

## Personal Reflection – February 10, 2023

### Thank You, Regina

One of the most poignant revelations of my life came from a Tanzanian Registered Nurse at a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. I had been sent there for a surgical procedure from my home in Tanzania, and the nurse who came to my room exclaimed, “Jane!” when she saw me. She was a young woman whom I had taught at the Girls’ High School in Tanzania many years before. We chatted, and I took the occasion to say, “Regina, I must apologize to you for my behavior as your autocratic teacher all those years ago.” Regina smiled, replying kindly, “Oh that’s all right, Jane. *You did not know any better.*”

This morning I watched a Black History Month video about Harriet Tubman, and the Greensboro Woolworth store sit in by four African American college students in 1960. 1960! I was thirty years old! Where was I? Why was I not going to jail with those college students?

“I did not know any better?”

That does not work today. What works for me today is, “I am too old!” It looks like I will go to any length to avoid engagement, inconvenience, fear. I am rightfully ashamed of my white history. *I do know better now* and I pray to find ways to be engaged, to take the side of justice against any intolerance. I’ve got some years of self-centered political narcissism to make up for.

Thank you, Regina.

--Jane Vella