desire for an additional wife out of the lust of your flesh or out of the lust of the eyes or out of the pride of life! Many men in America and the West want to have a number of wives merely because they want more sexual partners. This is sad!” Charles said as he shook his head slowly from side to side and looked down at the floor.

He looked up again. “Then again in Africa there are many men who want several wives for the prestige!” He shrugged his shoulders. “How sad. These are wrong reasons to want wives. If a man is truly seeking to go on with God . . .” - Charles stopped in mid sentence for effect - “He wants additional wives only because he truly believes that God wants it for him! A man will never know that for sure unless he is truly seeking God’s wisdom and he has put aside the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life!”

Charles concluded.

Now George cleared his throat to add his thoughts, but the session wouldn’t end until Shawanda had her say as well.

Chapter 28

“Well, she doesn’t appeal to me in the natural realm” George shared. “I hadn’t even considered her as a potential wife until she came up and asked me” he continued. “So there is no lust of the eyes or lust of the flesh

involved. And with no offense intended, but Charles, even you know that there is no pride to be had in being with a big woman in America. America's ideal is a girl with a thin waist and large breasts!"

George paused.

Several nodded the heads in the affirmative, indicating that what he said was true.

"It was my lovely Judy, here, that pointed out . . ." he paused as he walked over and put his arm around his second wife ". . . that the woman is hurting! She wants love, perhaps she wants children. Is that so bad?" he questioned.

"No! It's not bad!" Shawanda jumped in, "but she's got to fit in! Would you destroy the rest of us and our relationship just to help her out?" She demanded to know.

"Why would it destroy anything?" George countered, raising his voice.

"Whoa! Okay, okay, hold on folks," Charles stepped in by standing to his feet and a palm of each hand toward the feuding pair. "This is something that requires a lot of prayer on everyone's part. Shawanda, you need to understand that God sometimes allows people in our lives to bring out the flesh in us" Charles said calmly.

"The flesh!?" Shawanda questioned.

"Yes, sometimes we don't realize what the impurities in us are, until we have been tried by the fire," he explained.

"Right!" George snapped.

"And you my dear friend" Charles pointed to George "need to be absolutely sure it is God's perfect will for you before you consider adding another wife, even if she thinks she wants to be added."

Charles paused again and looked back and forth from Shawanda to George and then at the other two wives.

"This is too important for me to decide for you" Charles announced. "Even

if I thought that I had the right word of God for you, I'd let you find it out yourself. Otherwise, you would always blame me for whatever decision you made."

Finally Juanita spoke up. "I think we should all pray and see if we can come to a consensus."

"Yes, that makes sense," Charles replied. "Nevertheless, the final decision is George's."

Shawanda drew in another deep breath but said nothing.

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Trueblood called" George announced.

"Who's that?" Charles inquired.

"A man we met in the airport in Amsterdam" George explained. "He wants us to share a teaching on polygamy at a men's group in Texas."

"When?" Juanita asked.

"This next weekend" George replied.

Good, Shawanda thought, that would take them away from Beatrice and then maybe George would forget all about her. After all, she thought, I was nice to her, maybe that was good enough.

Her thoughts eased her mind but her calculations were dead wrong.

Chapter 29

Compared to the flights to Africa the flight to Dallas was a short one. They had decided to arrive a few days earlier so they would be able to shop and see the city.

Shawanda sat next to George on the plane. Judy and her boys were a few rows back and Charles had a seat next to Juanita.

“Look, Muscles . . .” Shawanda began, using her old nickname for George. “I know you’re praying about it and I know it’s your decision, but you need to throw this into the consideration.”

She paused to make sure she had his attention.

“Yes, honey babe” George responded as he turned to look her in the eyes.

“I . . . I . . . don’t know if I’m going to stick around if you marry her.” She said with a very serious tone in her voice.

“Honey babe!” George stated in frustration, “you can’t give me that kind of ultimatum” he retorted. “That sort of thing is the same type of manipulation device that other American women use on their husbands to control them!”

He paused and blew out a breath of air and then went on. “I thought we were past that type of thing!” he lamented.

Shawanda turned her head away and then looked straight ahead as she spoke. “I thought you wanted me!”

Silence.

“I thought you wanted me! Yes, I knew you had the other two but I thought that I was to be the last!” she complained. “I had no idea you would even consider adding another! Where does it end, George?” she questioned.

George blew out another breath, through his lips and turned his head away for a moment. Then, looking back at Shawanda, he answered. “The question is not what I want, honey babe, but what does the Lord want?”

“So you say,” Shawanda replied dryly. “Are you sure, George, that you won’t just hear what you want to hear?” She asked, not really expecting an answer.

There was silence for a while as they both looked straight ahead.

Finally, George broke the silence.

“Look, Shawanda, you know I love you. There should be no question about that!

When you agreed to be a biblical wife, there was no ‘out’ clause, if you weren’t happy for a few days or a few weeks or even months.

Marriage is supposed to be for life.”

He paused.

“Please don’t look for some easy way out simply because you think things might not be going your way right now.”

George knew she was on the verge of leaving. He didn’t want that, yet at the same time it was his duty to obey God. He had to pray and listen for God’s leading. Still, he wondered if he would be able to hear clearly when God might tell him to do that which could cause him to lose his ‘honey babe.’

Chapter 30

While Charles O’Kinyi remained in his Dallas hotel room praying, George and his wives went out for a stroll to see the stores in the area.

It was mid afternoon and there were many people walking up and down the sidewalk. George and Juanita walked together side by side and Judy and Shawanda walked behind them, allowing for passers by in the opposite direction.

“Hey, baby!” a voice called out. Shawanda recognized it was a black man’s voice and turned to see a tall, handsome mid-thirtyish man walking right behind her. She gave him a quick smile but continued her pace, keeping up with the others.

“Slow down, sweet stuff!” he said. “I want to talk to you.”

At this point George realized that the man was speaking to his Shawanda and decided to intercede.

“Uh, excuse me” George said as he turned to face the speaker and stopped.

“Uh yes, what did you do to be excused?” the man asked with a chuckle.

“She is with me!” George stated firmly.

“Oh, really now” the man responded with a laugh in his voice. “Well,” he went on, “I want to see if she’d rather be with me.” The man turned and looked down at Shawanda with a warm, inviting smile.

“She’s my wife!” George said more boldly as he grabbed Shawanda’s arm to pull her behind himself.

The man drew his head back and frowned. “Well, if that is the case, why are you walking with her?” he asked as he pointed toward Juanita.

“I am his wife also” Juanita said, speaking up for herself.

“And so am I,” Judy added.

“Oh no, I don’t believe this!” the man responded. “Look, sugar,” the man said looking past George and directly into Shawanda’s eyes. “You can do better than this!” he said as his eyes briefly darted in George’s direction. “Why be a white man’s mistress when you could be with me?” he said with a smile and a wink.

“Okay! That’s enough, just leave us alone” George demanded.

The man was at least as muscular as George was and he was a slight bit

taller. His boldness showed that he had no fear of George and this intrigued Shawanda.

“Look, babe” he said as he reached inside the sport jacket he was wearing and into his shirt pocket. “Here’s my card, honey. Give me a call.” He said as he handed the card to Shawanda.

Just as she reached up to take it, George snatched the card and tore it up. He then looked directly into the eyes of the man and tossed the torn bits to the wind.

“Be careful, my friend, you can get a ticket for littering” the man said in response to George’s actions. He then turned his attention back to Shawanda. “My name is Gerald W. Robinson the third” he said as he leaned forward and spoke softly over George’s shoulder to Shawanda. Then he backed up a step, smiled and added “I’m in the phone book. Look me up and give me a call.”

With that he pivoted around and headed the opposite direction.

George was angry and frustrated. He turned red in the face. “Let’s go back to the hotel,” he ordered.

With Shawanda on the brink of desertion, and a big speech coming up and the need to pray about Beatrice, this was the last thing he needed. He hoped Shawanda wouldn’t be tempted to call him, but right now he couldn’t be sure she wouldn’t.

Chapter 31

George had fasted, prayed and reviewed his message. The day was here. He was to speak at a men’s convention on the patriarchal movement, including a mention of polygamy. Phone calls from Trueblood after he had arrived in Dallas indicated that the group was a little nervous about polygamy being his primary message, so they had asked that it be shifted a bit to emphasize other things as well.

Since the meeting was only for men, George’s wives were asked to stay behind at the hotel. A car had been sent for them and George and Charles

sat in the back of the limousine and enjoyed good conversation and the view of Dallas as they slowly wound through the streets to the convention site.

As they entered the huge dining hall, they observed that there were some 150 or so round tables. In the front of the room on a raised platform was a rectangular table with a podium and microphone in the middle.

They had arrived a bit early and a waiter scurried over to meet them as they stood at the door. "Can I help you gentlemen?" he asked.

"I'm George Meadows, the speaker for tonight's meeting."

"Welcome Mr. Meadows" the waiter responded as he glanced from the side of his eyes and back to ask without asking why the black man beside him was there. George was about to respond to the unspoken question when Trueblood walked in.

"George Meadows, how are you?" he questioned as he reached out to shake his hand and slapped him on the back at the same time. "And . . . who is this?" he questioned.

"This is my friend Charles O'Kinyi" George responded.

"Oh . . . Okay . . . well, uh . . . Robert" he spoke to the waiter "please make a place for Mr. O'Kinyi at one of the back tables here."

"Wait a minute" George responded "I was hoping he'd be able to sit near the front."

"Well . . . uh, the front tables are all taken up by dignitaries . . ." Trueblood began to say.

"That's okay, George" Charles interrupted. "I'll be fine back here."

George considered protesting more but he could tell from O'Kinyi's facial expression that he didn't want that.

Others began to come in and take their places while George was escorted to a place at the table near the podium onstage. Waiters in white jackets efficiently moved about and served the meal of the more than 300 men that

arrived.

Although George tried to make light conversations with those sitting next to him his mind was really on his message. How would these men take what he had to say, he questioned within himself. One more hour and he'd know.

Chapter 32

Finally the time came.

“Today we have a man who I met in the airport in Europe. Yet he is an all American. He's not a Muslim and he's not a Mormon, but he has three wives and he wants to tell us about restoring man's rightful position as a Patriarch today. Let's welcome George Meadows.”

With that there was a polite applause.

George stood up. He was nervous. His palms were sweating. He looked for

Charles but he could hardly see him at that distance.

“Somehow things have gotten turned upside down!” he began. “Women rule in America!”

There was almost a collective gasp from the audience. George knew he now had their attention.

“Why do I say women rule? Not because women are the majority in congress, because they’re not. They rule at the most basic level. They rule the marriage. How, you say? They rule their husbands. In over 70% of the households, the women control the finances. Was it one of the Rothchilds that said “Let me control a nation’s money and I care not who makes it’s laws?”

He paused for dramatic effect.

“How is that women have gradually taken control?” George asked, not expecting them to answer but putting the question before them so he could answer it himself. “First they demanded the right to vote. Okay, we gave them that. Then they demanded the right to birth control. They got that too. Eventually they said they wanted the men’s jobs. And we began to train them for these, and let them have them. They demanded the right to control their own bodies; that is, the right to murder our unborn sons and daughters. The Supreme Court gave them that.

“They demanded to be in the military, and we lowered the standards for them. They demanded the right to have divorce on demand and they’ve gotten that too! Little by little they gained more and more and in the process taken away the authority from the man. Now if a man seeks to be the head of his home, he can’t.”

He paused again and looked around the room. Every eye was on him. Many of the men were in business suits. A few were more casual. There was one who looked to be very young, not much more than a teenager who sat in the back and had a baseball cap on.

“Why can’t he?” George forged on with his speech. “Because if he tries to exercise his authority to be the head and to control the destiny of his family, a wife can sue him for divorce for merely being unhappy.”

George paused again, reflecting on his own situation that he was currently facing.

“If she divorces him, the courts will usually grant her the house and the custody of the children and will make him pay either child support or alimony or both.”

“Yeah, that’s right!” Someone yelled out.

“Is that biblical order?”

George noticed that some in the audience stiffened. He had forgotten momentarily that this was not a Christian audience but a secular one. He guessed there might be a few nominal Christians in the audience but he’d have to be a bit more selective with his wording.

“God ordained that man is to be the head of the family.”

“You tell ’em!” someone yelled.

“Mr. Trueblood mentioned my three wives. Most of us who grew up in the Western world have been indoctrinated that it’s wrong! That indoctrination has been reinforced by romance films and books and by the education system that says monogamy is the norm and by the government who outlawed more than one legal marriage and it has been reinforced by most religious institutions.

“Yet if you really look at history, you’ll find that it was a Roman tradition that was brought into the Church and then passed down to us. Many of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament were polygamous men. This includes Abraham, Israel, Moses, Gideon and David. We don’t think less of them because they had several or even many wives, do we?”

George paused. As he looked around, he saw many nod in agreement. The guy in the back with the baseball cap though sat still unmoving and with arms crossed in front of his chest.

“When a man could have two or more wives but a woman could not have more than one husband, there was no question who was in charge. The

removal of polygamy as a possibility was Satan's first step toward raising women above men."

He paused again.

"Oh yes, it's taken much more than that, but I contend that it was his first in a series of moves to make this into the matriarchal society that is has become."

George began to see more and more nods of agreement and occasional vocalizations agreeing with his position.

"To correct things we have to know our history and then go back to the first wrong move and correct that!"

He was on a roll now. He went on to talk of the various Roman Catholic edicts regarding marriage. How marriage eventually came under the direction of the Church, and then under the State. He talked about the Counsel of Trent and the Mormon Principle and the Morill Act. Finally his time was about up. He was about to close out when the unexpected happened.

Chapter 33

“You’re a rotten male chauvinist pig!” Came a loud shout from the back of the room.

Everyone was startled. The guy with the baseball cap had stood up and removed the cap. It could now be seen that he was a she!

A female in disguise had secretly gained entrance to the meeting to spy on what was being said.

“I know who you are! Mr. George Meadows! Everyone in the NAW will know!” she shouted.

“Who’s NAW” George whispered to Mr. Trueblood, who was now standing next to him.

“The National Association of Women” he whispered back.

“Some of you men grab that woman and put her out of here,” Mr. Trueblood ordered over the microphone.

“We’re not going back to the stone age!” she declared as she was being dragged out. “We’ll never be the slaves of men again!”

“George Meadows” she screamed “your name will go down as the arch enemy of all women!”

“Thank you for removing that disturbance,” George said. “However, you know it’s not the women who are the enemy, it’s the devil himself.

“I believe he has had a long term plan in place for centuries to turn the world upside down.

“In the Bible we read that Solomon’s heart was turned after other gods by the women he married from strange lands.

“One of these was a goddess named Ashtoreth. She is also called Ishtar by the Akkadians and Astarte by the Greeks. The Romans had the goddess Venus and other female goddesses. So Satan has been working for a long time to get man to worship the female.

“In the first century there was a man named Ovid who wrote satirical essays called ‘The Art of Love.’ This spoke of a man worshipping a woman in pursuit of her. He wrote facetiously, and the people at the time knew he was not serious. Later, Shakespeare and others promoted this as the ideal form of love. The romantic idea has permeated our society to such an extent that it is promoted as a Christian concept. Hardly anyone in the Western world would consider marriage unless they ‘feel’ they have ‘fallen’ in love first.

‘In addition, as the Roman Catholic Church took on the characteristics of the pagans, among which was the worship of goddesses, we find Mary being exalted to be the ‘queen of heaven,’ and having people pray to her.

“I have come to the conclusion that part of the problem is that people in the West have exalted romance to the point of worship. The rules of romantic

love say that there is one man and one woman exclusive to each other and anything else is cheating. God's rule is not romantic love but agape love. That's God's type of love. God's rules for agape love say that a woman can have only one husband, but a man can love many wives.

"We in the West are continually indoctrinated that romantic love and its rules are the only ones that apply, and anything else is wrong. Unfortunately, the Churches also teach this.

"The exaltation of the woman to be revered in marriage has also evolved to the point where many if not most women in the West would be highly disturbed if their husbands did not worship them, do their bidding, and let them have their way. Any man who failed to do so would be accused of mental or emotional abuse if not worse.

"Many other societies in the East were based on arranged marriages or marriages after a few meetings. Apparently these marriages often last longer than their so called romantic counterparts. The closest word to "romantic" in the Greek language is "eros." This word is never used in the New Testament. The words for love are agape and phileo. Phileo is defined as a family type of love or care one for another. Agape is God's type of love which is giving not based on expectation of reciprocation.

"God expects men to have agape love for their wives. Women are expected to reverence their husbands. It should not be the reverse where women rule and men reverence them. See Ephesians 5:33. Women are to call their husbands lord -- boss, ruler, master -- 1 Peter 3:6. They should treat them so, and not the reverse as we see it most often in the West. Men oftentimes actually say 'I have to check with the boss,' meaning their wives. This should not be so."

"There were curious looks amongst the audience. Men glanced around nodding their heads, indicating they were impressed by George's knowledge.

Then George continued. "Romantic love is the ideal today. It is promoted by the media, Hollywood, books, magazines, education, government, and religious institutions.

"The word romantic comes from a French word which comes from a Latin

word meaning of Rome. In romantic love one worships the woman. We can see this in that when a man proposes, he often bows down on one knee as she sits or stands before him. He asks for her hand in marriage, and even in the ceremony he promises undying love to ONLY HER.

“Jesus said you cannot have two masters.

“She then becomes the one master as is evidenced by the majority of marriages in the Unites States.”

“There was a smattering of applause as many wanted to show their approval and agreement with what was being said.

“BUT THAT IS WRONG!!!” He yelled.

George emphasized it even more by pounding his fist upon the lectern.

“The man is supposed to be the master of the household, not the woman!

“The man can have more than one woman because he is the master, but the woman can only have one master, one husband.

“A man’s master is Jesus Christ . . . or at least He should be!

“Your wife cannot be your master, because it’s not Scriptural!

“Jesus said, you would love the one and hate the other, or you would cling to the one and despise the other.”

He paused again, realizing to himself that the Spirit had just taught him a lesson about his own situation.

If he clung to Shawanda, he might be despising God in not hearing what He wanted concerning Beatrice.

“We have to decide . . .” he continued “whether we’re going to be masters or the slaves of our wives!”

There came even more applause now. When the applause died down, he continued.

“Now I’m not saying we should abuse our wives . . . in any way. Not physically, nor emotionally, not even verbally. We should love our wives as our own bodies as the word of God says we should.

“Yet it is also true that they should reverence us, not us them.

“They should obey us, not us obey them.”

His voice grew louder and stronger.

“They should submit to us, and it is not we who should submit to them!

WE - MUST - BE - MEN!!!” He ended with a shout.

There was a spontaneous round of applause and a standing ovation. The men clapped and roared. George sat down and felt good. Nevertheless, the day was not over yet.

Chapter 34

As Charles and George exited the limousine in front of their hotel, they saw Shawanda standing out front waiting for them.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” George questioned.

“Wrong?” Shawanda repeated with a mock smile. “What could be wrong?”

“Shawanda,” he said firmly. “What is going on?”

“Well, you have a visitor,” she answered.

“Really? Where is he” George asked.

“Not he” Shawanda responded. “She!”

“Where?” George questioned.

“Inside the lobby” Juanita said, pointing toward the hotel.

They moved back inside the building.

“Hey Snookums!” Beatrice waved as she saw him enter.

“What?” George began as Beatrice made her way over to him. “How did you get here?” George queried.

“Same as you, sugar dumpling” she replied. “You didn’t think you were the only one that could purchase a plane ticket to Dallas, did you?”

“But . . .” George stammered, not knowing what to say. “How did you know where we were?”

“Honey Poo, a girl has ways of finding out what she wants to know” she cooed.

Beatrice pulled George down to her and whispered something into his ear.

“Yes,” George replied simply.

Shawanda hadn’t heard the question, only the answer . . . but she guessed she knew what that question was. They rode up together on the elevator with Beatrice hanging on his arm. Reaching the seventh floor where George and the others had secured rooms they moved down the hallway and entered. Juanita and Judy rose from their seats.

“How did it go, George?” Juanita questioned, before seeing Beatrice, who came in after him.

“Well, hello!” Judy greeted her.

“Surprise!” Beatrice exclaimed. “And guess who is going to be your new sister wife?”

They were all shocked for a moment. Eyes widened, and mouths dropped open.

“Well, welcome to the family,” Judy said as she went over to hug her.

Juanita drew a deep breath but slowly went over to shake her hand.

George turned to look at Shawanda. Her eyes met his and then were downcast toward the floor. “Are you okay, Shawanda?” George asked.

She glanced up briefly. “Yeah, I’m okay,” she said sadly, as she turned to leave the room.

“Will you be okay?” he asked, concerned about her long term well being.

“Yes, George, I will be okay!” she said firmly. She exited the room, closing the door gently behind her.

Meanwhile the others began to explain what a biblical marriage rather than a legal marriage would entail.

-- THE END --