

Foreword

It is a good thing that John Scott, preacher, pastor, scholar, civil rights leader and family member has paused to put on paper his extensive experiences in the period of African American history that has seen such change over the last fifty plus years.

Considering that in these last fifty-plus years the history of African Americans in American, the white dominant culture life has moved from the stronghold of Jim Crowism, sharecropping on farms and women domestics riding in the backseats of their employers' cars to active demonstrations to protest against unjust and evil social practices and legislations that extend even to the present age, it was a very active time of change in African-American history. Now the promise of democracy is not only realized in the books, but the hearts and practices of the people and is still working to keep the dream of full citizenship for all God's people, wanting.

The one institution in the African-American community that pulled me and John Scott together was the magnet of the Christian Church. He was born and grew up on a farm in the northern community of North Carolina where his parents were landowners and prosperous farmers. As a result he grew up knowing the impoverished livelihood of black farmers and the power of the Church in their lives.

On the other hand, I was born and grew up in Selma, Alabama in the heart of the Black Belt. My parents were Christian ministers and I was exposed to the plight of the black family both in rural and city life. Both of us grew up in families where our parents instilled in us the vision of a better life for our people. We were both grounded in the need for disciplining ourselves in hard work, education, and the practice and growth in our faith. Because of this influence in our lives we met and became friends through our attendance at the Crozer

Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania which is the theological school that nurtured Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This was the school, with its liberal interpretation of biblical thought and strong emphasis on social and political justice for all God's people that helped to shape and nurture the mind and life of John Scott. This was the place where he was able to marry the fervor and faith of his education in the rural church of his native North Carolina with the models of social protest and civic change he learned from the Civil Rights Movement, especially as led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

There is one significant aspect of John Scott's involvement in this movement worthy of note. His primary motivation for being a foot soldier in the freedom fight struggle, especially that of being a voice for poor people, was his deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of his life. Trying to understand John Scott apart from the church and the gospel of Jesus Christ is absolutely impossible.

Personally, I was blessed to conduct revival services for John Scott when he pastored his first church, New Ahoskie Baptist Church in Ahoskie, North Carolina from 1967 to 1969. I had been involved with him in non-violent civic protests in New York where we camped out in front of the A & P Headquarters, on the 9th floor of their corporate offices. We did fully prepare to go to jail, fighting for ordinary workers in this corporation for them to receive fair wages and employee benefits. This movement, led by the late Dr. William A. Jones, Jr., was a strong regional movement in Brooklyn, New York which in fact was another vital satellite of the broad-based Civil Rights Movement.

The fact that John Scott has served the great St. John Baptist Church, one of New York's leading churches for thirty-nine years, and has served as moderator of the United Missionary

Baptist Association of New York is another testament to this strong courageous leadership from behind the pulpit to the marketplaces of life.

We recently walked down Fifth Avenue in New York City when we passed by a panhandler seeking money. John Scott walked about ten feet ahead of the person before he stopped and gave the individual a financial donation. As we walked away he stated, “I just don’t care what people say, I simply cannot pass by anyone in need!” Sometimes, it is the *small things* in life that reveal the deep reservoir of love and compassion in a person’s character.

One will see in reading this book that John Scott is ever driven by his creed. It flows in his family life and his love for his wife, Minnie Scott and their sons, all of whom have become productive and professional citizens serving the commonwealth of our times. A reservoir of love and compassion dwells in him in such a way that family and people of all races and across all classes are blessed because such a selfless and giving person exists among us. The spirit of love and dwelling in him will not permit him to ignore or deny the angelic nature of his deeper self.

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