

# ***REFLECTIONS***

October 14, 2007

**whoever wants to become great among  
you must be your servant ,**

*Mark 10:43*

## **A Servant's Heart**

Her name was Bertha, but my brother called her Berga. So as with many other monikers that my brother conferred, the rest of us adopted that name for her too. Berga's life offered us an inkling of how life might have been in the days when African Americans were held in bondage to slavery. Her life was free from bondage but otherwise she lived a servants' life. Berga lived in a part of town reserved for African Americans and the shanty she lived in offered protection from wind and rain, but provided little shelter from the scorching summer heat or the bitter winter cold.

She lived her life without fanfare or complaint. Mom would pick her up each week to help with the ironing and to clean about the house. I have vivid memories of her ironing our clothes, a red bandana wrapped on her head and a snuff ridden toothpick pressed between her lips. All the while, Berga could be heard humming the tunes to *Dry Bones*, *Amazing Grace*, and *Shall We Gather at the River*.

Sometimes Berga would come in the evenings to baby sit with my brother and me. Because of her advancing years I sometimes wondered if she would be of much help if something went wrong. But Mom trusted Berga because she had a servant's heart.

Then a call came one day to tell us that Berga had passed away in the night. At the time, her death left me with little emotion. It was simply a part of the process of life. Even today, I identify the passing of life with a part of God's process. But today I am struck more by the memories of those many people that have passed through my life and the difference they made in it. Berga is one that recently came to mind.

As different as her life was from mine, she added to my perspective of the world God created and that makes her a part of who I am. Her life was a simple one. There was no glamour and no extravagance, only a life of the basics. But Berga did love people. From her life, I learned that no matter the circumstances, we all love the same.

Berga was a part of our family life. We loved her and she loved us. And as I look back on her now, I realize that on the day that her life ended, a little bit of mine did too. It all serves as a reminder of the difference we all make in the world. We always leave a little something of ourselves with those whose paths we cross.

From Berga I learned to value a servant's heart. It's a nice blessing to pass along.

*"You are the light of the world,"*

*Richard* +

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