

## Breda Pete (Jah Jah) and I.

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In light of the sudden and unforeseen passing of our dear brother, activist and defender of the Raizal Nation, Eduardo Peterson, I want to embrace this moment to share briefly of my triune interaction with Breda Pete.

First, I interacted with Pete as an “activist.” He was very passionate about defending the rights of the Raizal People. He was a strong promoter of the philosophy of constructing and rescuing the historical knowledge of the Raizal People. He believed that it was of utmost importance to know our history so that we wouldn’t repeat the same mistakes of the past that currently has us under the colonial spell of this nation. He professed a strong philosophy of independence, and continuously taught and advocated for the Raizal people to become an independent nation, freed from their colonial status under Colombia.

Perhaps one of the most notable saying I learned from Pete (which you probably know as well is “Uhuru Amani: freedom”, which he would say every day as he finished a Raizal Opinion Radio program. While studying in the USA I asked my Nigerian, Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Cameroonian and Kenyan friends to share with me the meaning of Uhuru Amani. I learned that it is a Kenyan word that means, freedom. This taught me something about Pete even when I was far away from home at the time. He was a man deeply rooted in the philosophy of freedom. He believed that man was created free by their creator and they should not be placed and subjected to bondage by no system or person. Therefore, every morning from 8:00 to 9:00am through The Raizal Opinion program he encouraged and challenged the Raizal people to become free and independent in every area of their life.

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Second, I interacted with Pete as a “friend.” Pete was such an open, lovable and charismatic person. He was incredibly talented, a true multifaceted, renaissance man. He was photographer, designer, builder, artisan, cook, baker, activist, researcher, spokesperson...the list goes on. One of my first interactions was when he introduced me to African attire and sayings. In fact, it was through Pete and Julia that I fell in love with African attire as I watched them incorporate these clothes into their everyday lifestyle, not just on special occasions. My love for African knowledge, dress, and our connection to Africa as Raizals grew as a result of their influence and friendship.

It was easy to love and appreciate Pete. He made himself available and accessible. I remember while my wife was in Bogota with our premature daughter...Pete and Julia would regularly call us to pray and encourage us. Pete came to meet both my boys when they were a little over a week old, taking many pictures and sharing with them many stories. They still know him as “Uncle Pete”. We would visit him and Julia at their home and talk about the struggle, about the ministry, about life. Every December before his annual trip to Panama, he would come by with his delicious baked sweets for us. Pete became family.

Lastly, I interacted with Pete as a “pastor.” As a pastor I admired Pete’s love and gift to interact with kids. All the kids from the children department looked forward to Sunday when they could get their candies from Pete. He was an everyday Santa Claus. His joyous personality, contagious laughter and childlike disposition allowed him to easily connect with children of all ages.

Pete’s love and commitment to the creator was reflected in the way he would serve and make himself available. More importantly, if he had an observation or suggestion he would come personally and shared it with you. He was honest and open, the type of person who will give constructive criticism and encouragement—such people are treasures to any pastor.

Farewell my friend, you are now truly and completely free, having joined the ancestors in that great cloud of witness, watching and cheering us on as we continue to run the race. Thanks for all you’ve done for us. Uhuru Amani, Freedom.