



Nuggets 4: The Klansman

I don't cry easily, but I heard a story not long ago that moved me to tears. National Public Radio reported on the death of C.P. Ellis, a former grand exalted Cyclops of the Ku Klux Klan in Durham, NC. A remarkable change occurred in his life that illustrates the transforming power of Christ's love.

A 10-day meeting on school desegregation was held in 1971 to build better community relations. Ellis was chosen to co-chair the meetings along with his polar opposite, Ann Atwater, a militant African-American leader of Durham's civil rights movement. Ms Atwater later said Ellis was nominated by segregationists so he could disrupt the process. She said Ellis came to the meetings with a machine gun in the trunk of his car. She came with a white Bible. She told Ellis they would see whose God was strongest, his or hers.

A gospel choir was invited to perform at the meetings. Atwater noticed that Ellis began to clap his hands with the music but was missing the beat. She took his hands and helped him clap to the beat. Later as they talked with the children, they realized that while they were hating each other, the children were the ones who were suffering. She said she and Ellis cried and began to melt toward each other. He made the dramatic change from Klansman to a civil rights advocate. The interviewer asked Ms Atwater how she could explain this change. She said it didn't make sense, but when she looked at it through her Bible, she could see that God had a plan so that integration could occur peacefully.

Colossians 3:11; Ephesians 2:14

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