



Joaquim Livramento

The day Cape Verdean time died, it was a cold, cloudy day, and we were preparing for a celebration at OLOA and I said to Father Stan, pastor at that time, "You know that they will not be on time. They will be running on CV time. CV time is about one half hour later than usual." I, of course, was just kidding. I was just using an expression I had heard a number of times. Father Stan asked me, "Why do you keep putting yourself down? You as a people are no different from any other group of people. Some of you are on time and some of you are late, but you do not have to put your entire culture down."

I thought about it and I did some research. I found out that the expression is used in a number of cases when the dominant group all too often, wants to put down the minority group. I found out that down south they had CP time or Colored People Time and people who live in the back hills have MP Time or Mountain People Time. It is even used with religious groups, JP Time or Jewish People Time. The amazing part about this is the minority group accepts the put down and incorporates it into their own culture. They start putting themselves down, and their culture, by using the expressions and thinking, we are just joking. We are just using an expression.

I ask the question, have you ever heard the expression WP Time or White People Time? I don't think so. I have not, because they don't say it. And they as a group are no different from us. Some are early, some are late. That is the human condition.

With all of that information and with my research, I came up with a new expression, "CV Time is dead." There is no such thing as CV Time. We as a people are on time. We are up-to-date and on time. On some occasions, we are ahead of our time. As a people with the Cape Verdean culture, we know we must be prepared if we are to succeed. CV Time is dead. It does not exist. Please do not put my culture down. Thank you.

And now for the fictional part or the nonfictional part. The obituary of Cape Verdean time, commonly known as CV Time.

CV time died December 12th, 2010 at 12:05 PM. It was a tragedy of major importance. In fact, the entire family perished in this mournful death. His sister, MP Time, Mountain People Time, his mother, JP Time, Jewish People Time, and his father, CP Time or Colored People Time, all were struck down at the same time or the same instant. It was a fire of major proportions. It was like an atomic bomb struck their home. They were all peacefully asleep, and all of a sudden the scent of smoke was in the air and the flames were running down the hallway. Cries for help were heard, and 911 was called. But the firetrucks arrived too late. Just the ashen remains of their lives on the earth could be seen.

The wake was a soulful gathering of the entire community. The reception line stretched down the hallway and out into the street. The eulogy at Mass was particularly eyeopening, reflecting on the lives of CP, JP, MP and CV Time. CV Time was born in a community of color that was looked down upon by the majority community. He went to schools that all too often were not as good as the white schools. But supported by the love of his parents, he worked hard and got a good education. He grew up in a time of segregation.

His father, CP time, had to come north because he wanted a better life for himself. He met JP and fell in love at first sight. It was the first interracial inter-religious marriage at that time. With the birth of their first son, CV, and daughter, MP, they thought things would change, but it was the same old story. "Those people are never on time. They are always late." The joke was that they would probably be late for their own funeral. When CV was growing up, he would put many of his friends down by including them in the family. If they were just a few minutes late, he would say "They must be running on CV time." It was just a joke.

Later in life, it was no longer funny. When he found his first job at the factory, the boss made it a point to tell him the factory ran on time, not CV Time. His attitude changed. He was proud of his family and proud of his heritage. I am a Cape Verdean and my mother is Jewish and my father is Black. We are one happy family and we do not put



ourselves, nor do we put other people, down. He did not lump any group of people together in one basket. Each person is an individual. How they act and the things they do are not a reflection of the entire group. Their ashes were scattered to the full winds. The times they are changing.

So if anyone tells you they are running on CV time, you tell them CV time died December 12th, 2010. Thank you.