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Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

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The Sunday School Beacon
June 12, 1994



BIG CHIEF
By Mrs. Paul E. King

Slowly, Todd dribbled the basketball along the driveway of his home, not caring whether or not he made a shot at the basket above the garage door. He was in a less than good mood over the way things were going in the youth group. It didn't seem fair, he reasoned, that Melton Stater was put in as the leader of their singing-musical group, The King's Witnesses, while he -- Todd -- was a nobody since the recent election of officers.

Todd fumed inside himself. Melton, taking his position! His place! Why, he'd had musical training for so long almost as he could remember. He was qualified for the job; highly qualified. And if Melton hadn't moved into the community and . . . and. . . . Todd felt a prick of guilt over his evil thoughts.

Melton Stater, along with his parents, two brothers and three sisters, had moved into the community from out of state; a transfer for his father with the company for whom he worked. James Bellow, hearing of the new family who moved in less than two blocks from where the Bellows resided, and always on the lookout for someone new to bring to church, rushed over almost before the new family had been fully settled in and invited them all over to his parents' place for Sunday dinner. Of course, the dinner invite came after his invitation that they all attend church with the Bellows. And it worked; they attended the services and afterward were treated to a sampling of Mrs. Bellow's "par excellence" cooking.

Needless to say, or tell, the Staters and the Bellows became fast friends, and before long, Melton Stater made his way down the church aisle to the altar and was gloriously converted.

The change was so marvelously real and wonderful in Melton that it produced a chain reaction for the whole family as, first the parents went forward and were converted, and then the girls and, finally, the two boys.

It did something for the church, seeing an entire family getting saved and walking in the light as God shined it across their pathway. Their pastor had called the Staters' conversion a modern day Biblical example of household salvation. Nor was it long before the entire family became seekers after and joyous obtainers of entire sanctification. This was the beginning of a gracious and glorious revival in the church.

Melton's shy ways couldn't conceal his talents, however: his wonderful voice, heard during the congregational singing, was made known to the pastor and song leader by those who heard him sing Sunday after Sunday in the pew and Wednesday night at the mid-week prayer meeting. And before long, Melton was asked to sing. Only then was it discovered the wealth of talent God had sent the church by way of the Staters: not only was Melton an excellent singer but so were his parents and each of the other family members. And skilled musicians, as well!

"We used to sing and play for the devil's crowd," Mr. Stater said, when the family stood up to sing and play one Sunday at church, "and now we pledge our allegiance to our wonderful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that, from henceforth and forever, our songs and music shall be for His glory. To this end, each of us has dedicated himself and herself."

And from then on, the Staters became active in the church as, first one talent and ability surfaced, then another. They were voted into offices in the church and became Sunday school teachers and helpers. And then, quite suddenly, it came time to vote on the leader for The King's Witnesses and, of course, Melton was put in.

Todd bounced the ball hard against the concrete of the driveway now. He felt like he could punch Melton for taking his place. Melton, the less-than-two-year newcomer! In disgust, he flipped the basketball over on the grass and sat down beneath an elm tree nearby.

"Why the dour look?" a voice asked cheerfully.

Todd looked up and saw James Bellow coming up the driveway.

"What's wrong?" James asked, parking the tenspeed bicycle in front of the garage and dropping on the grass beneath the tree by Todd.

"What a stupid question!" Todd retorted instantly. "What a very stupid question!"

"I guess I'm not following you, Todd. I can't see why such a simple question as I asked should be branded as stupid. In my way of thinking, it's a perfectly logical and legitimate question to ask of one whose countenance bears the ominous marks of a foreboding storm or of impending doom."

"Make light of it, if you will; but you weren't voted out of something, like I was, that meant everything to me," Todd said vehemently, as color rose in his cheeks.

James gasped in disbelief. "Todd, you . . . you . . . I can't believe I'm hearing this!"

"Well you are! And if you hadn't gone and invited them to church I'd still have the job I loved more than anything I've ever been in or done."

"But Todd. . . ."

"Oh, don't 'but' me, James. You know as well as I that I am the one most qualified to lead that group and to select the songs and the music to be sung and played. I studied under some of the most gifted and qualified teachers around here. I keep up with what's going on. And I stay abreast of the latest trends and changes and. . . ."

"Stop right there," James said, interrupting the angry harangue. "And, please, do accept my sincere apology for interrupting you. But you shock me. Profoundly so, Todd. In fact, I cannot help but wonder just where you stand spiritually."

"Well, stop wondering: I'm no Melton Stater, but I know I'm far better than he is where music comes into the picture. And the thought that my peers voted me out and voted him in, consumes me. Especially when I know I'm the capable one."

"The big chief, huh?"

"Make fun, if you like: I know what I'm capable of doing."

"Meaning that you think Melton isn't capable, I assume."

"Not nearly so well as I. He's behind the times. He's not up to what's in."

"That's because he doesn't want to be 'up to what's in,' Todd. Melton's burden for our entire young people's group has been to bring us all closer to God and to keep us on the old paths; the Biblical way. You were trying to squeeze the singing group into newer, more current trends and methods and tempos, and it didn't get off the ground. The Lord can't bless that which He condemns. Those 'methods' of yours, Todd, and the modern beat, well, it isn't of God. That's why the ones in the group refused to go along with your 'newer, more advanced' suggestions. We're holiness young people, not a bunch of worldlings."

"And the whole group is behind the times. They don't want change, that's obvious," Todd stated with disgust.

"Not when that change runs contrary to and opposite of God's mandates and directives, we don't. And my prayer is that God will ever keep us on this holy and narrow way. It's the only way to Heaven. Your spirit, Todd . . . it . . . well, it frightens me. You are insanely jealous and envious of Melton. And because the Lord is using him -- and the other members of that family -- and is promoting him, you wish he had never come to church and been converted! Oh, Todd, this is extreme wickedness! You will answer to God Almighty some day for this great evil and wickedness. You need to repent of this heinous sin or your soul will be lost forever and ever."

"Who made you a judge, James Bellow? Just because you enjoy seeing how many new people you can get to come to church doesn't give you license to judge others."

"My only reason for bringing people to church is that they might hear God's truth preached and become converted and sanctified wholly, Todd. This great desire and burden was impressed and imprinted upon my heart immediately after the Lord saved my soul. It is a Divine Command for us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. This means we are to tell people about Jesus and do our best to bring them to Him."

"I'm cut out for music," came Todd's quick rejoinder.

"But it's wrong for you to want to be the big chief at any and all expense; even to keeping others from being converted lest they may get voted in to the position you once held.

"This is sinfully wicked, Todd, and it needs a sincere and thorough repenting of lest you miss Heaven. There will be no pride nor envy and jealousy in that Holy City, dear friend. None whatever. You know this. Do what you know you need to do, Todd; get back to God by repenting of your great wickedness then go on into holiness. Let God's Holy Spirit burn out and eradicate that old carnal nature that's raised its ugly old head in horrible jealousy and envy until you're about to be consumed by it. Please, don't allow this deadly and poisonous thing to remain in your heart for another day," James pleaded.

Getting to his feet quickly, Todd said, "Take care of your own affairs, James; I'll take care of what I want to take care of. And, for right now, I have plans other than those mentioned by you. I know where I can get into a band. . . . And yes, it's a 'trendy' one; right up on tiptoe with the times. My last music instructor told me that whenever I was available and ready, he'd put me on with his band. So, enjoy yourself, James, and goodbye. My mind's made up. I've got a call to make . . ." and Todd rushed into the house.

Slowly, James got up from the lawn and pedaled away on his bicycle with tears in his eyes and an earnest prayer on his lips. The Big Chief! he thought sadly. Yes, either be the Big Chief or quit the church completely. Carnality, how dreadful it was! And how deadly for the soul who refused to have it purged out -- root and all -- and to be filled with God's Holy Spirit!