

*Dear 7Uppers, Bob Love & Les Washington,  
Greetings.*

*Few people know or have any idea what it takes in terms of heartache and spiritual agony to create an organization that continues to perform or exist after we have crossed over.*

*I do not know.*

*But along the way, God in his DIVINE MERCY has allowed me to have a few wake up calls. Not least of these, near fatal accidents and taking away and out of this world, most of the people that would have offered me earthly consolation on the end of a telephone line. In Africa. If not, elsewhere. Perhaps this is the price I have had to pay for having affiliated closely with people who were far much older than I, by a couple of decades.*

*But far much younger people have also crossed over and gone HOME.*

*Their wisdom has been amazing. But it only makes one lonely. I could not help reflecting on this as I remembered **RODNEY GRANT WELLS** among others. And the many conversations we held or insights we exchanged.*

*I hope you will find some of the attached scripts useful and handy for your website as we prepare the next generation of those who will advance the Disabilities Outreach Ministry. Some of the manuscripts in my archives are bulky and I do not wish to burden you with reading them at this juncture.*

*Thank you for your updates and God bless you.*

*Sincerely,*

*John Patrick kamau*

*My late Grandfather used to tell me that, Elders, old men and women do not shed tears. For they have none. Their physiological tear ducts have long since dried up: and that, when tears well from their eyes, they are but tears from the heart tear ducts, not from eye tear ducts. They are:*

*THE TEARS OF GOD.*

*Tears of blood*

*They would have loved to do too much, far much more, perhaps it is true, that their tears were **TEARS OF GOD**, they had given up their BLOOD and physical STRENGTH for our sake. I have had the privilege of seeing such TEARS in them and in, many a young and also elder persons, even among 7Uppers. PS: I recently receive an edited 3 hour DVD video on the project we started for the mentally handicapped/challenged children in Africa. It's thanks to GOD that on February 16<sup>th</sup> 2010 they commemorated their 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary since we started the project in 1996. Rev Fr Antonio Gianelli's **TEARS** of August 10<sup>th</sup> 1996 and those of his counterpart Rev Fr Rossi Ricardo were no doubt **TEARS from the HEART DUCTS, TEARS OF GOD**. Thank you and GOD BLESS YOU for having been such dear friends. John Patrick -Friday, July 16, 2010-6:23:08 AM*

*Email: [JohnPatrick33K@Gmail.com](mailto:JohnPatrick33K@Gmail.com) Or [DJKW2004@yahoo.com](mailto:DJKW2004@yahoo.com)*

## A TRIBUTE TO DEPARTED 7UPpers and MISSIONARIES IN FACING OUR COMMON DISABILITIES

**“WORRY IS LIKE A ROCKING CHAIR,  
IT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO DO,  
BUT IT DOES NOT TAKE YOU ANYWHERE”**

*Sermon by-Pastor Joe Roberts--Ebenezer Baptist church*

*Atlanta GA November 2002*

### **PASSING THE TORCH and THE LAST GOODBYE**

*Tuesday, June 29, 2010 Ref: 6/29/2010 2:53:52 AM/03:52:47/DJKW9191999/62010*

*There comes a time in life when the HEARTS of one generation must be willing to heart-ingly give up that which they have passionately done and thought throughout all these years, days, hours, minutes and microseconds. A time when the hearts must be willing and be allowed to transmit to the mind and tongue, hand and paper, tongue, lips and/or ears and eyes: that which has always been the realm of acts and actions from the HEART. It is of such struggle, or in such a struggle that we must find fertile ground, a ‘SEMINARIUM’ - to forgo and plant the best seeds for the next generation of CROPS and leadership. If the only reason we are willing to give up of these our heart passions is by way of a Physical and/or Spiritual ‘CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE’ then we deny that which only time can tell was our contribution to mankind: for in this world as we pass by, the WORKS of GOD must truly be done by the CLAY and MOTER fashioned by the DIVINE.*

*For as one sage said-“The problems of the world cannot possibly be solved by skeptics or cynics whose horizons are limited by the obvious realities. We need men who can dream of things that never were.” –*

*“With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth Gods work must truly be our own.*

*John Fitzgerald Kennedy (American 35th US President (1961-63), 1917-1963)*

*Thus will the story of the making and creation of the ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL for THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED in Kenia and that of our departed supportive friends the 7UPpers be passed on for those who come after us. It is the legend or story of ‘doing the possible to create the impossible’ by adopting one person with disabilities within the framework of well meaning, able bodied and intellectually astute persons of good faith. In so doing, shaping and changing our attitudes on disabilities, one at a time.*

### **DYING of the OLDWAYS and REBIRTH of a NEW GENERATION**

*“Changing the world does not entail meeting and shaking hands with all the worlds Over 6 billion citizenry, it starts With, the changing and transforming of self and reaching out to one more person.[Ref:JPKW7/21/1957//DJ/7/21/2010]*

*“All who wish to advance should sow and leave for others the harvesting of the crop.”*

*With full knowledge of nature, its seasons and active communion with God, we must go forward, abandoning at every step a piece of oneself, giving way, diminishing at each stop, leaving a little more light for others, a little more clarity and warmth, a little more vitality, passing the WORD, until the end of our journey when in eternity we meet our maker and Master.*

## **“ IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD ”**

*In the Old Testament, common to the three Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the creation of the world begins with, "and God said: let there be light." In the Christian Bible Saint John's gospel says, "in the beginning was the Word". In the Hindu Vedas one can read: "In the beginning the Word was with Brahmin", The Hopi Indians believe that the Spider Woman sang on the inanimate forms and brought them to life. The same thing appears in the Mayan in the Popul Vuh, and in many other traditions. Sounds, words, are holy and all of humanity realizes this.*

*As we spread the word to other cultures and traditions in a Ministry that binds us all and touches each one of us, let us seek too, to appreciate our differences, our sensitivities and cultural diversity.*

**" Persons with disabilities are prophets of how each of us may become in the future, when physical strength diminishes, when we may loose our autonomy, become totally dependent, even then we will want to be treated with dignity and respect and still be responsible for our life and take part in community events "**

*The Late POPE JOHN PAUL II*

**A Meeting with Les November 14th-16<sup>th</sup> 2003:  
IGNATIUS RETREAT CENTRE –Atlanta GA :  
“Take one handicapped person on board”**

### **7 Uppers DIS-ABILITIES INITIATIVE**

**Seek to facilitate formation or sustenance of centers of excellence for persons with various disabilities/handicaps by:**

**\*Creating and facilitating a forum for persons of various religious diversity, to address issues on human disabilities with a special emphasis on physical and mental disabilities and other affiliated disorders/limitations.**

**\* Towards this end we shall seek to include in our advisory boards religious and secular leaders from various religious entities/schools of thought and faith and secular based institutions.**

- \* *seek ways and means of creating and sensitizing in our various societies a youth that is "dis-ability" friendly and takes the mission and vision of persons with various disabilities into the future.*
- \* *Seek to influence the creation or strengthening of a liturgical /spiritually based disability friendly church and congregation.*
- \* *Towards this end the universality of God shall be our guiding light just as disability is a universal human element in all continents, faiths and cultures.*
- \* *Seek to tap the various influence groups as represented by the 7ups membership and fellow-shipping groups towards the enhancement of a disability friendly social culture.*
- \* *Seek to demystify disability by inculcating "Reason & Faith" in line with various contemporary efforts in this direction as undertaken by religious, secular, scientific, cultural, fraternal and corporate institutions.*
- \* *Seek to form and encourage twinning and sponsoring arrangements for persons with disabilities in developing and new missionary lands in conjunction with organizations and churches that are already represented in those countries and cultures.*
- \* *Seek ways and means of assessing, evaluating and rehabilitating dis-ability friendly projects by inculcating relevant technology, management, financial, moral and ethical disciplines that govern the success of a conscience/spiritually sensitive society. Ref: JANUARY 2004[JPKW]-GA/ July 7, 2010FL/GA/LBJ8/77210 JHS*

**“WHY WOULD ANYBODY IN HIS RIGHT MIND SUPPORT A PROJECT FOR THE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED?”-Ref: ANONYMOUS-2002**

Lesson for Sunday July 11, 2010

**“Who is my neighbor?”**

**Gospel: Luke 10:25-37**

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "***What is written in the law? How do you read it?***" He said in reply, *You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*"

He replied to him, "***You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.***" But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "***And who is my neighbor?***"

Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, **he passed by on the opposite side.**

**Likewise a Levite** came to the place, and when he saw him, **he passed by on the opposite side.** But a **Samaritan traveler** who came upon him **was moved with compassion at the sight.** He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then **he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn, and cared for him.** The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, **'Take care of him.** If you spend more than what I

have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.' **Which of these three**, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "**Go and do likewise.**"

*Ref:7/14/2010 6:20:36 AM/*

**Prayerful thoughts from Rev. Jack Vessels, SJ, The Rio Grande El Paso Padre**

Reflections for JULY 11, 15th of yr: Deut 30.10-14; Col 1.15-20; LK 10.25-37?

THIS COMMAND IS NOT TOO REMOTE, NOT UP IN THE SKY, OR ACROSS THE SEA.

NO, IT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR HEARTS. YOU HAVE ONLY TO CARRY IT OUT!

The scholar of the law replied, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart & all your being, with all your strength & all your mind, & your neighbor as yourself. Who is my neighbor?

**During the day: Be neighborly. To everybody. Strangers. The next guy that comes along. The person who glances your way, & smiles; the one who doesn't. Whoever knocks on the door, or calls on the phone. God is on the line; see & serve what He wants.**

**ABOUT PRAYER: Prayer is the inner vision that sees God in the other; i.e. consciously 'sees', unconsciously perceives. God is in everything &, in a very special way, in every person. Prayer trains us to accept that fact, & treat others accordingly**

*6:29:02 AM/July 14, 2010/Ref: Rev Jack Vessels SJ/7Ups/Spiritual moderator/7:14:57 AM*

***MEMENTO MORI.***

***Introduction***

***It has been 14 years since my first meeting with the Last of the Consolata Missionaries in a mission in Africa, on Sunday August 10<sup>th</sup> 1996.it was then that the subject of an otherwise near clandestine project for rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped children cropped up, in tears, during a lunchtime meeting with a priest who had been advised that he would shortly be dying from complications caused by his evident skin cancer and underlying blood cancer, leukemia.***

***11 years had since passed from the time the project was awarded the 'PRO ECCLESIA ET PONTIFICE' by Pope John Paul II, in a ceremony held on Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup> 1999-[9/19/1999], 8 years since my arrival in the crucible country that is the United States: and 7 years since I met the founder of 7Ups, Les Washington, at the Jesuit Retreat Centre' on Riverside drive Atlanta GA. In all, 21 years since 1989 when I first encountered the late Rev Fr Antonio Gianelli at the church driveway one Sunday morning.***

***The above ecumenical initiatives that bring persons of diverse cultural backgrounds and Faiths represent the success of works that were never meant to remotely succeed but by DIVINE Grace. "AD MAIOREM DEI GLORIAM"- "TOTHE GREATER GLORY OF GOD"***

***This is part of the untold story of THE MAKING OF ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL for the MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, A Tribute to THE LAST OF THE CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, the fallen members of 7UPs and living 7Uppers. A tribute to all those who formed the***

*backbone of a unique Disability Outreach program that few able bodied men would dream of. All reaching out to those facing Disabilities in their midst and beyond and bringing together people of a diverse spectrum for a common good. For years society has at times found it convenient to divide people along religious boundaries to the detriment of persons with disabilities.*

*The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive and unrealistic” John Fitzgerald Kennedy (American 35th US President (1961-63), 1917-1963)*

## ***DISABILITY and THE CHALLENGE OF NEW BEGINNINGS***

### **A Brief History of People with Disabilities**

*The Disability Rights Movement asserts that people with disabilities have the same rights as every citizen. However, throughout history most individuals with disabilities enjoyed few rights or opportunities. Society viewed disabled people with pity and fear or treated them with cruelty and ridicule. Discrimination and prejudice trapped countless disabled individuals in poverty, confined them to institutions, and prevented them from enjoying all the freedoms and participating fully in society.*

*In pre-industrial times, people with disabilities were dependent on others and were often objects of pity. They were dependent to others for all their needs and decisions about their life. Their families, doctors or social workers would speak for them, label them, and take care of them. Often they were unable to support themselves or their families and became recipients of charity. Society denied their rights, equality, and the possibility of integration.*

*In medieval Europe, disabled people were associated with evil, witchcraft, and the Devil and so were often victims of religious superstition and persecution. In this period, people believed that a child born with disabilities was the result of a mother who supported satanic beliefs. Fueled by hearsay, tales, and superstitions these notions often were examples used by those in power. In fact, in the Bible, the authorities declare that the blind man who comes to Jesus has been born blind because of the sins of his parents.*

*These beliefs and practices toward people with disabilities that were prevalent in Europe, Asia, Africa and other cultures, followed settlers to the New World when they migrated to find freedom. In the early years of the United States, society isolated persons with disabilities from society and they often lived their entire lives in hospitals or hidden away by their families at home. At the time, there was a paternalistic view toward people with disabilities. The family and doctors were the primary decision-makers while the person with the disability had little input into his or her own life and destiny.*

## ***TEMPUS FUGIT MEMENTO MORI***

***[TIME FLIES, REMEMBER DEATH]***

*The United States of America provided me with exceptionally rare opportunities of observing people, both strangers and friends go through the motions of physical, mental and at times Spiritual DEATH and revival. Atlanta Georgia provided the first innate glances of life in what are at times referred to as developed countries.*

*While Europe may claim, and rightly so, this unique title of offering the first opportunity, with ROME and the VATICAN providing rare insights, these were but quickies.*

*During moments of deep spiritual agony, it was the Jesuit Retreat Center in Atlanta GA on, 6700 Riverside drive that became my first homestead. It was here that I met Rev Fr Niel Jarreau SJ on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2003 and exchanged rare but encouraging insights. It was here that I met Yet another inspiring Jesuit Priest Fr Jack vessels SJ, a spiritual moderator to an ecumenical men's fellowship group 7Ups, which became my second support family in the United States. And it was at 7Ups that I met the first batch of true friends.*

*It was at Riverside drive's Chattahoochee River, retreat center that I met Les Washington of 7Ups, during a retreat organized courtesy of, and for members of a fraternal group. They 'NEVER NOT MET' at the retreat Center on every Wednesday morning at 7.07AM. Les would later invite me to participate in the morning meetings at the Dunwoody golf and country Club that met on Friday mornings. In typical Texan slang, 'THEY NEVER NOT MET' at Dunwoody too. I was welcomed to a table facilitated by Bob LOVE, and became its 16<sup>th</sup> member.*

## **RODNEY GRANT WELLS- A TRIBUTE**

*It was at Dunwoody country Club and Later during intense spiritual and intellectual sessions that we met with the late, RODNEY GRANT WELLS. Following an intense scriptural analogy on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2004, we continued our session after the 8AM mass at the Jesuit retreat center by proceeding to a nearby top hill Egyptian pharaoh-nic design castle house. We visited the designer building with other 7UPpers led by Les Washington. For reasons which only DIVINE DESTINY can unveil, we continued in a conversation with our late brother Rodney wells, up-to 11AM on that Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2004. We met again once more during the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July Friday morning 7UPpers session at Dunwoody country club. It was Rodney grant wells, who a few months before his death sent me an email introducing a disability outreach group in Florida.*

*As DESTINY would have it, RODNEY GRANT WELLS suffered a STROKE/heart attack, on Saturday July the 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004, at his residence. We would later visit him at the nearby Regional hospital Outstation, where he lay in COMA state. He too DIED. RODNEY GRANT WELLS was many things to different and diverse persons. He was, honest and sincere to a fault. Tuesday, July the 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004, claimed him for eternity. A dear FRIEND, a MENTOR, a VISIONARY, a DAD had DIED.*

<http://www.7ups.org/RodWells.html>

**Rodney Grant Wells, Sr.**

1935 – 2004

FANTASTIC!



### ***From the Funeral of Rodney Grant Wells, Sr.***

**July 13<sup>th</sup> 2004**

Today my father died. Rodney Grant Wells Sr. was a man that defied the world's definitions; He was from the banks of the Ohio River in Kentucky – and he walked and talked with world leaders. He was an untamed philosopher – and he was a stringent debater. He was annoyingly analytical – and he was an unbridled artist. He was a crisp Navy officer – and he was a pirate. He had the looks of Santa Claus – and the smile of a child. He was a politician of the grand ol' party – and he was a revolutionary. He was fiercely competitive – and yet he always sought to help others win. He struggled to find himself – and he always treasured one's –everyone's- self worth. He loved the unspoiled outdoors, especially the mountains and the lake – and he felt equally peaceful in front of the glow of his laptop. He was always awake – and yet he dreamed more than anyone I know. I know he could be a doubting Thomas – and yet he had the faith of a little child. He cherished the finest detail – and he was constantly consumed by a vast vision that was in God's proportion to his faith. He sometimes couldn't see the page in front of him – and yet he could always see far ahead of everyone else. He was a writer. He was an encourager. He was a mentor. He was a loving and devoted and passionate husband. His final email we found on his laptop is included here, but among it were other sweet nothing and loving messages to his sweetheart of over 40 years. He was a father and friend. He was my Dad

\*\*\*\*\* As it says in Numbers, he *was* faithful, and now he gets to have conversations face-to-face with his savior and creator, someone who can finally answer all his questions! Dad had many sayings that everyone could expect to hear in conversations, like "Fantastic!" and "Blessed to be a blessing." As the eternal optimist, and years before the saying became popular on merchandise around the world, Dad would always say, "Life is good!" Well, **for Rodney Grant Wells Sr., life was good.**

- James Remington Wells, Rodney's son

***On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004 shortly after we had attended his funeral and a memorial service at the Peachtree Presbyterian Church where he was an active member, I for the first time broke down and shed tears. Life just didn't make sense. Not long before then, I had received information on the death of a very dear childhood friend in Africa, one Julius. Others would follow, an uncle, my father and mother in law, old-time supporters in starting the project for the mentally handicapped, plus nearly all dear age-mate friends I could recall. Was life just a matter of being born, growing up, engaging in a few activities over a period of time, winning a few accolades here and there, and then DYING. Was ANYONE really in-charge of this life process. Had Mother TERESA of Calcutta, heavily accolade-d not said that if she was ever made a Saint she would be missing in HEAVEN?***

***Even the acclaimed Dr James Dobson's analogy in his book 'How to hold on to your Faith WHEN GOD DOES NOT MAKE SENSE' : did not make sense. One moment, you are engaged with a strong, healthy, Spiritual and intellectual persons. Sitting next***

*to one another .The next moment, the person is gone, DEAD, with no warning signs and-*

*- no time to say- -*

## **“THE LAST GOODBYE ”**

**Remembering Former 7 UPper's**  
**<http://www.7ups.org/Togetherness.html>**

*[7/15/2010 9:22:00 AM].*

**<http://www.telechem.com/7ups/7upsmenblessings.htm>**

### ***A TRIBUTE to 7UPpers***

7 UP's Men who passed our way in fellowship, sharing their suffering with their handicaps, yet Blessing us every step of the way.

**7 UP's Men who passed our way in fellowship, sharing their suffering with their handicaps, yet Blessing us every step of the way. June 7, 2010.**

Eddie Chapman-Lung Cancer, Mel Benson, John Young -ALS, Ken Gettis-Lung Cancer, David Woodward-Brain Cancer, Rodney Wells-Stroke/Heart Attack, Collier Ross-Heart Attack and Leroy Gray-Stroke -Diabetes. Each with a story of faith that has given each of us a faith of no matter what, In Christ Jesus we are all one in Christ for all eternity. Each were an inspiration to all who prayed for, cared for and spent time with each from bringing one of them to our meeting, to visiting then and planning a day with them. I personally know that we have more prayers from them in Heaven and think of them in a special way, as Brothers in Christ.

We have met at Dunwoody Country Club since 1995 and established a place where all of these men passed thru and we continue to meet each Friday at 7:07 AM in the Tennis Facility -"Since we never not met." and Leave our guns at the door, just a simple -casual meeting with prayer, some study of God's Word but each sharing their thoughts with each other. Since 1997 we have also met on Wednesday's at St. Ignatius Retreat House and since 1997, some have come to both meetings and some only to St. Ignatius. Praise God, what a Blessing.

I like to feel they are there too. In summary I now know better than ever we are all handicapped at Least Spiritually and Need each Other in Faith and the Search for the truth in our lives and Share it-since it Glorifies God in some small way in each of our lives.

In God we trust and May we Praise Him in some way each and every day in whatever we do. Hopefully some of our efforts will be within His Will. In Christ Jess I pray.

Les Washington May 17,2010

Bryan Dechant was born with the disease called Cockayne Syndrome. It causes retardation of mind and body. Bryan is now 37 yrs. old. Normal life expectancy is early teens. His IQ is that of a 4 yr. old. We still take Bryan out for fun events and lunch monthly. His mother and dad really appreciate our involvement, he is a pleasure.

Three table brothers from 7UPs are now deceased. They are;

Ken Giddes-lung cancer

Collier Ross-heart attack

Bob Morell-cancer-brain tumor

John Patrick- We hope all is well with you.

Best Always. Charley Trense\_

Fred Follmer, added, Bob Morrell got brain cancer and was able to sell his home and be with his family his last days, God rest his soul.

John Patrick, I like this weeks scripture, Second Reading: Romans 5:1-5  
Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. I have seen this in our men at 7ups who past our way in that their afflictions produced even stronger faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise God, as Paul would suggest. Have a Blessed week.

Les 5/24/10

6/7/10 I also like what Ann Benson wrote about Mel and how he relates to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3 vs 10 thru 17 specifically 16& 17, All scripture is given for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God, of The Lord Jesus Christ and The Holy Spirit may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Mel Benson died August 15, 2004. He was ill since January 1997 when he was diagnosed with lymphoma. Throughout '97 Chemo treatments were given every three weeks. But while being treated and the remainder of that year, he went to 7 ups bible study whenever he could. The spiritual support of his 7 ups brothers helped sustain him during that year. After that year while in remission, it seemed God was not finished with his servant Mel. He chose him to take a more difficult road adding Parkinson's disease and diabetes to his already difficult burden. For six years he struggled with serious falls and endless medications that eventually took his speech and memory from him. The men of 7 ups were always there to visit him, take him to lunch (wheelchair and all) and let him know that they had not forgotten

him. And on some level Mel knew they were God's own servants helping him on his way to heaven. Thank you 7 ups.

## **TEMPUS FUGIT**

*[Time flies]*

*Perhaps it was worth living 'ONE DAY AT A TIME', and not worry about whether the SUN would rise in the morning from the EAST or set down in the evening towards the WEST. Simply take time out to "SMELL THE ROSES". Take time out, to watch the shrubs sprout out and the flowers blossom after the cold WINTER seasons and the advent of the SPRING in Atlanta Georgia and later in the NORTHERN States. But the lessons of the SOUTH, and life down under had to be learned too.*

## **BRYAN DeChant, the CHAMP**

*It was here, and during those 'Spiritually DARK NIGHTS' that, in the year of our lord 2005, I met a challenged young man in his 30s, Bryan the CHAMPION: Bryan Dechant, had Cockayne Syndrome. One that should have killed him before age 7.*

*Bryan's life story was summed up in the 'ATLANTA CONSTITUTIONAL JOURNAL' Newspaper, with his parents expressing concern about what would happen to him when they were NO MORE. It is the concern of many a parent in the world who find themselves short of any support structures when coping with members of their families facing various Disabilities.*

## **BRYANS LESSONS @7Ups**

*Brian MADE GREAT FRIENDS AT 7ups AND GAVE SPECIAL LESSONS TO ALL business executives, active and retired, who accompanied him. He taught them how to slow down and take time off from their EXECUTIVE responsibilities, to smell the roses with him and come down to his level.*

*Brian was not demanding, his was a simple diet, by any standard. And, he had his own money. All Bryan needed from the busy or retired executives was their time away from work at their offices and 'FAR FROM the MADDING CROWD'. He always faithfully waited for the anointed appointed time to be picked up by the 7UPpers. His first trip was in a private Jet, then private limousines, then private boats, cars, public trains and all. But these things did not particularly amuse Brian. His parents were not paupers and had devotedly given Brian the best of their time and anything that Brian the CHAMP, Dechant, fancied. His photo album bore testimony to this, and Bryan*

*loved welcoming the 7UPpers to share in his Chronicled, album-ed escapades. He had a special galvanizing charm about and around him. While others appeared to worry about Bryan and his rather delicate demeanor, Bryan just didn't worry.*

*It was that rare butterfly in flight that Brian would call your attention to. The overhead air balloon at Atlanta downtown Five point train station which we had barely noticed. That rare blossoming Hibiscus or Orchid flower. That bald eagle in flight. Even a nearby yellow jacket bee and the threatening nearby nestling of a Dove adjacent to a hornets nest couldn't miss Bryan's strained glare and glance. The blossoming dogwood trees of Georgia, which we barely noticed and took for granted, smiled at Brian. And even as he pointed at that fire Ant that carried a leaf or dead insect in its mandibles, into the anthill, Brian smiled .But it was a mischievous smile which said it all as Bryan knew it would instantly bite if tampered with: causing a fire-ry and stinging pain. He Bryan could afford a mischievous smile as we stood on our toes. worried. Brian's parents had trained him well. His was a simple vocabulary, backed with a good sense of humor and sign language.*

*At the time of writing this script, Brian Dechant , the champ, is still a strong 37 years; strong and well, in Atlanta GA. Many of the 7Uppers whom he trained in the art of slowing down, have since passed away, happy and content that they ever came to know Brian the CHAMP, Dechant.*

*During our first time out with Brian the CHAMP, at the JOHN DEERE sales office in GA, the Corporate Salesman Michael, who took Brian out to drive a heavy road making grader tractor exclaimed 'BRIAN, YOU HAVE MADE MY DAY!!!'. The two 7UPpers accompanying Bryan couldn't help smiling back.*

*Michael, the JOHN DEERE Salesman, must have had a tough day trying to market tractors and heavy-duty trucks. That was until he met Brian who made his day.*

*Brian to cap it up, invited a truck driver who had offered him a lift, for a rare photo shoot opportunity. But he politely declined a lift on the truck that would have taken him on 'the road to NOWHERE'. That was Brian the CHAMPION.*

*Brian reminded me of my Cerebral Palsy friend at Allamano Special school for the mentally handicapped/challenged Children, in Kenia, East Africa: and his unique LOVE storyline.*

*Fr Antonio Gianelli, the Italian missionary priest from the 'Institute of Consolata Missionaries' who started the enhancements to the once MUD plastered class, a 20<sup>th</sup> century modification of a 19<sup>th</sup> century cow dung plaster-ine, that had been put aside to house the first 5 mentally challenged children in 1989. It was this humble initiative*

*that later received the attention of the KENYA SOCIETY FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPED, the UNITED STATES EMBASSY in Nairobi, the INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, MANOS UNIDAS in Spain , the KENYA CHARITY SWEEPSTAKE, BARCLAYS BANK, Pope John Paul II, among many other persons, institutions, schools, Churches, and National-International administrators, donors and observers. The late Rev Antonio Gianelli called these mentally challenged children*

### **“THE CHILDREN OF GOD”.**

*In his OBITUARY appearing on the Institute of Consolata Missionary website Rev Father Antonio Gianelli had this to say about the project for rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped/challenged children at ALLAMANO SPECIAL SCHOOL.*

*"With this work I believe I have fulfilled my obligation towards him who made it possible for me to become a missionary. Next year I will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of my ordination; in these fifty years my greatest accomplishment has been this school for the handicapped. For this I thank God, .." (December 11, 1996).  
Rev Antonio Gianelli Kenya, East Africa .*

### **FINDING SOMETHING WORTH DYING FOR**

*Without these rare glances and glimpses into the  
‘BEAUTY OF HUMAN DISABILITIES’  
and such rare close up lessons from the Brian’s of this world and of the United states, the ‘CRYCIBLE and CRUCIBLE’ country, the story of ALLAMANO Special school in kenia, may perhaps have taken a different twist.*

*While Atlanta GA’s Riverside retreat center had become my temporary HAVEN, MONTSERRAT,, at FORT WORTH , near DALLAS Texas was another RETREAT center which came in handy, and finally the Dominican Monks Abbey at Saint Leo Monastery. I checked in at the Abbey in December 2007, shortly after the death of my friend and mentor, the late Archbishop Nicodemus Kirima. Archbishop Nicodemus had remained supportive during some of the DARKEST nights. He, Archbishop Nicodemus kirima had during these moments in the CRUCIBLE country, visited us and stayed with us for 3 days in Atlanta GA, in August 2002. And not once, even as he spent the last years of his life living on a borrowed kidney donated by his brother after the Archbishops kidneys failed, did he fail to receive or acknowledge my telephone*

*conversations on his cell phone. Our last conversation in 2007 occurred as he was in great pain, he insisted on talking on his cell phone even while undergoing a kidney dialysis. The dialysis that would shortly thereafter lead into complications that ultimately took his life.*

*The rest is HIS-story. He too DIED.*

*It was necessary to start looking at the STARS, during, or on, very DARK NIGHTS, for worrying or worry, about things we cannot change at will, is like sitting on a rocking chair, it gives you something to do but takes you nowhere.*

*I had grown up under the regime of one Bishop Ceasar Maria Gatimu of the 'UT SINT UNUM' court of Arms MOTTO, 'THAT ALL MAY BE ONE'. America had become for me, and others the mystical land of 'E PLURIBUS UNUM' – 'FROM MANY ONE'. A seminarian.*

*The United states is the land that created the environment and catchment, where the writing of the story of*

*“THE BRIGHT DARK NIGHTS OF THE SOUL”*

*became possible. Where the art of doing the possible to accomplish the impossible became possible.*

[ July 15, 2010 Ref:7/15/2010 8:01:15 AM/F.O.A.S.S/10:25:13 AM/July 10/-7/16/2010 4:59:52 AM/LBJ/FOASSK/1999sept]

*PS: Please accept my most sincere appreciation to all those members of 7Ups and their families who have continued to accompany Bryan Dechant on his regular outings and to support one another in these latter years.*

*Thank you and God Bless.*

*John Patrick Kamau  
Friday, July 16, 2010*

*Email : [JohnPatrick33K@gmail.com](mailto:JohnPatrick33K@gmail.com) or [DJKW2004@yahoo.com](mailto:DJKW2004@yahoo.com)*