

**February 18**

**John 7:24 (KJV)** [Jesus said,] “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”

A OneUnited Bank decided to release a new Visa card. One United, which calls itself the nation’s largest black-owned bank, issued the Harriet Tubman Visa Card. The card depicts Harriet Tubman, the revered abolitionist, with a determined look on her face. She also has her arms crossed. The crossed arms caused an immediate outcry. The gesture, crossed arms with hands clenched into fists, was said to resemble the salute from the Marvel movie, *Black Panther*. The bank was accused of pandering to African-America customers during Black History Month. The image was also seen as a sign of defiance. OneUnited countered that the Visa Card was symbol of black empowerment and a way to honor Tubman. The bank also countered that people were mistaken about the symbolism behind the crossed arms. The crossed arms is the American Sign Language sign for “love.”

As I read through this article, my first reaction to the card was somewhat negative. However, when I read that the picture of Harriet Tubman was a picture of a woman who did what she did because of her love for others, I had to change course. I looked up the sign for “I love you,” in American Sign Language. For “I” one points to him/herself. For “love” one crosses one’s arms. For “you” one points to the other person. Looking further, the use of the crossed arm symbol in the move *Black Panther* was a direct reference to the sign for “love.” The entire controversy did not stem from a misunderstanding; it stemmed from people jumping to conclusions. The Lord pointed that we, His children, must be wary of jumping to conclusions. If we are not, we will fight fights that are not fights at all. I remember a line from the book *Great Expectation* that said, “Take everything on evidence, not on sight.” God told Samuel that He does not look on the outside but on the inside of a person. That is excellent advice for all of us. One of deceptions of the enemy is to get us to react to what we see instead of acting on what we know. It is not the way a person looks that make him or her bad or good, repulsive or acceptable, etc. It is the way the person acts, for the way we act and treat others flows from what is in our hearts. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Oh, yes!!