

UNSEEN PROTECTION

By Paul M. Riley MD, FACS

“Dr. Riley, can you make a house call tonight? My husband is in pain. I don’t want him to get worse.” I recognized the voice of the Swazi Queen who had been a patient of mine. I knew that King Sobhuza’s regular doctor was not available so concluded that the king had developed an acute problem. I then got a call from Dan Dlamini who was a close relative of the King. He was the liaison officer between the RFM Hospital in Manzini, Swaziland, and the Royal Family. He was part of the King’s “Inner Circle”. Dan also worked in our pharmacy. I was to pick him up in front of the RFM Nazarene Mission Hospital where I worked in Swaziland. He was to show me the way. King Sobhuza had several “palaces”. Very few people knew where the King slept on a given night. None of the public ever saw him moving from one place to the other!

Dan directed me down the main highway towards Mbabane, the Capital. After driving several miles, I was directed to turn off the main road and drive on a back road, then at a solitary light on an electricity pole, I was told to turn left into a forest of pine trees. Finally we drove up to an ordinary appearing house. There were no bars on the windows; I saw no guards! Everything looked quiet and peaceful. We couldn’t hear a sound! The house looked completely unprotected!

The Queen met me at the door and gave me instructions. I noted that the house was neat and comfortable, but not elaborate. I followed the Queen into the living room. There sat the King in a low easy chair looking very elegant and dignified. I then looked around for Dan who had followed me into the living room. He had virtually disappeared. Then there was a movement on the floor just to my right. At first I thought it was a dog; then I saw that it was Dan scooting along the floor in the lowest duck-walk I had ever seen. Then I remembered that the King’s Subjects respected Him by always keeping their head lower than the King’s. I went forward and shook hands with the King as instructed by the Queen. She had told me they looked down on foreigners who tried to mimic the Swazis. I was expected to act like an American! The Queen had been educated in our Nazarene Mission schools, so knew our customs.

The King, who had been educated in England, and spoke perfect English, took me into his bedroom where I discussed his problem and did a careful physical exam. The King had an amazing medical knowledge and had already diagnosed his problem, because a friend, an English High Court Judge, had the same trouble while in Swaziland. I was thanked because I was the first doctor who had done a complete history and physical on him in a long time. I gave him instructions for the medicine I would be sending him. I also mentioned some previously undetected abnormal physical findings that needed attention. I promised to report these to his regular doctor when the doctor returned.

As I drove away I was worried about the King's safety. Enemies could sneak up unseen through the trees with no one to stop them! As I drove back toward the light, I thought some of the tree trunks looked a little wider than usual but thought nothing of it. As I reached the main highway I expressed my fear about the King's safety. "The King is well protected." Dan replied. "There are heavily armed soldiers behind all the bigger trees, in fact He is guarded by a whole platoon of soldiers. The soldiers, who are specially trained, have to stand motionless for several hours and are never to be seen by the public. The King travels mostly at night in ordinary pickup trucks. His guards, who travel in ordinary-pickup trucks and cars, are dressed as farmers and ordinary people. They drive in a random pattern so no one will know they are guarding the King. They are trained to blend with the crowd so no one can spot them. The King dresses so that he can't be noticed when he is not at a Royal function. You also, were being watched from the time you drove out of the mission gate until you drove back to the main road. All the soldiers knew you were coming. Otherwise you would have had a very warm reception!

When I parked at the hospital a battered Toyota pick-up truck pulled in beside me. Where did it come from? I hadn't seen it before! The driver gave Dan Dlamini a hand signal, then Dan unlocked the pharmacy. I found the right medicine which Dan gave to the driver. No words were exchanged! The truck then drove out of the gate and headed off in a different direction; not towards where the King was staying. Dan then told me that the shabbily dressed man in the pickup truck was a crack security agent trained with the best in England. He had even guarded the British Royal Family! He had been taught that the very best security is the kind you never see! Tomorrow he might be wearing a suit and tie and driving a company sedan! The agents were being continually trained to be more "invisible", but yet more vigilant! King Sobhuza never looked around for his protectors. He knew they were there, even though he seldom saw them! The next day the Queen phoned to say the "patient" was much better. I reported my "house call" to the King's personal physician when the doctor returned from vacation.

A long time later I realized that we were like King Sobuza, except that we are surrounded by a heavenly host. Most of the time we are not aware that we are being protected! We should at least have the same faith in God as the King had in his unseen protectors! The few times we are aware of God's protection is only a small number compared to the actual times He has protected us! We are safest when we are in the center of God's will, even safer than King Sobhuza was, when He was in the center of the pine forest! After all, we have much better "Security Agents."

PS:- When U.S. President Obama made his last trip to London, he was protected by over 500 vehicles, plus numerous, visible, security personnel. The whole of London was disrupted and at a standstill! The cost to British and American taxpayers was untold millions of dollars! Yet the British and Swazi Royal family protection is smooth, mostly unseen and is very unobtrusive. It has been perfected over hundreds of years. It is also much cheaper and more effective. Why didn't our President just place himself under British Protection, where he would have been even safer? Because most of their protection is not seen, enemies of these Royal families are unable to make any concrete plans. Our enemy, the Devil, has the same dilemma, when we place ourselves under God's protection!

