

To the Everlasting Memory of Our Brother and Colleague, Dr. Cain Hope Felder

In our realm death is the flattening of human capacity as functioning and contributing beings. We mount life's stage and soon we are gone. Truly we live our lives as a tale that is told.

My (our) brother Cain, on October 2, 2019 you began your trek home after 76 years, a short period under the measure of eternity, to the land of our ancestors, having done much to improve the plight we have endured for centuries in north and south America, on our ancestral continent, and on planet earth. As the veil of modern tyranny was being rolled back from the sordid history of the medieval period in western calculations, and from adventurism and profiteering of westerners at the expense of voiceless peoples in the modern period, you came to be a voice of the groans of sufferers around the world. Armed with knowledge recovered from the trenches of concealed and forgotten times and places, and with the winds of postmodern curiosity, critical perception and vision at your back, you wrote *Troubling Biblical Waters*, a work that described your personal struggles (and ours) to witness in adverse circumstances, a work that registered your unabashed determination to be heard in a closed field to people of African persuasion and African descent, a work that demonstrated in conceptual and visual ways that Europeans do not own the patent on thinking and interpretation, a text showing that European scholarship is designed to promote European ways and control over sufferers seeking liberation from European oppression and exploitation.

In these subject concerns we thank you for your contribution to our restoration. Your remarkable wisdom and choice to do something in

your calling to benefit the despised and rejected will live on beyond your rest and memorials to your memory. We all know that your career-choice could have been totally other – one registering little if any concerns for issues of those overlooked or denied – which is the American and worldly way of understanding and exercising freedom, what they call “*freedom of choice.*” We thank you for memorializing in your work and witness that we are never free until all are free – to be heard and respected, to be acknowledged and celebrated.

We, your colleagues and comrades, shall never forget your endurance on our stony road. In your life and witness we not only remind ourselves of the spirit of our ancestors; we remind ourselves of the long journey home. Through your sufferings and endurance the memory of our elder brother Jesus refusing Satan’s way resurfaced as a real option for us. Because of your willingness to stand strong on behalf of our sisters and brothers in threatening times and circumstances we are strengthened for generations to come.

Your decision to work and use your mind for the everlasting memory of our ancestors and for the way of Jesus your Lord in this land of sorrows does not escape us. That alone keeps you with us a very long time. That alone keeps us keeping on.

Brother Cain, we shall lift up your courage as a benchmark of our strivings. We will not forget your stiff challenge and unbending resolve to move the pile and bear the load. We shall never forget your stamina in troubling times.

Today we thank you for helping us to see and hear the crevices of silence. We thank you for reminding us incessantly of the concerns of our overlooked and dismissed histories, of hearing, owning and

embracing our people's voice, and for being guided by a drumbeat that our ancestors would and could recognize from the biblical world and within our own times, a beat forced and forged by the machinations of slavery, a convergence of intermingling sound made clear because our stories on these shores appeared to be a retelling of experiences and stories of our first biblical readers.

You, Cain, reminded us as our ancestors before that we were at Jesus's crucifixion; that we survived it; and that we could move beyond it. We heard anew that dying is living, that living is dying. We thank you for that offering. We thank you for your witness and voice in our times.

Brother Cain, in your short stay here you did well. Please accept our prayers, our sorrows, our experiences, and our memories of you as winds at your back as you make the long journey to our ancestors. Your persona and impact will continue to nourish our days and inspire our ways until your own journey becomes ours. We pray that you will not forget us; we cannot forget you; and in true ancestral style do come to see us from time to time just as Moses and Elijah visited Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and our ancestors do in troubling times. 'Listen out' for us as your train comes to the ancestral station where our ancestors await your arrival with shouts of well done.

Brother Cain, remember us; we remember you.

A tribute in memory of Dr. Cain Hope Felder written by Boykin Sanders, October 9, 2019, at Richmond, Virginia

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