

**Small Talk – March 8 2021**  
**Required Facial Covering When in Public – Day 229**  
**By Michael Small**

Several events this past weekend have shaped my thoughts this morning. Saturday, I watched the remake of “Coming 2 America” – a reprisal for Eddie Murphy’s successful and funny 1988 film “Coming to America” both with Arsenio Hall, James Earl Jones, and Shari Headley. In the first movie an idealistic prince comes to America in search of freedom and love. In the second movie that idealistic prince has fallen into the traps of wealth, power, and privilege. The prince, soon to become king, is incapable of thinking outside the box and making a pathway for his daughters to step into leadership because “only a male can ascend to the throne it’s the law.” In the end, all live happily ever after – it’s a movie and a fantasy of the way things are – a fun distraction.

The second event still haunts me – it was the text for the weekend. The Ten Words, or as we call them, The Ten Commandments, which are intended to shape and create healthy and just communities. It’s really simple! These words create “life, liberty, and happiness”! These words do not stifle, but they set forth a road map for a way of going forward as a people who will be able to work and live together. They are a good reminder of how things can be.

The third event was Oprah’s interview with Prince Harry and Meghan Markle who have walked away from the royal family of Great Briton. The pain and ugliness of a real-life story of a Prince and his wife who happens to be a person of color. Out of pain and disdain this family have chosen to move to America, to sever their “privilege” and relationship with the royal family. They moved from a place where Meghan lived in the darkness of contemplating suicide and where there were concerns about darkness of skin of their child who was yet to be born. In this wider family there was naming and shaming, broken lines of communication, disdain and distrust, and isolation.

Before you think I am getting up on my high horse, every family, at some level, is dysfunctional, mine included. Parents and children too often fail to honor and love one another. Too often we strike out and cause pain with those we love the most, while not finding those places of healing. Words and actions matter. The royal family is victim of layers of tradition and expectations that seem to be more corporate than grounded in being a loving family. They are an ancient aberration (with wealth, tradition, control and privilege) whose function in society may have outlived its usefulness.

The thing that sticks in my craw, is the concern about how dark the babies skin color would be. Eddie Glaude Jr. writes in *Begin Again* that one of the sins of America is that there are those who think and believe deep down in their bones that a person of color is less than a person who is white. There is a stratification of race where being white and Christian is at the top of the pyramid of, position, power, and wealth. All that is below is less than!

Glaude concludes, *In our after times, our task, then, is not to save Trump voters—it isn't to convince them to give up their views that white people ought to matter more than others. **Our task is to build a world where such a view has no place or quarter to breathe.** I am aware that this is a radical, some may even say, dangerous claim. It amounts to “throwing away” a large portion of the country, many of whom are willing to defend their positions with violence. But we cannot give in to these people. We know what the result will be, and I cannot watch another generation of black children bear the burden of that choice.*<sup>1</sup>

When we live out the Ten Words, there is no room for hatred or diminishment of those who are not like us. Jesus was asked by his followers – “Which is the greatest commandment?”

*“You must love the Most High God  
with all your heart,  
with all your soul and  
with all your mind.’*

*“That is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments the whole Law is based—and the Prophets as well.”*<sup>2</sup>

In the above words there is no room for discrimination, for hatred, for cruelty, for isolation, for disdainment, for concern of how one looks, or the color of their skin. I read in Jesus' words “No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey – you are welcome, you are equal, you are friend – not stranger, and finally you are to be loved! – NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE!

Today, let us love!

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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<sup>1</sup> Glaude Jr., Eddie S. *Begin Again* (pp. 112-113). Crown. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 22:37-38 *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible.* Sheed & Ward. Kindle Edition