

# CONTENTS

Introduction - - - - -	I-1	1,047+
Prologue: Me, Jesus and the Picture on the Wall - - - - -	P-1	2,697
PART I -- The Essence of Gandhi's Philosophy.		
1 -- Gandhi's Truth: A Never Ending Search - - - - -	1-1	2,745
2 -- Nonviolence: A Constant State Of Active Love - - - - -	2-1	2,786
PART II -- Inner Attitudes and Values.		
3 -- Faith - - - - -	3-1	2,894
4 -- Fearlessness - - - - -	4-1	3,303
5 -- Selflessness - - - - -	5-1	3,703
6 -- Humility - - - - -	6-1	2,637
7 -- Patience and Perseverance - - - - -	7-1	2,703
8 -- Morality - - - - -	8-1	2,439
9 -- Purity and Self-Purification - - - - -	9-1	2,707
10 -- Self-Discipline - - - - -	10-1	3,259
11 -- Hope In A Seemingly Hopeless Time - - - - -	11-1	3,004
PART III -- Outer Witness		
12 -- Unity - - - - -	12-1	2,641
13 -- Stewardship - - - - -	13-1	3,253
14 -- Constructive Activity - - - - -	14-1	2,393
15 -- Truth Force - - - - -	15-1	3,641
<del>16 -- Citizen Intervention - - - - -</del>	<del>16-1</del>	<del>3,641</del>
Conclusion - - - - -	C-1	1,141
Bibliography - - - - -	B-1	

48,943

THE BANDHI PROJECT:  
AN ENGINEER'S SEARCH FOR TRUTH

By Bob Aldridge



To Janet, my companion in the search for truth.

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## CONTENTS

Introduction	I-1
Prologue: Me, Jesus and the Picture on the Wall	P-1
PART I -- The Essence of Gandhi's Philosophy.	
1 -- Gandhi's Truth: A Never Ending Search	1-1
2 -- Nonviolence: A Constant State Of Active Love	2-1
PART II -- Inner Attitudes and Values.	
3 -- Faith	3-1
4 -- Fearlessness	4-1
5 -- Selflessness	5-1
6 -- Humility	6-1
7 -- Patience and Perseverance	7-1
8 -- Morality	8-1
9 -- Purity and Self-Purification	9-1
10 -- Self-Discipline	10-1
11 -- Hope In A Seemingly Hopeless Time	11-1
PART III -- Outer Witness	
12 -- Unity	12-1
13 -- Stewardship	13-1
14 -- Constructive Activity	14-1
15 -- Truth Force	15-1
Conclusion	C-1
Bibliography	B-1

## INTRODUCTION

I ask myself why I, an engineer, am writing a book which enters the realm of philosophy, theology, sociology and many other disciplines. Engineers are not noted for humanitarian ideologies. Rational analysis and application of physical laws is their more traditional role.

Nevertheless, I feel compelled to pursue this book, which I call The Gandhi Project. I am hopeful that if I can describe how Gandhi's principles have helped a logic-oriented engineer, more people will allow those principles to come alive in them. Precisely because of my logical tendencies I envision for this world a more orderly and humane arrangement than at present, one which might better oppose evil and foster the peace and justice for which so many of us yearn. For many years I have intensely studied practitioners of nonviolence, among whom Mohandas K. Gandhi stands out to me as the one who has contributed the most toward a totally nonviolent approach to opposing evil. Through decades of experimentation, this extraordinary person with unique insight has recognized that addressing all aspects of a problem is the surest and fastest way of resolving it.

I was asked by one of my daughters what I meant by a total approach. Using the example of homeless people in San Jose, some groups provide temporary shelter but that doesn't help everyone and it doesn't get to the root of the problem of why they are homeless. Others train the homeless so they can find work and that also helps a few. Still others prevail on the wealthy to share their good fortune and that, too, contributes a little. We can lobby legislators to pass affordable housing bills which also helps. There are numerous other things which might be done but none, by themselves, seem to alleviate the

problem. All together, however, in total, they have greater potential for success.

The same analogy applies to a person. There are many aspects to our personalities and we each have many talents to offer. To take the total approach is to strive for balance in our personalities and make maximum use of our talents. Then with everyone working together, doing what each one does best, we will achieve the maximum good. We can think less about opposing this or being anti-that. Our primary focus should be on properly applying our energies and skills, on living with our neighbors in love, and on being constantly open to new revelations of truth. This will inevitably lead to resisting evil but our primary motivation will be living as we think God wants us to live.

Truth was the basis of Gandhi's philosophy. No matter what the consequences to him personally, he never compromised with injustice or yielded to evil. Gandhi considered truth and God as one. Truth, he claimed, transcends all religions. It draws out the core values of every faith while rejecting erroneous human interpretations.

The application of Gandhian philosophy in the search for truth is the practice of nonviolence. He called it a constant state of active love. It is the positive condition of embodying love and compassion. Love eschews retaliation, harboring anger, embarrassing another, or coercing someone with guilt feelings. A completely nonviolent person -- one completely filled with love -- views no person as an enemy.

Most of today's activities for peace and justice seem to focus heavily on Gandhi's concept of nonviolence and truth. However, many of his ideas of what encourages nonviolence and aids in the search for truth have not been adequately explored. There seems to be a tendency to pick and choose what is

most comfortable while dismissing the more disturbing aspects as merely Gandhi's eccentricities.

Eccentricities he did have but I believe that his disturbing teachings have an important purpose which, if better understood, would provide greater success to peace-seeking people. Some of his prescriptions may seem out of touch with contemporary permissibility, but they do have considerable merit. His timeless insistence on a high standard of moral values, for example, is strong and essential medicine for today's society.

I feel that if more people had a clearer understanding of Gandhi's total approach the world would be a better place. That is why I am undertaking The Gandhi Project -- to share my personal opinions and searching, and as a contribution to the ongoing dialogue which will certainly evolve into a truthful, nonviolent solution to the problems we face today. Proceeding with this project has clarified my own thinking regarding truth and nonviolence. My understanding has matured as I put ideas into words and discuss those words with my family and friends.

I have been told that my presentation in these chapters is good for those with a Christian viewpoint or are sympathetic to such a viewpoint. It seems natural that I would use many Christian examples because they are the ones with which I am most familiar. Nevertheless, my spirituality has been influenced significantly by other religions and I believe that what I present in this book has application to all faiths.

Spirituality was the essence of Gandhi's way. I sometimes feel emotional about my spiritual beliefs but most of the time they are merely a gut feeling that God exists, loves us, and calls us to do good works. I have discovered some advantages to my type of dry, intellectual conviction. It has fostered a

mental determination to persist -- intellectual doggedness, it might be called. It seems to be the root of my staying power, and that I believe is good.

My manner of feeling and believing, though not ideal, does have a place in the whole. Feeling more spiritually emotional would give me better balance but a predominantly emotionalized spirituality is often shallow. Just as a man has a feminine side to his person, and a woman a masculine side, being all feminine or all masculine is not being complete. We approach wholeness as we are able to harmoniously balance our various personality elements.

Gandhi apparently had a well-balanced personality which gave him a well-rounded spiritual understanding. When he says truth is God, I can relate to that in my manner of comprehension. When he explains nonviolence as being a constant state of active love, it challenges me. In a very real way I envy Gandhi's ability to understand God and creation. It is evidence of Gandhi's mature personality that he appeals to both the emotionally-oriented person and the pragmatist.

Many people have helped in the development of this book. Thank you Jonathan Parfey, Michael Nagler, Jim Douglass, and my daughters Diane, Nancy and Kathy for your critique of draft chapters. Thanks also to the many people who have discussed this project with me and have offered encouragement and advice. And a special thanks to Bud Hanson for his critical advice, special encouragement, and overall nit-picking. Bud professes to be an agnostic but his grasp of things moral and spiritual surpasses many of us.

Most of all I must express my gratitude and love to my wife, Janet, to whom this book is dedicated. Without her stabilizing influence I could never have begun my search for truth. She has encouraged me and challenged me to live



according to my beliefs -- a struggle that continues today. Thank you, my  
darling.

Robert C. Aldridge

Santa Clara, California  
28 June 1990

## PROLOGUE: ME, JESUS, AND THE PICTURE ON THE WALL

When I was a small boy my uncle gave me a picture of an armored figure guarding a stone portal, lance in hand, sword on hip. His youthful face was pained, his troubled eyes averted, his fists tensely clenched. Blood was on the stone threshold and through the entranceway could be seen bodies strewn on the floor of what appeared to be an arena. More people were cowered together in the background with arms upraised, attempting to fend off balls of fire falling from above. My uncle explained that the soldier was a sentry guarding the entrance to a Roman circus where Christians were being persecuted. But the soldier was also, secretly, a Christian and that explained the display of anguish.

I hung the picture in my room and there it stayed as I grew up. I empathized with that soldier in his dilemma between "beliefs" and "duty." But what I really related to most were the armor and weapons he bore. In the unstable pre-World War II atmosphere -- between the survival struggle of the 1930s and the rabid wartime patriotism -- I visualized the ultimate Christian as a bold knight ready to fight for his beliefs. The contradiction between that and what Jesus actually taught never entered my head. I have always had a tendency to believe what suited me.

When Pearl harbor was struck I was fifteen and dreadfully afraid the war wouldn't last until I had a crack at the enemy. I was entranced by the battle fever expressed by such ballads as "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." I rejoiced when the military age was lowered to eighteen but I did have sense enough to finish high school. Many in my class were not able to. Many were not even alive to graduate.

A few months after entering the army I was sent to the Pacific. It was scary crawling into the belly of that troop ship at midnight for the long journey we weren't even sure we would complete. As I lay third up in the rows of

five-tiered bunks, getting a sardine-eye view of a can, I wondered if those dank metal walls would be my watery tomb. I felt a need for God. I found a poem in a magazine which reflected my feelings and hyped me for what was to come. I tore it out and carried it in my wallet for the rest of the war. Two verses were a form of patriotic prayer for survival with promises to do good things if God were merciful. It was the ending verse which I remembered over the years:

Thy will be done, if Thou decree  
That I should die afield.  
But let me go face to the foe --  
Sustain me lest I yield.  
Let no man cry he saw me fly  
The battle's agony.  
And let me die as a man should die  
In the fight for liberty

I felt lucky to be an American with God on my side. It would be awful to be God's antagonist. But subsequent events engraved persistent memories in my mind.

One reflection: The aftermath of a battle on northern Luzon ... walking back from a forward observer mission ... passing through a Japanese bivouac area recently burned out by a flame thrower ... gagging and puking at the stench. Scores of blackened bodies ... half out of foxholes in that last desperate effort to escape ... but cooked on the spot ... rotting meat on the musty jungle floor. A huge black beetle feasting on the tongue of a bloated youth. Whose son was he? How much was he loved? Where is my patriotic feeling of enmity? Where is the glory of war? Finally, is this really what God wants?

Another memory: Just outside Manila shortly after the war ... freedom was won. A group of us on a picnic ... a naked Filipino boy creeping from the bushes ... skittish as a wild animal. Now squatting on haunches ... out of reach but watching as we enjoy our food ... waiting for us to leave ... distended belly ... pus-eating maggots on a festering knee. Pouncing like a jackel on our leftovers ... devoured before we are out of sight. Is this the good life we cherish so

dearly? For whom is the hard-earned freedom and liberty? Is this what God wants?

After Janet and I were married the Roman warrior occupied a space on our bedroom wall, along with a silhouette of Jesus praying in agony during the lonely night before his crucifixion. Those two symbols epitomized my spiritual concern -- Jesus is sorrow over the world's indifference while we are forced to stand helplessly on the sidelines amid suffering. The dichotomy of that combination failed to penetrate my skull. I viewed my imagined powerlessness as some vague form of persecution through which I related to that early Christian warrior. At the same time I envied priests and ministers whose function it was to speak out against immorality. That was expected of them but it didn't seem to be expected of lay people. At that time I had a strong compulsion to do what was expected of me.

In the late 1950s I started an engineering job at Lockheed to help develop the Polaris submarine-launched missile. I convinced myself that I was really working for peace by keeping America strong enough to deter war. I was confident that America would use its power for good purposes. I had not yet learned the true meaning of the "national interests" we were trying to protect -- the exploitive behavior of large American transnational companies and the lush profits from foreign arms sales and Pentagon contracts. Ironically, I was earning my livelihood from the latter. It is true that I sincerely abhorred war but memories of those distant Pacific islands were filed in a dim corner of my brain during my post-war readjustment to life.

One night in the mid-1960s I lay abed in my California home. The hour was late, the evening warm and quiet. My armored gendarme hung in the darkness. Gradually an ominous rumbling came from the east and gathered into a crescendo as it passed overhead. It was the roar of many jet engines. Then, as it had

come, the sound faded into the west -- over the watery horizon in the direction of Vietnam. Finally, again, dead silence. I lay there enveloped in a clammy sweat as I contemplated the future role of those B-52 bombers. Memories of my own war experiences leaped into renewed vividness. My face must have resembled the contorted grimace of my Roman counterpart hanging there unseen, agonizing over that first-century napalming.

The role of those bombers in Indochina is now history. It was shortly after that haunting visitation that I became deeply involved in testing the radiation hardness of the multiple independently-targeted warheads for Poseidon missiles. Several of those specimens had already been mounted in a Nevada tunnel for exposure to an underground nuclear blast when several manufacturing flaws were discovered. I was ordered onto the next plane to make an on-the-spot evaluation. It was midnight in the dead of winter when I entered that austere desert mine shaft. The silence was deafening. I sat a mile underground peering down a steel-cased tunnel -- knowing that not too far away was a device capable of many Hiroshimas. This macabre meditation in the presence of "The Bomb" didn't strike me as compatible with God's will. My uneasiness increased when, after the test, clad in rad-safe garments, I reentered that tunnel to help recover the specimens. Through the foggy lense of my mask I could see the effect of radiation heat and shock -- parts smashed as if by a sledge hammer ... metallic surfaces boiled off from the heat ... material evaporated ... phenolics and asbestos charred. "The Bomb" is a huge technological step over the flame thrower. Cleaner too. People would just disappear in a puff of steam ... no stink ... no crawling beetles. But, God's will?

Slowly my channeled brain began to understand that US nuclear policy was drifting toward a more aggressive stance -- one which would so unbalance the superpower standoff that nuclear war might be tested. I became more and more

uncomfortable about building the weapons which would be used in such a decision. I began to feel a closer identity to that Roman soldier for I, too, was a mercenary fulfilling the needs of a contemporary Caesar while wishing desperately that less-fortunate people would not have to suffer so much. At the same time I thanked God that I was born American and had a comfortable life. Nevertheless, I could not escape that trapped feeling, much as the sentry must have felt, wearing Caesar's armor and carrying the instruments of oppression. Little by little, however, courage grew with awareness. Eventually Janet and I and our children were able to free ourselves from complicity in the incinerating potential that would make Vietnam napalming, to say nothing of World War II flame throwers and the Roman circus, dwindle to comparative insignificance. We finally asked ourselves the question, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" The answer upset our lives.

Anticipation of quitting my engineering job was frightening because I feared the unknown of the future. I had conjured up all kinds of unsettling possibilities which never did occur. I now recognize that this fear of the unknown is what prompts us to resist change and cling to the status quo which, at least, is known. As the time for submitting my resignation drew near, however, circumstances started coming into focus so I could deal with them. Fear diminished as I encountered tangible events. Growth is like that. It is a series of crises, each preceded by some degree of anxiety and pressure. Recognizing this pattern makes the process more acceptable and helps to summon the courage to hasten growth.

I have often been asked what caused me to quit weapons work when most people in that profession continue to justify their job. It is difficult to pick out one single incident from a succession of events which challenged my awareness. Many were encounters with my own conscience which were brought

about through the concern and sacrifice of others. Even awareness and courage seemed to be a medium rather than the cause of change. I believe the cause was a stimulation of the latent "feeling" nature of my personality. Scientists say we function in three ways -- we think, we feel and we act. The first two function usually control the third. It seems to me that in today's depersonalized society that "feeling" is discouraged while intellectual capabilities are lauded. I found that particularly true as an engineer because my actions were obliquely regulated by a predominant and detached "thinking" function. As a result my morality and spirituality had degenerated to an intellectual exercise instead of the living experience it should have been.

Today I use my technical knowledge and experience to help people understand what military programs hold for the future. Looking back over my life I can recall many incidents -- coincidences, if you will -- which have led me to the work I am doing today. Eastern religions use the word "karma" to describe a predetermined course for our lives. Christianity adds the concept of "free will" whereby our cooperation is necessary to help accomplish God's work on earth. Through our feelings we are able to recognize when our cooperation is desired. Many years ago Janet and I made a covenant that we would try to respond to God's will as we recognized it. I believe that had a lot to do with our ability to disentangle ourselves from a profession which depends on death and suffering to bring in the weekly pay check.

The Roman circus still hangs on my bedroom wall. I now see that guard as the personification of Christian failure. Because of militarism and fear he not only prevents true Christianity from flowering, but he also presents the flawed concept of a Christian compromising with evil. My perception now goes beyond that fearful sentry and into the arena occupied by the true followers of Christ. Now I can see the connection between those early martyrs and the suffering

people of today. It does not take much contemplation to recognize that my apathy and my excessive consumption of resources contribute to their suffering. Although that picture on the wall still disturbs me, and often disgusts me, it has become a challenge to my spirituality and a motivator to live as Jesus taught. It continually reminds me that the goal of a Christian is not to seek comfort in this world, and it challenges me to get on with the job that is far from finished.

# # # # #



PART I -- THE ESSENCE OF GANDHI'S WAY

## 1 -- GANDHI'S TRUTH: A NEVER ENDING SEARCH

He is the Rock,  
His work is perfect,  
For all his ways are judgment,  
A God of truth.

-- Deuteronomy 32:4

From my earliest years, as far back as I can remember, I had been taught to have a high value for truth. Maybe that is one reason I was attracted to Mohandas Gandhi. Truth is the foundation of Gandhi's philosophy. He considered God and truth as one -- "Truth is God," he says. Where there is truth there is also knowledge, but there can be no real knowledge in the absence of truth. Furthermore, according to Gandhi, from true knowledge there flows joy but, conversely, sorrow flows from lack of knowledge, or false knowledge. Therefore knowledge and joy are closely connected with truth, or God.

I see much to ponder in Gandhi's concept of truth being God. It has profound ramifications. When I question if something is truthful I am asking if this is God speaking to me. When I am seeking truth I am searching for God's message. When I speak of truth dwelling in my heart I say God is in my heart. If every time I use the word "truth" I substitute "God," it startles me to see how pervasive God is in my most mundane activity.

Every day at almost every moment I encounter truthfulness and falsehoods, from the most insignificant television commercial to religion itself. We are surrounded by untruth and deception. God is very much backstage in a large sector of our society. My way of bringing God into those desolate areas is by spreading the truth. I feel that when I help people to understand the conditions nuclear weapons create, I am proclaiming the word of God just as much as a minister preaching from the pulpit. But there is a pitfall I must watch for. It is easy to become entrenched in certain viewpoints, especially if that bias is motivation by strong interests. For instance, if I should become so caught up in

showing the first strike characteristics of certain particular weapons that I present only information which suits that purpose, I would be guilty of not presenting the whole truth. I would be presenting only a half-God, which is really no God at all.

Gandhi believed so strongly in truth that he avoided any taint of artificiality in any of his actions. He was uncompromising in not cooperating with evil in any of its forms. Yet he did not despise the person performing evil acts because he believed that no evil person exists. A person may encompass and spread evil, and it is that encompassing and spreading that lends itself to noncooperation. The person, however, is to be loved. Gandhi wrote in his autobiography:

To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means. [All Men Are Brothers, p. 76.]

Yes, if truth is indeed God then the seeking of truth is religion, no matter what field of work we may be pursuing. Gandhi saw our sole purpose in life to be the service and seeking of God through truth in thought, truth in speech and truth in action.

#### Truth in thought.

Thinking the truth is the basis for speaking and acting the truth. My search for truth seems to originate in my mind. It takes a concentrated effort, however, to recognize when I am thinking falsely because I frequently find myself trying to believe what I want to believe. I must be alert, ask questions, and change my outlook when new evidence indicates that truth lies elsewhere. That

is what a search for truth is all about. Truth, God, is very elusive. But when I practice real determination in its quest, it is revealed bit by bit.

Let me draw upon my experience as an engineer helping to develop nuclear weapons of mass destruction. When I accepted that position I believed it was morally correct because the Government sponsored it. I believed the government had the people's interest foremost in its policies and that it was seriously striving for a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons. I labored at my job for many years under that delusion and worked my way up to a responsible position. I enjoyed my profession, had obtained financial security, and felt good about my achievements.

During the Indochina war I reluctantly began to recognize that America was not upholding the principles I had been taught were paramount in our national heritage. I was shocked, especially after having fought in World War II to preserve that heritage. This so startled me that I unconsciously began further questioning and I soon recognized a discrepancy between what was happening inside the weapons industry and what was being told to the public. Eventually I was forced to admit that our nuclear deterrent policy was a massive propaganda ploy which merely justifies a continuing weapons buildup. After being confronted with an overwhelming quantity of truth I could no longer condone my occupation of designing nuclear missiles, and I changed my career.

I do not relate this experience as a great personal achievement in discovering truth because I was not making any real effort and my eventual awakening was more the accomplishment of others than my own. I actually hindered a truthful recognition by tenaciously clinging to false values with which I felt comfortable. It was the help and love and inspiration of family and friends that eventually motivated me to change my thinking and job.

Nevertheless, as I discovered later, this was only a small step toward acquiring a completely truthful lifestyle.

### Truth in speech.

Speaking the truth follows from thinking the truth. I, like anyone else, have harbored secrets which I only confide to someone very close, if I confide them at all. But am I being completely truthful when I do not release this knowledge? In an idealistic sense I would have to answer "no." But idealism, I may argue, does not always fit into practical everyday activity. It is nice to have as a goal but there are some things that must be kept guarded. I must be realistic -- so I tell myself.

What are these things which are so secret? One might be information detrimental to my reputation. This is tough to face, yet at the same time I castigate the government for its secrecy and I put down big business for hiding embarrassing activity. Gandhi opposed this compulsion to hide facts by being forthright to the point of naivete in his speech. He revealed even the most embarrassing information about himself. In his autobiography he confessed his worst habits, both past and present, while at the same time recognizing and building on his virtues. He has been ridiculed for confiding to casual acquaintances, often of the opposite sex, his innermost thoughts and temptations -- things which I would feel uncomfortable revealing to a close confidant. Nevertheless, although considered naive in speech, he was completely truthful.

Another reason for keeping secrets may be to protect another's reputation. Certainly I shouldn't hurt someone else and it is not my place to confess another's sins. Nor should secrets from clients of a legitimate profession be revealed, or blabbing about someone coming to me for needed help. In these cases I should be striving to help those people in their own search for truth.

Neither do I believe openness of expression should be interpreted as license to spread rumors and gossip. Such practice is opposed to God's desire that we live in harmony with others. More often than not, rumors bear large degrees of falsehood and in my search for truth I must habitually discard them as suspect.

From this train of thought I conclude that openness in speech applies mainly to my personal thoughts. Nevertheless, it is difficult to be completely open about every thought. What if I meet someone and immediately feel a dislike toward him? Am I obliged, in my search for completely truthful expression, to tell him so? Of course not. It is not necessary to instantly and publicly announce every temptation we encounter. In a discussion of truth with that person -- along the lines I am presently pursuing in this chapter -- it may be appropriate to analyze my temptation in proper context, but only as a means of overcoming such temptations.

Often the failure to speak truthfully is not motivated by a secret, but is aimed toward achieving a desired goal. An example is television commercials which usually distort the truth to sell their product. Children often lie to avoid punishment and the sad part is that social conditions allow them to feel it is no great sin to do so. How can children, who read in the newspaper about large companies cheating the government, not believe that some untruth is expected -- if one can get away with it?

The concept of being realistic has for ages been an excuse for taking, or failing to take, certain actions. Idealism has been downplayed as Utopian and, therefore, not realistic. To be a realist it seems that one must meet the expectations of society -- it is easier to conform a little and appear "respectable," we tell ourselves.

Idealism certainly has to be pinned down. To me it is something God desires, but which may seem unattainable under present conditions. According to Gandhi's axiom that truth is God, then the conclusion would be that idealism is complete truth. It then follows that in order to seek the truth I must attempt to change the conditions which obstruct truth.

I have always been strongly compelled to tell the truth. It seems to me that my nose grows an inch when I try to lie. I don't know how my parents inculcated in me the compulsion to speak truthfully but they did. On those rare occasions when I tried to lie, my guilty look was a giveaway.

This obsession for truthfulness has carried over into my adult life and has gotten me into trouble on some occasions. One experience was while doing electrical wiring at a center for fatherless families. This required a city permit and a contractor's license to accomplish but a cooperative contractor obtained the permit and allowed me to do the work as a volunteer.

Upon completion, the city inspector came to sign off the job. Unfortunately, he found some minor flaws which he suspected a licensed electrician would not make and asked who did the work. I could have given several evasive answers but just couldn't. Telling the truth got me, the contractor and the owner into trouble. Although the consequence was only a reprimand to all of us, I was very uncomfortable because of the embarrassment caused to the well-meaning contractor and to the center.

#### Truth in action.

As truth in thought leads to truth in speech, so truth in speech leads to truth in action. This is the normal sequence of events. What is the difference between truthful and untruthful acts? If a child hides a cigarette when his father approaches, the act of hiding the cigarette is a lie just as much as if he told his father he didn't have one. In the case of acting truthfully, the

question does not have to be asked for the action to be an answer because the one being enlightened or deceived doesn't know that asking the question is necessary.

Let me return to my example with the electrical inspector. The reason that I got myself and everyone else into trouble by telling the truth was because I had not acted the truth. Had the inspector not asked who did the job, I would have let the deception proceed. That would be telling the lie just as much as if I had lied verbally. If this experience provided no other good purpose it did enlighten me about the need for truthfulness in action. I resolved to never again be led by good intentions into that kind of situation.

Let me present another hypothetical example to illustrate truth, or untruth, in action. Mother gives Paul a bag of candy and tells him to divide it with his five friends. Three of Paul's friends are with him at the time so Paul gives them their share, intending to give the other two boys their allotment later. The next day, Paul meets one of the three to whom he had already given a share, but gets mixed up and offers him another share. If the friend, knowing he had already received his share, and knowing that Paul is supposed to divide the remainder with the two absent boys, took the additional candy without advising Paul of his mistake, that act is untruthful.

Another twist to the story could be that Paul divides all the candy with the three friends present and saves none for the other two. That would be untruthful on Paul's part because he disobeyed his mother's authority. Now we come to disobedience of authority -- true authority, that is -- being an untruthful act. I say true authority because the traditional concept of authority is not necessarily true and this is something that a person, exercising good judgment, must determine. I recognize all true authority as flowing from



God (truth). I need only ask myself if this is the way God would exercise authority.

As a parent, I have an authority of love over my children. It is delegated by God to flow through me and such delegation demands much of me because I have no authority in my own right. I am responsible to my creator, who is also the creator of my children, to raise my children in an atmosphere of truth and love, so far as is possible for me to do so.

True authority seeks to inform and liberate the person subject to that authority. A dictator does not exercise true authority. Neither do I when I subject my children to physical, emotional or mental abuse; no matter how subtle that abuse may be. Pretending to have authority which I do not have -- pseudo authority -- is an untruthful act in itself.

Many people exercise true authority every day. A policeman, stopping traffic to let school children safely cross the street, is exercising authority delegated by the creator. A judge, honestly mediating a dispute between citizens or meeting out just sentences aimed at rehabilitating a criminal, is exercising true authority. One way I found to determine if authority is true is to examine whether it helps the people subject to authority. If it represses anyone or usurps some power not delegated (such as taking a life through the death sentence) then it is not true authority and not morally subject to obedience. In most, if not all, cases it is untruthful to obey pseudo authority while open disobedience would be acting truthfully.

This is how Gandhi viewed the British rule in India and why he organized a civil disobedience campaign against it. The British had no true authority to make another nation subject to their welfare and exploit that nation to enhance that welfare. Gandhi rightfully saw flagrant disobedience of that pseudo authority as necessary in order to reveal the truth of the injustice. But even

in that disobedience to an unjust authority he opposed only the unjust act, not the people themselves. His understanding of truthful action was to firmly and nonviolently noncooperate with injustice in order to expose that injustice. At the same time he kept the channels of communication open with British officials so it would be possible for both sides to explore the circumstances and agree on the truth together. Of course such a joint search means that the resister of injustice must also be ready to change his or her understanding when new concepts of truth are revealed.

Today the abuse of authority is manifest. Dictators reign and nations prepare for war, even the nuclear war which scientists warn will destroy the earth. As mortal human beings it is beyond our capacity to find complete truth. Neither can we understand truth in its entirety. We can only grasp it bit by bit and perceive it in concepts. That is why the process of seeking the truth is never-ending.

# # # # #

## 2 -- NONVIOLENCE: A CONSTANT STATE OF ACTIVE LOVE

Civilization does not mean electric lights  
being installed.

It does not mean producing atomic bombs, either.  
Civilization means not killing people.

-- Ven. Nichidatsu Fujii

When I was a kid in school I hated fights. I would take all measures to avoid a fight. But when one was forced upon me I did fight, and occasionally won. Later in combat I detested war. I would often lay awake in my foxhole, bathed in a cold sweat as the machine guns chattered outside. I was no longer afraid -- fear diminishes as one gets into action. What haunted me was wondering who's loved one may be getting killed trying to infiltrate our area. Still later as a missile engineer I helped design a weapons system capable of killing 80-million men, women and children. I told myself that it was to keep the peace. For most of my life there has been a conflict between nonviolence and violence. It was Gandhi who taught me the connection between nonviolence and truth.

Nonviolence was Gandhi's way of seeking truth, or God. To him nonviolence was the necessary and indispensable means of discovering truth; a constant state of active love -- it "is not a negative state of harmlessness, but is a positive state of love." [Young India, 19 January 1921; quoted in P.C. Chandler's Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 412.] In the Christian bible, love is also equated to God -- "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." [1 John 4:8] Gandhi, a Hindu, agreed with this, as he agreed with all truths. It follows, then, that nonviolence, being a constant state of active love and an approach to truth, means living according to God's way as a means of recognizing God.

It may be logically construed that if nonviolence is a constant state of active love, and God is love, then nonviolence is God. It then may seem

contradictory when I say that nonviolence is a means of recognizing God. I don't think so. It is an example of ends and means. Gandhi refuted the concept of ends justifying means -- he disagreed that one can achieve a lasting nonviolent solution to a problem through the use of violence. He maintained that ends are the means -- that means are merely ends in the making. So it makes sense to me that aspiring to a nuance of God is a means of more fully perceiving God.

People have told me that nonviolence sounds negative because of the "non" prefix. It is actually the other way around. If nonviolence is a constant state of active love, then violence must be the absence of love. It would be better to use the terms "love" and "non-love." Then violence (non-love) would connote the negative state it actually is.

At the same time that nonviolence was Gandhi's means of finding truth, it was also his way of resisting evil and violence. He didn't mean that his nonviolence would eliminate evil. He wrote, "No Man can stop violence. God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in [God's] hands. . . . The deciding factor is God's grace. He works according to His law and therefore violence will also be stopped according to that law. Man does not and can never know God's law fully. Therefore we have to try as far as lies in our power." [Gandhi on Non-Violence, pp. 31-32] By aspiring to this constant state of active love (nonviolence) and searching for truth (God), Gandhi believed he could to some degree slow down the processes of evil and contribute towards their eventual elimination.

#### Nonviolence as an inner lifestyle.

Since truth is mostly an interior discovery, my search for truth begins within me. Therefore, since nonviolence is the way to truth it also begins within. Interior nonviolence is the foundation for a nonviolent lifestyle.

A friend impressed upon me early in the 1970s that I have control over only one person -- myself. The reverse is also true -- no one but myself can control my attitudes and values, as long as I am of sound mind, unless I allow them to do so. This may seem to contradict what I said in chapter one about the interaction and interrelatedness of all human activity but it really doesn't.

It all comes back to my search for truth. In its fullest sense, that search is my conscious effort to find the truthful order of my life which takes note of all my experiences and encounters. It is up to me to sort out this information -- accepting what I perceive to be true and discarding the false. In this case, exterior pressures affect my inner attitudes only to the extent I allow it.

Sometimes a portion of truth will subconsciously inspire (or disturb) me to a sharper state of attention. This may happen without my conscious knowledge. I have found this to be the process through which other people can influence my thinking and attitudes. My awakening to the real nature of work in the weapons industry, which I related in the first chapter, is an example. But the decision is mine.

It is unfortunate that when I am in the unthinking state I am not always inspired for the better. I can be easily pressed to go along with the prevailing mores of society. When I allow others to guide my life in this manner, I contribute to the destructive momentum which is now sweeping civilization. An engineering colleague of mine once had a sign on his desk proclaiming: "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." That pretty well describes the unthinking person in the world today. The hopeful side is that my slightest bit of attention works wonders in stimulating my mental processes toward constructive ends.

It is when thinking starts that I am able to conduct a conscious search for truth. If that search is to have maximum success, I will guide it with proper consideration for our environment and other people. This attitude is the constant state of active love which Gandhi calls nonviolence. Thus, to the degree I am successful in fostering a nonviolent outlook on life, to that same degree I am successful in recognizing truthfulness. Many subtle diversions exist to disguise the truth and motivate thoughtless decisions. I find that consciously fostering an interior nonviolent attitude is the most efficacious way to see through those diversions.

It may appear that people can be controlled by force but that is only in the physical sense. I once spent a few days in jail because I chose to express opposition to the Trident missile. This punishment was to deter me from future similar resistance. Physically, I was at the mercy of guards but my thoughts and attitudes remained my own to control. I could relate to the black youth about the same age as my son. Likewise for the chicano boy in the next bunk. They were no more bad than any other people. Their problem was that they were born colored and poor. I had no trouble tying the predicament of these young men to the misplaced priorities of our society, epitomized by Trident -- the reason for my own incarceration. Physical confinement in my case merely galvanized my interior resolve to continue resisting first strike weapons.

Attitudinal choices become tougher as physical repression grows. Suffering this repression, rather than lashing back in violence, is to choose personal discomfort rather than imposing it on someone else. This is the redemptive and reconciling essence of nonviolence and was the attitude of martyrs in the early church. I believe our world would be far better off if more of us would pay closer attention to the history of martyrdom and the forces which influenced it. This does not mean I should simply put my tail between my legs and accept



injustice. That would be acting cowardly. Nonviolence actively resists evil to anyone, including ourselves, but not at the expense of using violence in return. That is not necessary. As a constant state of active love, nonviolence is a more powerful force and many choices of action become apparent when I recognize that power.

Control over my physical activity can also be accomplished through psychological coercion. This may come as threats to myself or my loved ones. Emotions can be used to motivate certain behavior -- patriotism, sensuality, glory, team spirit. But, like physical constraint, psychological coercion can only affect my interior activity to the extent I permit.

One of my biggest obstacles to nonviolent living is coping with the emotion called anger. Anger is a normal human reaction to injustice. It is a pressure which builds inside me and seeks release. If I recognize this pressure as a supply of energy which motivates me to do something instrumental towards alleviating injustice, then I can turn that energy toward positive goals.

Too often, however, I become discouraged at my seeming inability to have any effect. This tempts me to lose faith and hope. As injustices appear to mount, so does the pressure of anger within me. Sometimes I unleash that force in a violent outburst which allows the anger to control my emotions and is what Gandhi described as a wasteful dissipation of energy. Even more than wasteful, it is destructive to those around me, and to my own ability to love.

Even Gandhi couldn't always use the force of anger in as constructive a manner as he wished. He said the most he could claim was that he could keep his anger enough under control that it did not drain his energy. That does not mean I should hold anger in because that is what builds the rupturing pressure for a violent outburst. The best means I've found to dissipate anger's "head of steam" is in a controlled manner, so to speak. Intense physical activity helps

to reduce the danger point. Then I can start channeling the energy generated toward a better purpose.

A cogent example is my reaction to military programs. As I study the testimony of Pentagon spokesmen seeking to justify new weapons, the half-truths and deceptive concepts they present make me boil. I mentally castigate legislators for being so gullible. If I am not careful I find anger eroding my reasoning and I often take it out on those dearest to me by being grouchy, contentious, and even downright insulting. Using better judgment, I might do something like write an article to reveal the deception taking place. This not only vents my energy but also informs others of the truth.

The essence of nonviolence is that I assume responsibility for the life I live. I have only one life to give and that is my own. Giving my life does not necessarily mean risking death. That may happen but it would be a rare instance. In most cases, giving my life means living in search of a better understanding of God (truth) and trying to maintain a constant state of active love through a nonviolent style of living.

Some say we humans are naturally violent. I do not agree. People may be originally violent, or conditioned to violence, but when they start desiring as much for others as for themselves, violence wanes. This may be what the concept of original sin is all about -- a mythical way of saying that without God (truth) I will wallow in the violent state of non-love. Baptism, at least in the Christian tradition, is an exterior sign of an interior desire to love God. Just having water poured over my head, however, doesn't flood my being with love. My inner change comes from consciously and emphatically desiring conversion.

Conversion is probably a bad word to use because it connotes inducing people to my way of thinking. Awakening would be more precise. Conversion is



really awakening to the latent power of love and truth which lies within me. I believe that no person is inherently violent -- that no person is void of love. It seems more probable that some people just don't awaken as soon as others and thus don't exercise that latent power within them. Others don't comprehend the joy of love and thus seek fulfillment in material pleasures. But I find that when love is activated by a conscious searching for truth then all kinds of great things begin to happen. It seems to me that the search for truth is more enchanting, more romantic, more challenging, more exciting, and much more fulfilling than any of the sensual satisfactions use as a substitute.

I have undoubtedly oversimplifying a nonviolent lifestyle. Such goodness of behavior does not come easily to anyone, however. Aspiring to achieve something as desireable as a constant state of active love requires work on my part. It isn't possible for me or any human being, at least of our present state of mental evolvment, to embody nonviolence one-hundred percent. Nevertheless, I can achieve an increasingly greater degree in living nonviolently. When I desire a nonviolent personality, and set my mind to cultivating it, all sorts of successes seem to follow. My frequent failures in culturing nonviolence seem awfully discouraging at the time and require much effort to overcome. Overcome them I can, however, if I have faith in myself, faith in my ability to love, and faith in my capacity to recognize truth.

#### Nonviolence as public activity.

When describing nonviolence as a constant state of active love, the term active means exactly that. Nonviolence must be outwardly active to be complete because a nonviolent person is eventually motivated to do something to show love for others.

Gandhi considered it essential to accept suffering and to channel his anger before nonviolent action could take place. He held that a person engaging in

political demonstrations or other nonviolent witness needs more rigorous training in self discipline than a soldier preparing for war. He said: "Victory is impossible until we are able to keep our temper under the gravest provocation. . . . A non-cooperator is nothing if he cannot remain calm and unperturbed under the fierce fire of provocation." [Young India, 25 August 1921 -- cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 56]

Such self discipline is necessary to alleviate my opponent's fear of violence on my part and in order for there to be a fruitful atmosphere for dialogue. When editing Young India in 1931, Gandhi received a letter asking him to define the limits to which one can vilify and criticize an opponent, and to discuss the degree of hostility which can be expressed toward an opponent during a political controversy. In his answer Gandhi explained how to resist evil while still loving the doer of that evil. He said there can be no vilification of the opponent but there can be a truthful description of his evil acts, and pointed out that an opponent may be as honorable as we presume to be but with a different view of the situation.

Regarding criticism, Gandhi advocated meeting perceived untruth with truth. This means that if I am treated discourteously, I should be courteous. In response to bullying I should have calm courage. If there is violence I have to accept suffering rather than retaliate with violence. When the opponent appears arrogant, I must remain humble, and anything resembling evil should be met with good.

Gandhi went on to describe the limits of hostility, saying there should be no hostility toward persons but we should be hostile toward acts which "are subversive of morals or the good of society." All of this, he explained, is to be in the spirit of seeking conversion rather than condemnation. [Young India, 7 May 1931 -- cited in Nonviolent Resistance, pp. 83-84]

Much too often people act nonviolently as a tactic without consciousness of the constant state of active love which can attain what is unattainable by lower standards. In many cases these actors believe it may be necessary to eventually resort to violence when nonviolence no longer works. These are often well-meaning people but they lack faith in nonviolence. When used solely as a tactic nonviolence will never be totally successful.

Personal nonviolence is an integral part of nonviolent witness. Gandhi pointed out that many actions were not the ultimate in success because, although the people did not retaliate, they still harbored violence in their minds. Sometimes this violence showed in their speech. These half-way nonviolent measures, according to Gandhi, are not the nonviolence of the strong. Neither are they the nonviolence which has the power to overcome evil with justice. He warned: "Nonviolence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Nonviolence of the mere body without the cooperation of the mind is nonviolence of the weak or the cowardly and has no potency. . . . If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our destruction." [Young India, 2 April 1931 -- cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 284.]

Gandhi held women in high respect for attaining both interior and outgoing nonviolence: "In this nonviolent warfare, [women's] contribution should be much greater than men's. To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength, is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If nonviolence is the law of our being,

the future is with woman." [Young India, 10 April 1930 -- cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 325.]

# # # # #

PART II -- INNER ATTITUDES AND VALUES

### 3 -- FAITH

Tis not the dying for a faith that's so  
hard, Master Harry -- every man of  
every nation has done that -- 'tis  
the living up to it that's difficult.

-- William Makepeace Thackeray

To me, faith implies religion. To Gandhi, religion was his entire life -- his politics, his actions, his thoughts, his relationships with other people, right down to the everyday activities of chores and ritual. Although Gandhi recognized the truths found in all religions, he was not hung up on any one faith. He knew that, although truth was present to some extent in each one, God was more than what any of those religions claimed:

Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself. [All Men Are Brothers, p. 73.]

Gandhi's spiritual staying force was faith -- faith in God (truth) and in nonviolence (love) -- yet he was ever open to accepting new concepts of truth and love as they were revealed. I believe faith is a gift to us which increases proportional to our desire for it, and brings us into a closer relationship with God, who comes to us in the form of knowledge (truth) and leaves it up to us to accept or reject that knowledge.

As I acknowledge the truth I can recognize, it influences my actions. Yet there is more truth and I yearn to understand it better in order to be closer to God. God responds to my interest, I have found, by revealing more knowledge. This cyclical effect seems to continue as long as I believe there is more to understand, and I seek that understanding. This is what my faith is all about --

knowing that God has infinite knowledge to reveal as I am prepared to receive, and thus preparing myself to receive more.

I often despair over increasing unjust activities and faith is the source of my perseverance. Faith, to me, is knowing that truth and love (God) will eventually conquer worldly evils. To summon my faith I need only recognize truth and love as I encounter them. There are all kinds of acts which demonstrate love and there are thousands of small incidents where truth has prevailed. My impediment to seeing them is busy-ness -- often too busy working for peace and justice. I may become so engrossed in getting publicity for an action, or in reaching fund-raising goals, that I lose perspective. I put too much of the burden on my human self and fail to exercise the faith needed to put real power behind my efforts.

Gandhi followed truth as he perceived it. Most people looked to him as a leader but he rightfully disclaimed that role. He was a follower -- a follower of truth. That is important to me. I often rigidly direct my attention toward attaining set goals. Setting goals is not bad. It is when goals become ends in themselves that they are detrimental. I need enough faith to alter goals as new knowledge indicates. Gandhi had the faith to call off campaigns when he recognized a lack of truth and nonviolence. Willingness to change direction with new knowledge, even in the face of humiliation, demonstrates faith in truth and the search for truth.

Gandhi placed no geographic limits on his spirituality. His religion transcended his love for India itself. He was just as interested in justice for Britain and believed that correcting Britain's exploitation of India was helping Britain morally. That is why he insisted that change come from recognized truth rather than coercion. He worried that if India took up the doctrine of the

sword he would not be found wanting in having to oppose this acceptance of violence.

Lack of faith is a dilemma I face today. I love my country and want it to be the bastion of justice and freedom which I have been taught that it represents. My problem comes when I realize that US policy is not what it should be. At these times my faith must overrule mere love of country in order to face the truth. Since I truly love my country with faith in "liberty and justice for all," I am moved to nonviolent action to fulfill that dream. I can love the land God has given us to care for, and the people living on that land, while staunchly denouncing the evils we are perpetrating and actively attempting to change our evil behavior. I would not be loving my country if I did not try to improve it.

My hour of trial came in the late 1960s. I am a veteran of World War II and at that time I felt war was necessary to preserve our freedom. After the surrender I was firmly convinced we needed strength to protect democracy. During the early 1960s I viewed the Indochina war as a necessary evil.

One morning at breakfast I glanced at the newspaper. Pictured on the front page was a helicopter with a body falling out. The story explained how "Viet Cong" were taken up in helicopters and one pushed out to frighten the others into talking. I was shocked that Americans would have such disregard for life. Nazis or communists, yes, but not Americans. I had seen killing in the war but not this blatant callousness.

This was new knowledge but I didn't comprehend it as a truth from God. At first I rejected it but the facts were indisputable. I was troubled. A good friend once told me feeling troubled warned him to look for a message. I did unconsciously seek an answer and that started the questioning process.



Later I was faced with more disquieting stories. The "Winter Soldiers" testified how their basic-training sergeant twisted a rabbit's head off and had the recruits bloody their hands. In my Army training I was taught to kill but not conditioned for bloody slaughter. More disturbing knowledge: the Mai Lai massacre, the Pentagon Papers, stories of slaughter and rape -- of killing women and children because they were defined as enemy. Other reports told how Viet Cong numbers multiplied in proportion to the atrocities. I was eyeball to eyeball with the fact that my country was not what I envisioned it to be. In one massive upheaval my value system was destroyed. I no longer felt pride in being a combat veteran. I reevaluated my love of guns -- what was the real root of that attachment? I lost interest in the "sport" of hunting. Some goals of benevolent organizations such as Boy Scouts and Little League came into question. I faced a complete turn-around in my outlook on life. Just as alcoholics must first recognize their sickness to be helped, I had to renounce outworn values. It was a traumatic experience and without faith I would have been plunged into the depths of despair.

Frustration over apparent ineffectiveness often breeds hopelessness. I have seen this happen to many in the peace and justice movement. Some start out aflame with enthusiasm but discouragement sets in when immediate results are not seen. Others begin with a bustle of activity but in a short time burn out from sheer exhaustion. Nothing could be worse for the movement than this high attrition rate. I have found that faith in what I am doing is essential for perseverance.

Although my efforts are not usually rewarded by visible gratification, I am able to see some degree of progress. Changes have happened in the social climate since 1980. More people speak out against nuclear weapons. Professionals are taking united stands, such as Physicians for Social

Responsibility. The list goes on to include lawyers, computer specialists, dentists, architects, atmospheric scientists, educators, parents, aerospace engineers and workers, religious leaders, legislators, and many more. These groups were motivated by the work of many people.

Another example hinges on the freeze resolution. A 1983 Gallup Poll indicated that 70 percent of Americans favor an immediate bilateral and verifiable freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons. By mid-1983 there were 11 state legislatures, 56 county councils, 320 city councils, hundreds of organizations, more than 200 US Senators and Representatives and thousands of prominent citizens calling for such a freeze. Again, this is the result of much seemingly insignificant work.

Nevertheless, one person's contribution in this massive movement may seem obscure. Just like myriads of drops make a lake, and uncountable grains of sand make a beach, each peacemaker's effort contributes to the total effect. That may not be enough to satisfy some enthusiasts who desire sweeping changes. Changes will come eventually if we do not become discouraged. What is visible now may be analogized to the camel's nose under the tent. The nose looks small and unthreatening to those in the tent. But after the nose comes the head, and then the whole animal. By this time tent and contents are in shambles. Justice is the camel and the tent is the refuge of demagoguery. The nose of justice will soon create a huge upheaval if we faithfully act on that belief.

Our personality has been described by psychologists as ranging from the physical; through the intellectual/emotional, social and moral; to the spiritual or religious -- a spectrum from the very visible physical makeup to the highly abstract spiritual aspect. Psychologists also point out that the importance of these attributes increases as their visibility decreases. Spirituality is hardest

to comprehend but by far the most critical portion of our personality to develop.

Faith lies in the realm of the spiritual. Its intangibility eludes description. It cannot be detected by the five senses because it is deeper than sensual perception. It has emotional and intellectual overtones but they are only the visible results. It is a visceral recognition of truth. It is wanting to love when it seems impossible to love -- desiring to be nonviolent when we are aflame with anger. Spiritual things also happen which cannot be confirmed by normal human processes.

On the more visible plane, however, we are required to put our faith to work. Thomas Merton said the first responsibility of a person of faith is to make that faith really part of his or her life by living it. In this regard, faith in truth and nonviolence means to direct that inner conviction toward a constant state of active love.

Living our faith leads to public witness. In the most profound sense it means resisting evil with truth and love. Gandhi said nonviolence would not fail through an inherent weakness. If it fails it would be due to poverty of response -- that is, lack of faith that truth and love will overcome. He warned that such failure, springing from and coupled with insufficient internal commitment to nonviolence, will certainly lead to violent responses.

Gandhi held onto his faith through about three decades of struggle to liberate India. Before that he developed nonviolent resistance in South Africa. Today another nonviolent resistance campaign, against Apartheid, is being waged in South Africa. Bishop Desmond Tutu, one of its leaders, doesn't seem to have the faith in nonviolence that Gandhi had. Press reports indicate he predicts the possibility of violence to achieve liberation: "I am sufficiently realistic to know that a time could come when you have to say here are two evils -- injustice,

oppression, exploitation -- and the other evil -- overthrowing this by an armed insurrection. Which is the lesser evil?" [San Jose Mercury News, 19 August 1985, pp 1A & 12A]

The bishop is not the first to use the term "realistic" to justify overcoming evil with evil. Although possibly referring to what could happen, rather than his own feelings, his quotation continues: "The church has a tradition which enables Christians to say there is a time when it is justifiable for Christians to overthrow an unjust government, but I hope we haven't gone to there yet. . . . I think we're on the brink of catastrophe unless a miracle intervenes. I'm not using hyperbole. I'm scared. I still believe we (blacks) are going to be free, but I am fearful that we are going to get there -- barring this miracle -- through a blood bath." [San Jose Mercury News, op. cit.]

Bishop Tutu is referring to the "Just War Theory" which was adopted around the fourth century A.D. when the Roman emperor, Constantine, became a Christian. Up to that time Christians had steadfastly refused military service. This "theory," which has no basis in the teaching of Jesus and in fact contradicts it, hypothesizes seven simultaneous conditions for justly killing others in war.

One condition is that the war be declared by a competent authority responsible for public order. My concept of true authority is the authority of love coming from God and it is hard for me to square "competent authority" with God approving our slaughter of brothers and sisters in war.

Gandhi also spoke of authority. He recognized that a satyagrahi (one who practices nonviolent resistance) has no power of his or her own. Power relates to authority delegated from God, he believed, and is given to us in the measure needed to accomplish the task God wants us to do. Accordingly, if we practice nonviolence, even in the most pressing circumstances when we are faced with death or the death of our loved ones, I believe we will be given the power to

succeed although possibly not in the manner we wish. Having faith in truth and love under such dire circumstances is tough. I cannot guarantee I could remain nonviolent under some conditions people face today, but I am certain my failure to do so would be because I lack faith. I pray for that faith. Nonviolence may not save my life -- that may not be in God's plan. Believing that God does have a plan, however, and subjecting my personal wishes to that plan, is what requires that intangible thing called faith. When I can acquire that, I will never feel hopeless.

Hope in abolishing nuclear weapons requires extraordinary faith. Most people are convinced that nuclear war would be a disaster beyond description, and that the very existence of nuclear weapons perpetuates the threat of that disaster. Yet these people, for various reasons, seem to feel unsafe in eliminating the weapons which are unsafe to keep. Frustrated at trying to understand this incomprehensible paradox, people relegate decision-making to national leaders. Citizens stand in awe of The Bomb and believe it is an evil we must learn to live with. This is real despair.

The closest to a true Gandhian campaign to my knowledge is taking place in Poulsbo, Washington, at the site of the Trident submarine base. Over the years, the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action has influenced residents surrounding the base. The Archbishop of Seattle was so impressed that he dubbed Subbase Trident "The Auschwitz of Puget Sound." Numerous base workers have resigned, including the Navy chaplain who declined being "The Chaplain of the Auschwitz of Puget Sound." Some former base employees are now associated with the nonviolent resistance. An attorney who once prosecuted resisters in court is now working for their legal defense. At least one resistance trial juror now works with Ground Zero. These are samplings of how opponents can arrive at the truth together.

Jim Douglass, described as the reluctant leader of Ground Zero's campaign, has written much about the philosophy behind it. In a Los Angeles Catholic Worker paper he succinctly summarized the dilemma over nuclear weapons today:

The greatest power which nuclear weapons have, their power to kill us spiritually, can be taken away from them right now by a living faith in Jesus' resurrection and the kingdom of God. Nuclear weapons have the power of spiritual death so long as we despair at overcoming their physical and political power. Nuclear weapons are killing us spiritually because our lives are in effect praying not "Thy kingdom come" but "Thy holocaust come," as if the will of God were to annihilate life on earth -- or as if faith in God were powerless to prevent such annihilation.

The predominant attitude of Christians toward our own history is that Jesus' death and resurrection didn't make any difference. History is thought to be determined by sin, by evil, not by the overcoming of evil with God's love. We Christians have been brainwashed by the various cultures of "man's way" into thinking of love and truth as powerless against the forces of the world, somehow seeing a consistency between a view of love as powerless and a Gospel which proclaims the overcoming of death itself through Jesus' resurrection. I think we have to make a choice. Either God didn't raise Jesus from the dead, which is consistent with the attitude that we are powerless against the evil and death summarized now in nuclear weapons, or God did raise Jesus, in which case God through our faith today can do whatever is necessary in our lives to overcome nuclear war.... [The Agitator, August 1981, p. 6.]

Jim's words are ample food for thought for all people who seek the religion that transcends all religions.

# # # # #

#### 4 -- FEARLESSNESS

O we can wait no longer,  
We too take ship O Soul.  
Joyous we too launch out  
on trackless seas,  
Fearless for unknown shores.  
-- Walt Whitman

After Janet and I were married I started taking instructions to become a Catholic. I was attracted to the Church because it seemed to provide more spiritual guidance than I had previously experienced, and it seemed to make religion come alive in day-to-day activities. I finished instruction about the time our first son was born and we were both baptized in 1948.

Twenty-five years later I saw a different side. I was struggling with the morality of helping to build nuclear weapons. I was pretty well convinced it was not the kind of work Jesus would do but the Church was silent on the matter. There seemed to be a fear of entering what was considered the political arena. If anything, most priests and bishops at that time seemed to condone nuclear weapons and even invested in companies manufacturing them. I did resign from that job but my family and I had to make that decision alone. When I was facing the most severe moral crisis I had yet encountered, the Church -- the supposed source of guidance in matters of faith and morals -- was silent. Institutionalized religion was rapidly losing credibility in my eyes. It lacked the courage to speak out on subjects having strong social and economic ramifications.

The steel of nonviolence (love) is tempered by fearlessness. Gandhi stressed that nonviolence is not for the weak. He labeled weak passivity in the face of violence as cowardice, and to the latter he preferred violence. True nonviolence, however, is for the brave.

Gandhi constructed the term satyagraha from two Hindu words meaning "truth" and "force" -- truth force -- to describe nonviolent resistance. He warned that satyagraha can only be used from a position of strength. He meant moral and spiritual strength, not physical superiority. Gandhi used the Jalianwala Bagh massacre on 13 April 1919 as an example of weakness, when British Brigadier General R.E.H. Dyer ordered his troops to fire on Indian people peacefully assembled in a small park to protest British oppression. Over 500 were killed and many more wounded. Gandhi deplored the running and screaming and seeking cover during the shooting as not in the spirit of nonviolence. Had they received the message of nonviolence, he said, "they would have been expected when fire was opened on them to march towards it with bare breasts and die rejoicing in the belief that it meant the freedom of their country." [Young India, 20 October 1921] He emphasized that all who would be nonviolent must not succumb to the opponent's game of "frightfulness" but, rather, face that opponent eye to eye so that fear vanishes.

That sounds mighty harsh. Many would denounce Gandhi's suggestion as suicidal. But it is not immoral to face death bravely without resorting to violence or cowardice. Fearlessly facing the bullets at Jalianwala Bagh would have resulted in fewer killed -- British soldiers would have found difficulty in continuing the slaughter while face-to-face with their defenseless victims -- while making a significant contribution toward liberation. Not that these soldiers weren't trained to be unwaveringly brave in war, they probably were. But Gandhi recognized that a true satyagrahi (one who practices nonviolent resistance) must have the same self discipline and courage as a soldier facing death in battle. He wrote:

A Satyagrahi must always be ready to die with a smile on his face, without retaliation and without rancor in his heart. Some people have come to have a wrong notion that satyagraha means jail-going, perhaps facing blows, and nothing more. Such satyagraha



cannot bring independence. To win independence you have to learn the art of dying without killing. [Cited in "Gandhi's Experiments Today."]

Courage in war does not compare to the fearlessness needed to practice a constant state of active love. As a combat veteran I experienced battlefield courage as a condition where one may practice faith to overcome personal fear, but not usually an active love which embraces all humanity, including the "enemy." I could overcome personal fear when necessary but I have never had the guts to love completely.

Gandhi emphasized that nonviolence cannot be taught to someone afraid to die, and perhaps fear of losing material achievements is as severe an impediment. Gandhi claimed that, "Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for nonviolence." [Harijan, 1 September 1940; cited in Conquest of Violence, p. 29.] After one campaign where many people had died bravely without resorting to violence, Gandhi announced:

... It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life, and, what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice. [Non-Violence In Peace And War, p. 49.]

Willingness to sacrifice one's life in the cause of truth and love is the highest glory attainable in any major religion. It is called baptism with blood, or martyrdom, and is believed to be a direct passage to heaven. Why is it, then, that this sacrifice is so rare when the needs for truth and love are so great? I believe it is because organized religion in general, and Christian churches in particular, do not inculcate a willingness to sacrifice. Instead, churches seem to give token objections to evils such as nuclear weapons proliferation and exploitation of the poor, but continue to invest in companies supporting those evils. If churches become too political, the government will

cancel their tax exempt status. Consequently, churches seem to seek compromises which excuse their "faithful" members from any serious sacrifice of wealth or freedom. This may forestall a membership decline with its resultant collection basket loss but it certainly isn't religion.

I cannot take such watered-down spirituality seriously. Gandhi taught that showing respect for unjust institutions is cooperating with evil. Performing prescribed rituals which in no way threaten one's affluent livelihood is, to me, self-delusion. Liturgical exercises which do not help our suffering brothers and sisters ignore the mandate of truth and love.

I highly respect individuals within the institutional church framework who are taking fearless stands. One such person is Cardinal Jaime L. Sin, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila. He lectured students and faculty of Santo Thomas University on 4 February 1982, feast day of St. Thomas More, patron saint of the university. Ferdinand Marcos was still dictator when the Cardinal said:

The historical experience of Christianity shows that whenever the Church aligns herself with the just cause of the poor and the oppressed, she becomes the target of the State's repressive apparatus. But history also teaches us that a threatened and persecuted Church becomes more dynamic and flourishes more vigorously whenever she identifies with the People and they with her. This is confirmed by contemporary examples such as the Church in Poland whose manifold vocations and intensive piety continue to perplex the authoritarian State. [Impact, April 1982, p. 126]

Those were brave words coming from within a repressive dictatorship. For many years the Cardinal endured evils without evidence of risky moral leadership. As human rights violations became more blatant, however, the Cardinal became more outspoken on the Gospel of Jesus. I must quote a longer passage from that same lecture which inspired me -- all the more so because I live in a democracy:

A democratic society is founded on an act of faith in the capacity of its citizens to assume political responsibility. The ancient liberal tradition phrased it as the right of the people to "judge, direct and correct" the process of government. The

supposition here was that people would have access to information that would enable them to understand government policies ... Through their access to the truth, citizens who are asked to bear burdens and make sacrifices for the common good can pass intelligent judgment on whether the good proposed by the government be truly for the people's good.

Truth therefore cannot be the monopoly of any state machinery; it belongs to the people. Truth cannot be packaged into uniform slogans and doled out bit by bit at whim of ideologists and propagandists. Truth cannot be so distorted that it transforms citizens into a faceless mass whose thoughts, desires and judgments are submerged in order to confirm those in power.

'The way of peace is the way of truth' -- a statement from that champion of nonviolence, Mahatma Gandhi. For indeed, the disseminators of lies are themselves the merchants of violence. It is their barrage of lies in media that brings violence and disorder into our civic life. Through their infidelity to truth, they create divisions among ourselves, alienating us from our fellow countrymen, even making us enemies of ourselves, of the truth within us.

A society denied access to credible truth is a society diminished in wisdom and love. Its citizens no longer see life in its wholeness and friendships which thrive on simple steadfastness to truth become an impossibility. [Impact, April 1982, pp. 129-130]

I did not cite that passage to highlight the vision and failings of democracy, although it does a magnificent job of that. Neither did I quote it to illustrate courageous church leadership, but it also does that. I used the Cardinal's words to exemplify personal courage -- fearlessness -- which stems from truth, love and faith. Such a lecture involved serious risk. Cardinal Sin could easily have become a Filipino martyr just as Archbishop Oscar Romero became a martyr in El Salvador.

I feel that churches should study governments' approach to motivating people. Promoting patriotism and glorifying the military has unfailingly inspired the masses to defend their country, even to making the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. 1,400 campuses across the United States have Army ROTC and the Army is only aware of nine others which object to students enrolling. Of 19,818 high schools to which Navy recruiter access was attempted, only 268 denied access -- of 2,606 colleges, only six denied access. Air Force officials report

95 percent cooperation from high schools and colleges and the Marines identify only 274 of approximately 18,000 high schools across the country as noncooperative. [Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1986, transcript of hearings before the Senate Armed Forces Committee, 11 March 1985, Part 5, pp. 2462-2463.]

Why, then, cannot churches stimulate the same level of enthusiasm for nonviolence, especially in youth? The radical gospel message can be far more compelling than any call to nationalism. The seeking of truth -- that religion which transcends all religions -- has powerful attractions. Such stimulation will mean the church's loss of tax exemptions and divestment of war stock. It will also mean losing the vested interest faction. The church may even have to become poor again to relate to the poor, and persecuted to relate to the persecuted. But I can envision the emergence of a unified, powerful and fearless religion -- a spirituality that radiates the true essence of peace on earth to people of good will. Cardinal Jaime Sin explained, "It is therefore the characteristic of the [Church] to be courageous in proclaiming the Gospel in situations as dangerous as those faced by St. Thomas More who preferred to die because, though he was the King's good servant, he was God's first." [Impact, April 1982, p. 125]

I believe we have a violent society because our citizens lack the courage to change it. When people are really ready to sacrifice for what they believe, we will see great strides toward peace and justice. It encourages me that some people are leading the way by living frugally and risking their freedom to present the truth. Such is the story of Missile Silo N5.

Carl was 51 at the time and a priest of the Oblate order. He had been a missionary in the Philippines from 1965 to 1968 and in Brazil from 1969 to 1973. In his words: "Returning from priestly service among the poorest of the poor in

Brazil, I thought maybe there was a way I could help with justice . . . You can't see people starve and be the same evermore . . . Disarmament is up to us . . . the risk of nuclear war is great . . . we have made the bomb our god. My trust is in the God of compassion and justice." [Trial Statement.]

Paul is Carl's elder brother and also an Oblate priest who works with the poor. After over 25 years in the priesthood, 15 of them centered on peace and justice work in Minnesota, he decided to directly confront the oppression caused by militarization. Paul says: "Something good is being worked out through all of us if we hold tight to God as our loving Creator-Parent . . . It is a difficult process, one which sometimes causes me consternation and even dread. I am not always the person of faith and hope I would like to be. Sometimes I am utterly scared and distressed by what I see happening around me and to me.[Prison statement.]

Helen, age 41 at the time, has 11 children -- 7 adopted, 3 foster and 1 natural. Of the seven at home, six have mental and physical handicaps. For 18 years she ran a day care center, treatment home and private school, and was active in parish activities. Helen explains: "Much will be expected from one to which much is given, and it is in gratitude for the gifts of my large family and my faith that I act today. Yet this is not an easy step for any parent of young children. The risks . . . fill me with fear. I can only speak the truth with my life, that above all else, we owe our children a safe and peaceful world in which to grow." [Statement at silo N5]

Larry, then 46, born Whitefeather of the Ojibway and raised on the Leech Lake Reservation, worked at a Native American mental health clinic, served as secretary of the Native American Committee, was president of the Ojibway Nation Club, a member of Clergy & Laity Concerned, vice-president of the Indian Neighborhood Club, active with the Minneapolis Catholic Worker, and was appointed

to the Diaconate Formation Committee by Archbishop John Roach. Larry pleads: "I ask the government of the United States, so called by the great-great grandchildren and grandchildren of immigrants who came to my land 492 winters past, to take from our Mother the Earth these machines of fire that destroy earth and harm life throughout the lands of all people. I act today, as the old ones have said I must, to take our stand, to make our land calm once again." [Statement in the name of the Native American People.]

On 12 November 1984 these four initiated citizen intervention to prevent nuclear war at Minuteman-2 missile silo number N5, about 35 miles east of Kansas City, Missouri. They arrived with hammers, bolt cutters, human blood, banners, seeds to plant for new growth, bread and wine for a liturgy, an indictment of the US Government and the Christian church, and a prepared statement. In the back of their pickup truck was a 90-pound jackhammer with compressor and hoses. Their prepared statement reads in part:

... Today, Christians must act as peacemakers, "beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah), disarming our hearts, our lives and our nation.

Faithful to that mandate, we have come today to begin the disarmament of one missile silo. In cutting the fence, we remove the barriers to peace symbolized there. In pouring our blood, we expose the murderous intent inherent in the weapon and in our government's war policies. In hammering the silo cover and instruments, we render temporarily useless a weapon of mass murder. And in damaging the warning system, we express our intent to place our trust in the Lord of Life rather than in "gods of metal" (Leviticus).

Minuteman-2 silo N5 ceased to function at 9:45 AM that beautiful Wednesday morning. The Silo Pruninghooks, as they called themselves, were held four-and-a-half months awaiting trial, at which they were found guilty of conspiracy, destruction of government property, espionage and trespassing. Carl and Helen were each sentenced to 18 years in prison, Paul to 10 and Larry to 8. After lengthy confinement they are stronger than ever in their commitment to truth and love. Following a massive letter-writing campaign to the judge, from

virtually all over the world, Helen's sentence was reduced to 12 years, Larry's to three years and three years probation, and Paul's to 40 months plus four years probation.

This story carries a strong message, but we are in dangerous times when serious action is necessary -- action in the spirit of truth and loving nonviolence. The tale of Missile Silo N5 illustrates fearlessness in living one's faith. These were ordinary people doing only what they could until the inner voice of conscience told them more was necessary. They trembled at the task but did it anyway because it had to be done if the things they believed in were worth believing.

Fearlessness also means the courage to face psychological persecution. A wise person once said that it takes much courage to die for our faith, but even more to live it. Most people are never called to the supreme sacrifice, but they are called to live their faith in the fullest every hour of every day, even in the face of ridicule and rejection.

Fear is a potent means of bending citizens to the desires of government. On a smaller scale, fear is systematically used to motivate employee behavior that is supportive of management goals. This point was illustrated by an incident that occurred one weekend while I was working at Lockheed. For many months we had been doing an intensive design study to define the reentry body (warhead) configuration for the Trident-1 missile. On Friday the entire study was knocked askew by a gross increase in the loads these bodies were expected to encounter. To make matters worse, an important review was scheduled for the following week at which Navy brass from Washington would attend. We were told to work both Saturday and Sunday to make the necessary adjustments to our design,



I resented that ultimatum because Janet and I were planning to take the kids camping as soon as I got off work. It didn't seem fair that the company should assume a prior claim on my life and disrupt family plans at that late hour. What made the whole situation even more unjust was that this crisis was not completely unexpected. It was more a case of poor planning. But management adopts a cavalier attitude toward employees' personal lives and feels it is doing them a favor by providing a chance for overtime pay. Even choosing who shall work overtime is used as an incentive to compliant behavior. Anyway, I decided not to alter my personal plans. I laid as much groundwork as possible that day and then assigned a very capable engineer (who wanted to work overtime) to act in my place in overseeing the crew that weekend.

By Monday morning the panic had diminished. Thanks to some philosophic rationalizations by management, a new design had evolved without too much trouble. For several months prior to this incident I had been working closely with a friend (whom I shall call Sam) who was leading the structural analysis group. He asked where I had been that weekend. I told him that we had family plans which couldn't be changed. He didn't seem to understand how I could put company matters at a lower priority. I explained that I worked at Lockheed to live, that I was not living to work at Lockheed. I pointed out that I had made arrangements so the project would not suffer and that under the circumstances my presence was more important someplace else. It still seemed to be beyond Sam's comprehension. Possibly he thought that such a self-imposed absence illustrated that I was not indispensable. Or maybe he was resentful because he had to cancel family plans. At any rate, his parting remark was: "At least I still have a job and can hold up my head when I walk out the door."

A lot was revealed in that remark. I could sense an underlying fear. It seemed to be more than a fear of losing his job and income although that part



was also significant. It seemed to be a fear of breaking from the established pattern -- a fear of public opinion that he was not man enough to compete successfully if he lost his job. He didn't realize that it would have taken more courage to have done what he really wanted rather than bend to management expectations. Whatever consciously or unconsciously caused Sam to make that statement, it appeared evident to me that he was a victim of the work ethic where corporate structure depends on habitual obedience practiced under the guise of respectability.

Gandhi recognized fear of personal loss as an obstacle to living one's faith -- that a nation yearning for freedom must learn a hard lesson. People today need to overcome the fear of losing status, wealth and job security even more than overcoming the fear of imprisonment, bodily injury or death. Fearlessness is required to practice faith -- faith in God, faith in being able to understand God through truth, and faith in other people through exercising that constant state of active love.

I don't view fearlessness as something to be donned as a suit of armor. It is a part of our personality which must be cultivated. To face all my anxieties at once seems overwhelming but fearlessness flourishes as I overcome one obstacle at a time. By taking small steps, fearlessness gains strength and allows me to move to greater accomplishments. I find the key is continuing to fearlessly take that next step.

# # # # #

## 5 -- SELFLESSNESS

Empty yourself of everything.  
Let the mind rest in peace.  
-- Lao Tsu

The thought of selflessness brings memories of my grandmother. After raising five children she needed more people to care for so she opened a home for the aged. When that became too much for her, she took up sewing for the needy. Shelves of clothes lined her garage, all arranged by age and size so the poor could find what they needed. In her final years when she, herself, retired to an old people's home she made handicraft gifts for others. Even when confined to a wheel chair, and hardly able to breath because of a bad heart, she continued to go around to other rooms to read mail and papers to bed-ridden patients. Grandma always recognized someone worse off who could use her help. The spiritual beauty of her attitude shone through when she told me toward the end, "Soon the Lord will take me and I will be able to breathe again."

I considered my Grandmother a selfless person. Selfless is the opposite of selfish -- it is unselfish, making less of the self. Selfless people consider less of what is best for them and more of what will help others. They put themselves in perspective to all of society instead of at the top of the list. Selflessness is a firm renunciation of the "me-first" attitude of "Looking out for No.1."

Selfless people consider others because they love others. Grandma demonstrated this love. Selfless acts are not performed out of duty or exterior compulsion, as might be the case of an employee. "Duty" often breeds resentment which can result in selfishness. True selflessness is a life of loving service to humanity without reservations about one's own reward because loving service is its own reward.

I said that a selfless person does not serve others because of an exterior compulsion. There may, however, be an interior compulsion stemming from the love that person has for others. Serving others can be an attempt to fulfill that love. Selflessness is the interior attitude, motivated by love, which is shown outwardly by service.

Let me examine the opposite of selflessness, which is selfishness. Humanity is divided brother against brother and sister against sister because of selfishness. This also separates people from the truth which is God. Selfishness is closely associated with fear because a selfish person often reacts from fear. We all experience this malady to some degree. When selfishness dominates me, I become possessed by possessions and fear for their loss. This fear blurs my perception of others' needs and often creates the illusion of need for more possessions. As I cling tenaciously to what has been obtained, a compulsion to obtain more often sets in. This is called avarice and it is warned against in the Daw-Der-Jing (Truth and Nature) which is considered Taoist Canon Law:

There is no error greater than that of having many desires.  
There is no calamity greater than the feeling of discontent. There is no fault greater than the desire for gain. Therefore, he who knows contentment is always contented.  
[Daw-Der-Jing, Chapt. IX, p. 103]

An example of protecting selfish interests on the municipal level was demonstrated when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in early 1986 approved an ordinance prohibiting the city from doing business with most companies which have financial ties to South Africa. This was to support the anti-apartheid sentiment which has swept America. However, before final passage, the language was diluted to allow exceptions if the cost is prohibitive elsewhere or if the item is only available from a company doing business with South Africa. In essence, the city fathers opposed apartheid as long as it was not too

inconvenient or expensive. Who is this ordinance designed to protect -- the people suffering from apartheid or the public image of San Francisco politicians?

If selfishness breeds fear, selflessness nourishes fearlessness. When a selfless person considers the needs of others first, he or she is willing to share or even give up material things and personal time to help the less-fortunate. Thus the fear of losing possessions does not dominate a selfless person. This absence of fear, when it extends to all of one's possessions, even life itself, is fearlessness.

The selfless personality, seeking the well-being of others, is easily endowed with that constant state of active love which is nonviolence. Such a state eschews retaliation, even verbal retaliation. Selflessness in the nonviolent search for truth demonstrates the willingness to suffer anger from those who are threatened by selfless acts without giving anger in return. It does not allow embarrassing another or coercing another by imposing guilt feelings. It is an attitude which welcomes redemptive suffering rather than resorting to a subtle form of violence.

I have said that selflessness welcomes redemptive suffering. I use redemptive in the sense of helping people to overcome the evils they encounter and, thus, bringing them closer to the truth (God). For a selfless person, the intention of redemptive suffering would be outgoing -- that is, suffering for the benefit of others, even an opponent. Nevertheless, the person doing the suffering would also benefit, although that would not be that persons primary intention. It is quite probable that the self-redemption aspect may be even more fruitful when the primary intention is not for redeeming oneself.

Whenever I mention that a nonviolent person does not give anger in return, I am confronted with the question of what to do with that anger when it does appear. After all, as human beings, we are not exempt from that emotion just

because we aspire to being nonviolent. Gandhi said that he was not able to completely eliminate anger. He said that the most he could do was keep it from sapping all his energy. I believe that handling anger constructively takes much preparation and that is what these chapters on inner attitudes are all about. A conscious effort to exercise faith, fearlessness, selflessness, humility and patience (humility and patience will be discussed in the next two chapters) helps the formation of a nonviolent (loving) attitude which puts anger in proper perspective. This then allows us to channel our energy toward constructive purposes.

Selflessness is actually the willingness to sacrifice when sacrifice is needed to help the oppressed. Sacrifice often seems fearsome to me. It should not when viewed as offering myself in the pursuit of truth (God). Sacrifice does entail some suffering but suffering, properly endured, is redeeming.

Changing a sick society requires sacrifice and redemptive suffering, and that may be why it often seems that God sends extra suffering to those who try to follow the truth. Gandhi said: "The penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man." [Cited in India's Social Miracle, p. 14] Sacrifice and suffering are not generally held in high esteem. I sometimes seek fulfillment in many material ways and fail miserably. These persistent failures to obtain satisfaction indicate that something is not working right and a different approach seems called for.

A common perception of sacrifice is to do without something in order to obtain a higher goal. On the spiritual level that is possibly a good definition, but on the material level it can be misleading. In its pejorative sense, one may "sacrifice" to improve personal status. That may not be wrong but neither is it

selfless. I prefer to reserve the word "sacrifice" for a loftier meaning associated with selflessness.

Gandhi's term for sacrifice was Yajna, which means a spiritual or temporal act directed toward the benefit of others without any desire for reward. "Act" in this sense, according to Gandhi, encompasses thought, word and deed. "Others" embraces all life. [See Nonviolent Resistance, chapter 9.] Channeling our attention to the welfare of others diminishes concerns about ourselves as we move from self-centeredness to a feeling of usefulness. Feeling valuable is a healthy self-concept which promotes inner peace and joy.

Sacrifice, in my opinion, is most of all a life of service. When I recognize my relationship to the universe and believe that I have a place in God's plan, I also see how much my talents are needed. Gandhi wrote:

... Every single act of one who would lead a life of purity should be in the nature of yajna (sacrifice). Yajna having come to us with our birth, we are debtors all our lives and thus for ever bound to serve the universe.... Our body is [the Lord's] to be cherished or cast away according to His will. This is not a matter for complaint or even pity; on the contrary, it is a natural and even a pleasant and desirable state, if only we realize our place in God's scheme. We do indeed need strong faith, if we would experience this supreme bliss. "Do not worry in the least about yourself, leave all worry to God" -- this appears to be the commandment in all religions. [Yeravda Mandir; cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 48.]

Recognizing my importance in the big plan motivates me to participate. As I continue to offer my thoughts, words and actions to the service of others in our mutual search for truth, I see the need for even more sacrifice because I can then recognize that more giving of myself is necessary if more people are to find the God of truth.

Probably the most recognized and accepted form of sacrifice is raising and nurturing children. It often saps my strength. Sometimes I do it with reluctance (such as those middle-of-the-night calls for attention -- whether that be for a bottle or to tow home a broken-down car). Sometimes I yearn for



that day my children will be un-dependent. But as a parent I am motivated by a profound love which brings me great joy. When this love predominates, I give care with no expectation of reward because there is no reward greater than nurturing my children to be wholesome human beings. To the extent that this is done in its pure form, it comes under Gandhi's definition of sacrifice. But as my personal expectations enter this vocation of child raising, sacrifice diminishes.

Sacrifice means recognizing the conditions of my birth. I am a transient in this world. According to Gandhi, I was put here with an obligation to seek my part in God's plan. My life span is a mere finger-snap in the longevity of the universe. With so little time at my disposal, my actions should be guided in the context of my relationship to eternity. In our family we often ask ourselves a question when faced with a decision: "Will it make any difference a hundred years from now?" A hundred years is still a fragment of history but it outspans my life. If the answer to that question is negative, then I can regard the decision as of minor importance. But if the answer is positive, I have learned to give the decision careful thought. This frequently leads to uncomfortable circumstances but ones which I willingly accept because it is the right thing to do. Sacrifice is not sincere, however, if it is felt burdensome or annoying. The joy of sacrifice depends upon a selfless attitude. Recognizing that the possessions we brought into this world are the same we will take out of it after a short span of life can spark a more wholesome attitude toward sharing this planet with others.

The basis of sacrifice, and selflessness, is self-suffering. This means to accept suffering personally if the alternative is for another to suffer. This is a form of redemptive suffering and the essence of nonviolence because it is the chosen substitute for the suffering of others. As nonviolence is the essential way to truth, self-suffering and sacrifice are the way to nonviolence. Gandhi

said, "In true sacrifice all the suffering is on one side -- one is required to master the art of getting killed without killing, of gaining life by losing it." [Young India, 8 May 1930; cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 271.] It seems that in the Hindu tradition earthly life is viewed in purer context with the universe than is done in western countries. One common truth in all the world's major religions is that we should downplay worldly achievements, including the perpetuation of our own life when that means compromising moral principles. Gandhi continually tried to drive that message home.

Thomas Merton pointed out that suffering in itself is not redemptive [No Man Is An Island, Chapter 5]. Suffering in bitterness or suffering for the self-righteous sake of suffering is futile. It has to be consecrated to God (truth) to have a purifying quality. Our faith must be in God, not suffering, because to believe in suffering is egoism but to suffer, believing in truth, is humility. Egoism tells us that to suffer is to be strong whereas humility recognizes suffering as an evil we should expect because of the evil in our own lives. [No Man Is An Island, pp. 91-92]

Some bad consequences came from the involuntary suffering experienced during the 1930s depression. Many families struggled for survival, even at the expense of others. Compassion became secondary as bitter people resolved to never again be caught in such poverty. There is nothing redemptive about this attitude. It has snowballed to a fight for security beyond anyone's needs. Since World War II this scramble has led to conditions where Americans are so persistent for self-satisfaction that we exploit poor countries for our mere comfort. Greed has escalated to avarice, which breeds more greed. It is unhealthy for all of us that poverty-stricken people in this country and abroad are being oppressed and exploited to the point of developing the same hateful attitudes which have spawned so many problems since the great depression.



Resentment of forced suffering has caused people to lash back with violence. This has led to terrorism, revolutions, death squads, and all the bad things which are happening today. Certainly, suffering that is tyrannically imposed on the innocent is unjust and the repressed who revolt against that can hardly be blamed for resorting to violence if they see no other recourse. Gandhi made only slight headway in teaching people other alternatives. He had some success but there is still much violence in India. Little by little, though, as more of us persist in our efforts, people seem to be recognizing the strength of truth and nonviolence, and to the extent they do they accept God.

The question is, where do we interrupt the oppression-backlash cycle? To do so, I believe it is essential that we be motivated by higher values. The rich and powerful are in a position to do much for suffering people if they can overcome their richness and powerfulness. With access to material resources they can alleviate much physical suffering. But the poor also have much to offer by making their suffering redemptive, if they can muster the strength to do that. Both of these actions have much to offer, one materially and the other spiritually -- the rich have more power in the material arena and the poor could predominate in the spiritual aspect. Initiating this behavior is difficult because it is hard to rise above worldly goals. But success will become possible when a few people set the course because their courage will be contagious.

Two of my friends from opposite ends of the rich-poor gap have set good examples. Ladon was once a successful marketing executive for IBM and a former officer with the Strategic Air Command. By worldly standards, he was well up the ladder of success and looking forward to a lifetime of financial security. But the more he learned about poverty and injustice, the more unhappy he became in the affluent world. When an opportunity arose for him to become coordinator of

a well-known agrarian community addressing justice and peace issues, he gave up his IBM executive position.

Eventually that also became limiting to his motivations because as a key person in the community he had to retain some degree of rapport with all its members and not all were motivated by Ladon's inclination to confront the nuclear-weapons evil more directly. So he tendered another resignation and joined the Jonah House Community in Baltimore. He has since been in many nonviolent acts of citizen intervention which have resulted in lengthy prison terms -- much of that time spent in solitary confinement because he could not cooperate with the injustices meted out by prison authorities. Frequently, upon being released from one jail, he would immediately participate in another act of citizen intervention and be arrested again. By interspacing his incarcerations with periods of contemplation and retreat he has been able to live out his motivations and convey the truth about weapons and killing, and poverty and starvation.

A jail cell is a long way from IBM's mahogany row but it holds stronger potency for curing society. Change is possible when we recognize truth. Gandhi said of a similar instance that this type change cannot be called idealistic or hypothetical because someone having actually accomplished the feat makes it practical and achievable.

At the other end of the economic spectrum is Bernie, a Micronesian woman who, opposed by massive US power, continues her effort to keep her small island nation of Palau free from militarism and corporate exploitation. At the global political level she works with the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement -- dubbed by one US official as the biggest threat to US "interests" in the Pacific. But she also helps with local programs aimed at improving the literacy and self-respect of her own people.

Recent covert US activities have aggravated an economic crisis and provoked violence by some Palauans with vested economic interests, all towards forcing that country to accept free association with the United States. Free association in this sense means the US would have military base options which would occupy three-quarters of the land, as well as nuclear weapons storage and transit rights.

After the traditional tribal high chief dropped his court challenge to the free association approval process which conflicts with Palau's nuclear-free constitution, many Palauan women elders, including Bernie, immediately took up the court challenge. Their houses have since been fire bombed, electricity cut off, and Bernie's father assassinated by a terrorist. The women could not even appeal to their own government for protection and were subsequently forced to drop their case under duress. But they have the legal option to reinstate it if they wish, and that is exactly what they plan to do. Deep spirituality, combined with cooperation from her husband and desiring a future for her small daughter, gives Bernie the strength to face such overwhelming odds.

My daughter, Kathy, once questioned the redemptiveness of suffering. She recalled people who had never experienced love despite having all the necessities and many luxuries of life. She pointed out that these people just don't have love to give and often feel that the world owes them something. They seem convinced that others would take advantage of them if they tried to love.

Poverty of love may be the worst form of poverty and may be the most widespread ailment in contemporary society. We don't live in a totally loveless environment but it certainly falls short of being loving. Possibly the biggest block to improvement is not recognizing what is lacking. When we equate love to vulnerability, as in the case of the people Kathy mentioned, we form a hard

outer shell while competing fiercely for material possessions and sensual pleasure. This is selfishness.

Have I come full circle? Earlier I said selflessness is the way to nonviolence (love). Now it appears that lack of love breeds non-selflessness, or selfishness. I can't really separate the various elements of my individuality but I do need some concepts to understand myself enough to make some contribution to peace and justice. To me, fulfillment can best be accomplished by having some desire for the truth and feeling some semblance of love toward others. Material things and sensual pleasure then become less important -- especially when they impoverish others. If I am to move from desire to action in reducing oppression, becoming less selfish is the first step. Then as I become more selfless, the impact on my capacity to seek truth and act more nonviolently is more profound.

For some people, being selfless comes naturally while for others it is hard work. I fall under the latter category. I must continually resist the drive for personal success which has been my preoccupation for the major portion of my life. An article I once read helps. To become less selfish, it recommended a conscious effort to select the least-appealing option in every choice I make -- even in the most trivial decisions. For instance, if a hostess offers a plate of cookies I should choose the smallest. Such discipline may not always be practical, or possible, but the idea has merit.

It is important for me to keep my love for others uppermost in my mind. When I can submerge my ego trips to that love, then I am better able to make selfless decisions. This is particularly true of decisions as a parent because I tend to be over protective -- that is, selfishly putting my own concerns first, whether that be for my own peace of mind or to keep safe someone I love. Selfless love for my children, on the other hand, allows them reasonable

experimentation to grow in wisdom. That, of course, entails some risk which is uncomfortable for parents.

I would like to close this chapter with a few words from a friend of mine who is a spiritual leader of the Dakota Sioux. During his opening address at a worldwide religious conference for disarmament in Tokyo, he warned: "I want all of you to look at me and look at the creation, the sacred creation. I put myself below the creation because I stand below the spirit of the one who flies. A long time ago, words were told to us, 'Do not put yourself above the smallest insect. When you do that you will be in trouble.' Today, as human beings, we have done that...."

# # # # #

## 6 -- HUMILITY

Ofttimes nothing profits more  
Than self-esteem, grounded on just  
and right  
Well manag'd.

-- John Milton

Webster defines humility as "the state or quality of being humble of mind or spirit; freedom from egoistic pride or arrogance." Common usage seems to have denigrated Webster's term "quality." If I describe an experience as humiliating, one usually conjures up visions of discomforting embarrassment, possibly from hurt ego or displayed ignorance. Such emotions do not predominate, however, in truly humble people who would quickly admit their limits of knowledge and be grateful for being corrected.

I was inspired by the definition of humility given at a Cursillo I attended in 1963. The "Cursillo de Cristiandad" is a Spanish term for "A Little Course in Christianity," called Cursillo (pronounced Cur-see-yo) for short. It originated on the Spanish island of Mallorca, also spelled Majorca, in the Mediterranean and eventually migrated to the United States, and then California; following the precedent of Father Junipero Serra who was also born on Mallorca and came to California. The Cursillo is an intense three-day experience of spiritual community focused around a series of lectures, called "rollos" (roy-yohs) in Spanish. The rollo on humility had a lasting impression on me.

The professor giving this rollo warned that putting ourselves down is pseudo-humility. It is not being humble to deny our good traits while emphasizing the worst of our personality. Doing that is nothing more than egoistic pride coming from the same mold as self-righteous suffering. Frequently it is a ploy to induce others into assuring us of our good traits. The exceptions might be people with poor self-concepts who honestly believe they are unable to achieve good things. I shall discuss that later. Being humble does

not mean to suppress our talents, but to suppress our egoism. The difference is not always easy to recognize.

According to the professor (not an actual college-type professor but a lay person who has spent much time preparing the rollo), true humility is honest recognition of the talents given us by God, and using those talents to the best of our ability to help others and improve our environment. If someone compliments me on my ability to do something well, I should simply and graciously accept that compliment. To downplay my ability is false humility.

Of course being humble also means recognizing my faults and weaknesses and trying to improve those that can be changed. In the area of knowledge, for instance, if someone proved one of my theories to be untrue, I should be happy to be corrected. That is part of the search for truth. Humility is not feeling offended or embarrassed. It is recognizing that I am fallible because I don't possess all truth just as much as it is recognizing my strong attributes and using them wisely.

The professor I mentioned above also described humility when interacting with other people. If someone starts to tell a joke I have already heard, it would be very un-humble, even arrogant, for me to stop him with the "I've heard that one before" line. It does me no harm to sit back and enjoy the joke again and give the other person the pleasure of telling it. Similarly when someone mispronounces a word. If publicly correcting that person serves no purpose than to show that I know more about pronunciation than he, then I would be un-humble to embarrass him by making the correction. Of course if allowing the continued mispronunciation would be a disservice, as in the case of a child just learning the word, I should kindly and privately point out the mistake. My interpretation of this professor's rollo is that glorifying myself is not being humble, whereas glorifying God's gifts to me and to others is true humility.



Poor hearing is a constant test of my humility. During World War II, I was in the field artillery and in those days there were no protective ear muffs to prevent hearing damage from cannon fire. Consequently, my auditory nerves were injured and I have difficulty understanding what people say -- particularly the consonants. People often take offense when asked to repeat themselves -- they seem to think I am criticizing them for not speaking clearly rather than recognizing it is my ears that are at fault. Sometimes they draw themselves up, take a deep breath, and make a great show of distinctly enunciating every word as if they were speaking to an idiot. I then have difficulty controlling my umbrage.

I also have to watch myself closely. I can easily allow my impatience to show after continually asking a person to repeat. Of course that invites a caustic reply.

Being hard of hearing prevents me from reacting quickly in verbal exchanges. Comprehension is difficult simply because I cannot hear what is said. This gives the impression of being mentally slow. Many school children presumed to be mentally retarded were later found to be merely suffering from a hearing problem. Anyway, being in a debate situation, or even a live media interview, is difficult for me because spontaneity is important. I don't like to appear hesitant or uninformed when I am trying to present an important message. Nevertheless, when I do recognize that my worry is really fear of a hurt ego I must resign myself to doing the best I can.

Frequently I am asked to give a lecture on the arms race, military technology, or some similar topic. Everything goes fine while I am talking. However, any lecture without audience interaction is sterile and the discussion sessions which follow my talk are the hard part, particularly if the room has poor acoustics. I have found that it works well to explain my difficulty and ask



people to speak slowly and clearly. In most cases that sets the stage for loud-and-clear questions. At other times I have to ask someone to stand beside me and repeat the questions for me, and I have a hard time not feeling uncomfortable under those circumstances. Sometimes I feel that I have failed the humility test when I decline a speaking engagement in favor of spending more time writing. But then, I keep telling myself, we should use our strongest talents to accomplish the best work we can.

I have given some detail regarding my hearing to illustrate how the temptation of egoism is constantly present. I believe everyone has at least one vulnerability to egoism; whether that be an excessive consumption of goods, overconcern about personal appearance, put-downs by an over-protective parent, or thousands of other mundane and difficult situations. I find that practicing humility takes constant awareness of the pitfalls I may encounter.

Obviously, I consider humility as another necessary attitude in the nonviolent quest for truth. That is why I feel true humility vis a vis pseudo humility should be clearly understood. Just as violence is the opposite of love (nonviolence), egoistic pride is the opposite of humility. Humility is a search for my true nature which is part of my search for truth. Egoistic pride sidetracks that search by distorting my perception. Going back to Gandhi's definition that truth is God, I can then say that pride distorts my perception of God. This makes sense to me because when I attribute too much to my own capabilities, I tend to lose sight of how I acquired those capabilities. In my effort to inflate my own ego I forget that it was really God who gave me those talents -- whether they be physical, social, intellectual, emotional, moral or spiritual. I would not have those talents except for the generosity of God and I am obligated to use them for creating a loving and peaceful world. Humility, therefore, is acknowledging the source of my abilities.

When I dissociated myself from the building of first strike weapons well over a decade ago, I felt a sense of satisfaction for having done a good thing. I had a good concept of humility but I also felt tempted to attribute more to my act than my own efforts deserved. This infringement of ego became especially troublesome when people told me, as they often do, "I really admire what you did." It took me a long time to develop the proper response to that intended compliment. I read of an instance where Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, was complimented on her work for the poor. Her emphatic reply was something like: "Don't try to make a saint out of me -- what I did, you can do too." It is an escape to believe that extraordinary deeds are expected of saints, but not of ordinary human beings. So I copied her response. When people express "admiration" for what I did, I simply point out that I only did what anyone should do when they find themselves in a conflict of conscience. I have no compunction about being a copycat when I really believe what I am copying.

My lousy hearing is a benefit in many ways. It keeps my head from getting too big. It is very tempting to feel the role of expert at the various speeches and lectures I give but I quickly get slapped back into place when it comes to interacting with the audience. Misunderstanding statements and answering the wrong question can be very embarrassing when I feel a little too satisfied with myself. I am then forced to realize how fragile my ability is and how hard I have to work to accomplish what I can -- and how helpless I would be without divine help. I believe God often gives us blessings in disguise -- something to slow us down when we feel like moving into the fast lane.

True humility is to me a healthy sense of self-esteem -- that is, looking at ourselves frankly and having respect for our potential. That doesn't mean I should be satisfied with myself. There are many areas in which I need improvement but they are to be recognized in context with my total personality.

As I see my weak personality aspects, I also perceive how they can be improved. This is the potential I have and it is important that I maintain a true perspective of it.

Failing to recognize my potential occurs when I lack self-esteem. That can lead to two conditions which are not mutually exclusive. First, because of the insecure feeling which inevitably accompanies my lack of self-esteem, I lose confidence in my ability to accomplish certain things and thus degrade my potential. I can have such a poor concept of myself that I reject compliments for the good things I do accomplish and thus foster an attitude of pseudo-humility which may even be subconsciously seeking further assurance that I really did do something well.

Second, because I fail to recognize my positive aspects I frequently resort to exaggerating my capabilities. This hyperbole, again, stems from the insecurity associated with lack of self-esteem. But bragging and exaggeration do not remedy the basic problem. What I really need is to just feel good about myself and that can be encouraged by simply looking a little harder, but more realistically, at my strong points.

In 1979 the California legislature passed a bill setting up a 22-member commission to investigate the causes of violence in society. In its 1982 final report the commission made recommendations in ten areas of our environment.

[Ounces of Prevention, pp. 6-20] They are:

1. Parenting, early childhood development and family violence.
2. Economic factors and institutional racism.
3. Schools and educational factors.
4. Diet, drugs and other biochemical factors.
5. Biological factors.
6. The birth experience, parent-infant bonding.
7. Violence and the media.
8. Sexual violence.
9. Government and violence.
10. Youth gang violence.

Assemblyman John Vasconcellos was the sponsor of Assembly Bill 23 which created this commission. He also happens to be my representative in the state legislature. From the 1982 report he was quick to recognize a common denominator to the problems in each of the ten areas -- self-esteem. Vasconcellos put forth the idea that promoting self-esteem was the best solution to the violence in society. After a three-year battle he finally succeeded in ushering another bill through the legislature, and across the governor's desk, which establishes a 25-member panel mandated to explore the relationship between self-esteem and a life free from violence, criminal behavior, drug abuse, welfare dependency, teen-age pregnancy and alcoholism. That study will last three years -- until January 1, 1990.

When we truthfully understand our weaknesses and capabilities, we acquire good concepts of ourselves. In short, we then have the confidence that goes with self-esteem. It is not difficult, then, to practice humility because there is no need to downgrade or exaggerate our abilities when we know what those abilities can ultimately become. With patience and perseverance we can improve the improvable weaknesses and devise means of coping with the ones we cannot change.

Gandhi pointed out that the spirit of nonviolence always leads to humility, "we have no reason to be puffed up with pride over certificates of merit. In so far as we observe nonviolence we only do our duty." [Young India, 2 April 1931; cited in Non-Violent Resistance, p. 284] He warned that haughtiness and bragging are signs of insecurity -- and such actions might also cause our opponent to question our sincerity in a nonviolent encounter. Gandhi considered humility so important that he described it as the key to success in a nonviolent campaign.

To examine humility in that key role, we come right back to the connection between humility and nonviolence. It is not possible for an egoistic person to

be nonviolent because there are too many conflicts in that person's personality to foster the loving quality which is nonviolence. To use a cliché, we have to swallow our pride in order to endure the insults which occur against the practitioner of nonviolence -- to humbly receive those insults and give only respect in return; to lovingly endure hardships without complaint; to willingly accept injury and suffering which might come our way.

If I can meet that test I have a right to walk with dignity. Dignity is another characteristic of a humble person. Not the self-righteousness which is too often observed in many people who would profess to be nonviolent. Not the would-be prestige of seeking my own glory. I refer to the dignity of knowing that I have done the best I can and am happy to serve God in the best manner I can perceive. There is also the dignity of knowing I have not willingly compromised my conscience.

Gandhi likened humility to the mango tree which droops under its load of fruit. It is this majestic lowliness, he said, which is the tree's grandeur. Likewise with the practice of humility. Humility allows me to consume less so as to reduce my exploitation of the poor people who suffer to provide the products I enjoy. When I wear clothes longer, or second hand, or out of fashion, my stylish appearance deteriorates but, like the mango tree, it is this shabbiness which shows my sincerity about nonviolence and my effort to live the truth. This does not mean that I can become careless. I must take the best possible care of my body and keep my clothes as neat as possible. I can then hold my head up and face the world with an undisturbed alertness that grasps whatever truth is discernible, but at the same time savoring the aesthetic beauty of my environment. As I am able to overcome prideful notions and don the cloak of humility, I prepare myself to help my poorer brothers and sisters enjoy their fair share of the world. As justice is promoted in this fashion, peace will unfold.

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## 7 -- PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

Perseverance is more prevailing than  
violence;  
And many things which cannot be overcome  
when they are together,  
Yield themselves up when taken little  
by little.

-- Plutarch (46-120 A.D.)

Let me not be misunderstood. Strength  
does not come from physical capacity. It  
comes from indomitable will.

-- Mohandas K. Gandhi

We are an impatient people. We live in an atmosphere of "instant everything" -- when we want something, we want it right now. If we can't repair an item we throw it away and buy a new one. More often than not, the urge to replace is so strong that we don't even attempt any fixing -- the article being broken is excuse enough for buying new. This impatience frequently reflects either an unwillingness or an inability to take the time to live properly.

Impatience also becomes evident in projects we undertake. If we don't see results quickly, enthusiasm diminishes. Our application span shortens as the object of our application becomes more unyielding. Nowhere is this more true than in resisting the evils which stand in the way of peace and justice.

To truly contribute toward a better world I feel it is important for me to recognize that I cannot eliminate the faults overnight, or possibly not even too much in my lifetime. Conditions will never get better, however, if truth and love are not spread and I can help with that spreading. To do so, however, I need "staying power" or perseverance. This is true for improving the world but it is also true, and possibly more important, for my interior struggle to achieve a life of high moral standards. Likewise, I need the patience to persevere.

It may seem that I am playing games with these words -- patience and perseverance. They are close to the same meaning and even Webster's

definitions seem to overlap. Nevertheless, I see a slight variation in each of their connotations. Webster describes patience as "the state, quality, ability, or fact of being patient, especially (a) the will or ability to endure without complaint and (b) steadiness, endurance or perseverance in performing a task." Webster further states that "patience implies the bearing of suffering, provocation, delay, tediousness, etc. with self control."

Perseverance "implies a continuing to do something in spite of difficulties, obstacles, etc." In short, perseverance seems to connote a doggedness to finish the job while patience adds certain qualities of self control to that doggedness.

In the context of truth and nonviolence, I shall assign perseverance to describe the resolve to be nonviolent, or loving, in a search for truth (God). Patience will describe my control in accomplishing this feat. To give a grounded example of the distinction, I am unswerving in my determination to understanding God better, but my lack of patience frequently becomes an obstacle in that quest.

As Janet, my wife, so tactfully pointed out, if I am to learn patience I must learn to express my feelings without hurting others. Controlling my impatient feelings by holding them in usually results in my becoming angry or resentful. Sometimes it is best to truthfully acknowledge the fact that I feel impatient -- just admitting it to myself is helpful. Of course when I have someone I can discuss my feelings with it is even better.

Like other interior attitudes, patience and perseverance can only be recognized by outward actions. I cannot look into another person's mind or soul so I must judge from what I see. Gandhi's campaign for Hindu Raj (Indian Self Rule) was long and tedious. It started about 1919 and continued with periods of high and low activities. Finally, in 1947, India was liberated from Britain. The nature of Gandhi's efforts prompted Albert Einstein to say: "Gandhi, the greatest



political genius of our time, has pointed the way. He has shown of what sacrifices people are capable once they have found the right way. His work for the liberation of India is a living testimony to the fact that a will governed by firm conviction is stronger than a seemingly invincible material power." [Cited in Ideas and Opinions by Albert Einstein (NY, Bonanza Books; 1954) p, 166.]

Einstein's last sentence, "a will governed by a firm conviction," highlights the subject of this chapter. It was Gandhi's will which provided the doggedness of perseverance. But it was his firm conviction in nonviolence which governed, or controlled, the patient manner in which he persevered. This was not always true with his followers who often became impatient when immediate victory was not evident. Impatience did not necessarily mean that they failed to persevere although some undoubtedly did fall by the wayside. Many persisted in their quest for self rule but resorted to violence because they lost patience with nonviolence -- possibly because they neglected Gandhi's principles and were only using nonviolence as a tactic. Gandhi fasted several times to purge the movement of its violent inclinations.

Losing patience in the nonviolent (loving) means of achieving noble goals still happens today. One US peace organization, which I had better not name, seems dominated by impatient people. Its motto is "They Won't Listen To Reason, They Won't Be Bound By Votes, The Governments Must Be Stopped From Launching World War III, No Matter What It Takes!"

I would support that shibboleth up to the last phrase. "No matter what it takes" opens the door to violence and is the springboard to terrorism. The prime argument of terrorists is that the injustice to them is so great that terrorism is justified. This comes back to Gandhi's axiom that good ends do not justify violent means -- he emphasized that means are nothing but ends in the making; that the end result will reflect the means of achieving it.



Applying "no matter what it takes" in the fullest could lead to various and escalating forms of violence -- especially if the decision makers were impatient. Perseverance is a good quality but, by itself, is not enough. It needs the tempering quality of patience.

I am not just speculating that this motto embraces violence. That fact has been confirmed during several conversations with organization leaders. Actual physical violence has not yet taken place during demonstrations because, according to these leaders, the goal is to attract a membership of diverse viewpoints to work harmoniously together -- apparently through compromise. I cannot imagine a truth seeker compromising with the potential for violence.

This organization has conducted actions which I interpret as subtly violent because they convey disrespect for the opponent and sometimes employ hit-and-run tactics -- tactics which have been euphemistically described as "mobile nonviolence." Such actions, to me, are far removed from a constant state of active love and I could not compromise with them, especially when they are aimed toward escaping the consequences.

My purpose in relating this story is to show how violence (non-love) can surface if one does not have patience in the nonviolent quality of perseverance. In reverse, there are cases where discouragement can lead to failure in perseverance without necessarily losing the patience to be nonviolent. This so-called "burn-out" has apparently afflicted Dr. Helen Caldicott, a dedicated woman whom I respect highly and value as a personal friend. She conducted an unrelenting campaign which would weary the most stalwart of us. I was distressed to hear of her decision to retire into seclusion. I sincerely hope that after a little rest she will again be active on the nonviolent front.

Burn-out can occur from undertaking too much all at once. I have seen people so distraught over injustices that they drive themselves unrelentingly in

an attempt to alleviate the suffering they see around them. Many can keep up this hectic pace for considerable time while others fall away sooner. This result is well described by an old song lyric: "Remember that a candle burning on both ends won't last throughout the night; but Harlem Butterfly, it certainly gives a lovely light."

That line from the 1940s tune "Harlem Butterfly" metaphorically describes the short effect of intense activity. Experience shows that overextending our effort soon depletes our energy and we burn out. "Burning the candle on both ends" eventually creates a condition where perseverance is impossible. I find I must selectively choose my strongest talents and judiciously apply those talents in a consistent manner in order to persevere over a greater time. In the long run, this eventually results in a more significant contribution.

My focus at present is to analyze military programs and technology and piece together a pattern which implies an underlying government policy, or option. (Some officials disclaim that certain capabilities are policy but admit to an option.) I think it will take many generations to bring about the attitudinal changes necessary for a just and peaceful world, but I also see a near-term nuclear threat to human existence which must be abated. As I delve into the many government documents in an attempt to glean some insight to solving this immediate problem, I find that I must resist being overwhelmed by the immensity of the problem. My meager efforts sometimes seem fruitless and these are the times I need the moderating quality of patience.

Ironically, it is the attitudinal changes which will take generations to complete that must be endowed quickly in order to avert the coming crisis. This Catch-22 situation makes the struggle for survival more frustrating. Nevertheless, I have only one choice and that is to continue in the most efficacious manner I know. My struggle against discouragement has now jelled

into a realization that there will be no quick solution to removing the nuclear danger. I believe we will have to gird for a long campaign. More generations of children will grow up in the nuclear shadow, with all the evil effects that implies, and we will teeter on the brink of nuclear disaster for some time to come. I see a need to face these facts in order to adjust to a philosophy which transcends the desire of immediate gratification based on our notions of how the problem should be solved.

I have not adopted a fatalistic resignation to whatever fate awaits me. Neither am I abdicating the will to act quickly when a timely response is called for. Rather, I am taking the only reasonable approach that I can see although I cannot visualize the complete plan. I feel certain that if I patiently persevere that my part in the plan will unfold. That is what nonviolence and the search for truth is all about.

I have been using exterior activity to illustrate what I consider interior values. However, I believe that patience and perseverance nest in both the intellectual and emotional aspects of my personality. Just as they are required in order to maintain a long-term physical undertaking, so they are also needed in my interior nonviolent quest for truth. While I may have a concept of what I aspire to in this regard, fully understanding that concept and merging it into my character is neither easy nor quick. If I try to change too much too fast I will assuredly burn out. Likewise, when I relax in my effort to slowly fill the vacuum of violence with love, I can easily become discouraged, which leads to despair.

I don't believe despair is necessarily a bad sign. It depends on how I react to it. First of all it is an indication that I truly care and am trying. It also indicates that maybe I must be more conscious of the other interior

values which I have already discussed. So I believe that I need to pay attention to despair as another truth to try to understand.

Secondly, if I interpret it correctly and don't give up, despair can help me understand that I must prepare for a long inner struggle which will continue for my lifetime. Some faiths believe it will continue for many lifetimes and that may be true, I don't know. But, I often ask myself, how could I fully understand truth in a million lifetimes if truth is indeed God? Then I remember that it is impossible to answer that question with the limited understanding of truth which I possess. At this point in my thinking I like to recall Gandhi's connection between ends and means. If my end goal, as presumptuous as it may sound, is to maintain a constant state of active love in a complete understanding of God, then practicing nonviolence to the best of my ability and searching for the truth is certainly that goal in the making. Understanding that can transform despair into patience and perseverance.

Despair is not always that easy to convert, however. For instance, there have been many times that I have seriously considered giving up on this book because I feel my inner attitudes are not developed enough to write it with any integrity. This despair usually surfaces when I succumb to violence, especially with those who are dearest to me. These are the times I must muster all of my emotional and intellectual strength to practice patience and perseverance.

In spite of all this fine-sounding philosophy I experience considerable inner turmoil. A phrase that I often hear is that peace starts within us -- if we don't have inner peace we aren't effective in promoting a peaceful environment. That goes right over my head. I am still groping to understand what inner peace means. Somehow I don't believe it is contentment. Neither do I believe it is necessarily happiness. It must include joy but I think a person can be joyful

without necessarily being happy. How can anyone who takes spirituality seriously feel happy when conditions are as they are today?

Maybe this so called inner peace is nothing more than seeking comfort by blocking out real conditions. Possibly it is even association with others in an introverted community which has lost touch with the real problems in the world. I have tried these escapes and they don't bring a peaceful conscience -- possibly because I do not believe these machinations are real definitions of inner peace. I don't know what inner peace means to others but the closest I can come to describing it is the humble satisfaction of knowing that I am working to the best of my ability to alleviate misery in this world. It is sort of a faith and trust in God and a commitment to continue; while knowing that no matter what that commitment brings, it is good. I believe my inner unrest stimulates my desire to persevere in this work, although it does try my patience.

I continue writing this book because I have a vague feeling that my aspiration to Gandhi's holistic approach may be of value to others in their work for a better world. I have not mastered that approach and it is my lacking in that regard which brings trepidations. But just writing this has been a good exercise in working toward a goal I cannot completely formulate. I do have a vague chapter outline which I have revised from time to time, but I don't know exactly how I will explain my feelings on each topic until I start writing. They seem to unfold as I go along but only to the extent that I stubbornly apply myself to the task of helping them unfold.

Patience, I believe, comes from a firm belief in God's will being worked out if I have the perseverance to continue the job of accomplishing what I believe God wants. This point was driven home to me by Phil Berrigan's statement in the late 1970s when I was writing a lot about the emerging US first strike capability

and predicting how that capability will upset the nuclear standoff. In an interview Phil was asked how he reconciled my analysis with God's plan. Phil replied that by all that is rational from a human viewpoint, we should have had a nuclear war many years ago. But, he went on, there has been some force which we don't understand that has prevented that devastating catastrophe. He said he believes the same force will continue to help us if we persevere in our work for peace. That statement epitomizes what I mean by an attitude of patience and perseverance. Even while unable to recognize a complete plan, it is knowing that the next step will become apparent if I lovingly uphold my part in completing the one I am taking.

# # # # #

## 8 -- MORALITY

If ignorance and passion are the foes  
of popular morality,  
It must be confessed that moral  
indifference is the malady of the  
cultivated classes.  
-- Henri-Frederic Amiel

In matters of conscience, the law of  
majority has no place.  
-- Mohandas K. Gandhi

The Bhagavad Gita begins with the battle for life on the field of truth. The sons of Dhrita Rashtra are engaged in battle with the sons of Pandu, Rashtra's brother. Arunja, with Krishna as chariot driver, charges between the two armies. Then Arunja looks into the ranks of each and sees "fathers, grandfathers, sons, grandsons; fathers of wives, uncles, masters; brothers, companions and friends. When Arunja thus saw his kinsmen face to face in both lines of battle, he was overcome by grief and despair . . ." [Bhagavad Gita 1:26-28]

The story continues that Arunja dropped his mighty bow and declared he would die rather than kill his loved ones. At this point Krishna, Lord of his soul, prodded Arunja, saying: "There is a war that opens the doors of heaven, Arunja! Happy the warriors whose fate it is to fight such a war. But to forgo this fight for righteousness is to forgo thy duty and honor; to fall into transgression." [Bhagavad Gita 2:32-33]

About this time I closed the book in disgust. It sounded like the same old "God is on our side" tripe we were fed during World War II. Some time later I learned that Gandhi was similarly disenchanted until he understood that the battle described was a spiritual/moral battle taking place in the mind. After comprehending the metaphor, those passages of the Gita came to life. This is indeed a battle to open the doors of heaven and in which the participants should

feel happy to engage. Alas, it often does pit family and loved ones against each other.

Spirituality and morality seem closely connected. Spirituality, to me, applies to my soul in relation to God. I define morality as the down-to-earth application of my spiritual beliefs -- all the pragmatic, mundane and ordinary activity we pursue within the sphere of our spiritual convictions. Morality pertains to honesty (truthfulness) at the human level. It has most to do with consideration of others and their right to a decent life -- both individually and collectively. Certainly it is tied to meeting the human needs of people. If we have an abundance while others are destitute, the moral action is to share our good fortune.

A long-time friend of mine -- Nichigu Sato, a World War II Japanese bomber pilot turned Buddhist Monk -- performed another transposition of a cliché in much the same way as Gandhi turned "God is truth" into "Truth is God." He coined the motto "Let Live and Live." Venerable Sato says this reversal of "Live and Let Live" denies the kill even at the point of oneself being threatened with death. We should first let others live and only then live for ourselves, rather than kill to live or live first and then let others live with what is left.

Moral thinking is one of the spiritual exercises Gandhi formulated to help develop healthy interior attitudes. It encompasses non-stealing and non-cheating, and avoids self-righteous behavior. A moral person does not deceive, but struggles for complete openness and truthfulness. Morality is embracing what is right and fair and renouncing injustice. It is tied to conscience. Gandhi often referred to the "small inner voice." That voice, no more than the guidance of conscience, was the star by which he navigated his life.



My daughter, Kathy, once wrote that morality seems to be relevant to different people's beliefs and that may be true. V.G. Afanasayev said that "From the point of communist morality, that which promotes the movement of society towards communism is moral." In that case, the criteria for morality would be found in the Communist party line. Regarding South Africa, morality for the Afrikaners stems from the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church and in that manner apartheid is justified. People vested in military life ease their conscience through "just war" beliefs which ostensibly support their behavior. Gandhi's moral principles were grounded in truth -- which can be translated as the true teachings of God.

It is hard but at the same time necessary to find true moral ground on which to stand. If we measure religious teachings with the scale of truth, those teachings often fail miserably. How can any religion truly justify the practice of apartheid or the waging of war? To me these can only be convenient interpretations of doctrine made by weak human beings for the purpose of excusing what they do.

A common way to evade the truth is to cite the lack of proof to justify not making a moral decision. This has been used by government to escape fair reimbursement to former servicemen who's health had deteriorated from radiation, Agent Orange, and other military-induced ailments. Another example was the management decision to launch the space shuttle Challenger over the objection of engineers because those objections were only based on "engineering judgment" (the temperature was outside of approved parameters) not a factual explanation of how the O-rings would act at that temperature. Since there was no proof that the O-rings would fail, the decision to launch was influenced by economic and political pressures. Seven human lives were immorally risked, and in this case sacrificed. In weapons contracting work I was often told to "put on your

management hat" -- that is, to rationalize away objections in the interest of profits.

Another example was when in early 1988 an armored truck in San Francisco dropped a crate of money. Some blew away and was recovered by various people. On a radio talk show, one person discussed finding some bills but justified keeping them because there was no proof they had come from the armored truck. If plain old horse sense didn't indicate the source of the money, the media certainly did. This person was obviously grasping for excuses to keep the money.

I faced a moral battle during the late 1950s when the Office of Civil Defense was urging people to build bomb shelters. I now recognize that activity as a way of mustering support for nuclear policy by getting people into the act. It also created another market for big business. But at the time I felt guilty about not providing protection for my family. We did make plans as far as our economic ability would allow. We taught the children how to minimize injury and radiation exposure. We kept the car full of gas in case there was an evacuation order. We planned where to meet if we became separated in an emergency. It was a time of fearing the bomb in a manner much the same as children still do today.

Then I read about people storing shotguns in their shelters to keep the neighbors out. That shocked my conscience. Our neighbor commented that under such conditions it might be better not to survive. My attitude changed and I no longer felt guilty about not building a bomb-shelter. Apparently others felt the same because the program eventually floundered and disappeared.

When I translated the bomb shelter lesson to the bigger picture, I saw the immorality of living in affluence while much of the world starves. This eventually begged the deeper question about cooperating with a government that

makes nuclear weapons and indulges in nuclear blackmail. It seemed that non-cooperation was morally demanded.

One form of noncooperation is to deprive the guilty government of tax support. We do not pay the federal excise tax on our telephone bill and avoid paying most income taxes by keeping our income low -- a practice which has other distinct advantages in the quest for justice and peace. This prompted a conversation on morality with our youngest son, Mark, who worked as a restaurant busboy and received a share of the tips left by patrons. When it came time to file his income tax for the year, I was asked to help and pointed out that he had to declare the tips received. Mark had some doubts about that, particularly since there was no record of how much, but he declared an estimate anyway.

Some time later Mark and I were discussing tax resistance so that our money would not be used to build weapons. He asked why it was, since I object to supporting government policies with my tax money, that I had advised him to pay tax on the tips. I explained that it would be absolutely moral to not pay the tax if he openly stated why he was not doing so and was prepared to suffer the consequences. But to not declare the tips for the purpose of secretly avoiding payment would be untruthful and thus immoral.

Morality dictates ethics, which is the moral code of conduct for a person or group. That does not mean that a businessman, for instance, is meeting his full moral responsibility by living up to the accepted code of ethics for his business. His personal morality may be more stringent and in that case he would be obliged to follow his conscience. Because people in many disciplines and professions are becoming concerned about morality, many organizations advocating greater social responsibility are springing up -- physicians, educators, computer professionals, and many more. What these people seek is a higher degree of

moral responsibility to society in their particular area of expertise. I had the gratification of helping one such organization come into existence.

In October of 1984 I was asked to give a lecture at Cornell University. While there, I attended a lunch-time gathering with engineering students and faculty. It was a good meeting and probably the high point of my visit. I briefly explained the moral crisis I faced in resigning from missile engineering. Following that was a nitty-gritty discussion of the options engineers face in this world. By no means were all the problems solved in that meeting but I later learned that this informal get together grew into a campus organization called Forum on Responsibility and Ethics in Engineering (FREE). In October 1987 I was again invited to Cornell to give the lead lecture in a series on ethics in engineering -- sponsored by FREE. I gladly accepted.

In most of my lectures I try to highlight aspects of the moral battle. One book, The Respectable Murderers by Paul Hanley Furfey, left no room for delusion as it unfolded a continuing saga of immorality in US history -- from the early slave trade to present nuclear policies in which I was deeply involved.

Then Furfey tightened the screws by explaining four mechanisms of moral self deception: repression, rationalization, impossibility and sublimation. I had used each one at various times to muffle that small, inner voice. But once these defenses are recognized as merely means of kidding ourselves into believing what we want to believe, they lose their tranquilizing qualities and we are brought face to face with the truth. While commonly employed by weapons workers, these four escapes are used extensively by everyone.

Repression, called denial by psychologists, is curbing unpleasant thoughts as they surface. If something disturbs us we merely put it out of mind. I recall how it tugged at my feelings to learn that the weapons system I was helping to design could annihilate 80-million men, women and children. But I

didn't dwell on that subject. It was more pleasant to dream about spending my lavish wage. Did that make the deadly potential of my efforts less lethal? ... or more moral? Of course not.

A Lockheed employee was once asked by the press what she thought of working on the Trident missile. She replied: "After all, we get good money out here, working conditions are good, and we need national defense. Everyone gets paid well. And if they don't like the end product they don't have to think about it." [San Jose, CA Mercury News, 8 August 1981, p. \_\_\_]

I think you see what I mean. I believe that dodging the moral issues has reached epidemic proportions in this country. This woman's remark is symptomatic -- to allow morality to enter her thinking would create havoc with her conscience.

Rationalization takes over when disturbing thoughts cannot be silenced. We then construct flaccid excuses to justify our behavior. A common alibi is that decisions should be left to the "experts." Like Pilate in the 1st century, we try to wash our hands of responsibility.

On one of my trips to Japan I met a soldier returning to his unit -- a nuclear weapons combat team in Korea. A friend asked what he would do if he were ordered to fire those weapons. He answered quite calmly that he would do it -- he couldn't see that it was any big deal if those were his orders. Another example came during one of my talks on the myth of deterrence. A 30-year Navy man admitted a moral crisis but justified his activity with Trident by saying we should be glad that a person like him has his finger on the button, rather than someone who doesn't care. I fail to see what difference it would make who pushes the button -- a soldier blindly following orders or a moral Christian. Both are rationalizing, and thus eliminating the option of doing away with the button entirely.

Impossibility, as Furfey calls it, comes into play when repression and rationalization reach their limits -- when immoral activity reaches our consciousness and we recognize it should be stopped, but we continue to excuse our participation on the grounds that one person would make no difference. One of my colleagues at Lockheed once acknowledged a theoretical moral responsibility not to continue weapons work but said everyone must stop in order to be effective. He believed that what he could do by himself would accomplish nothing, so he did nothing.

Another person told me that if he quit, someone else would do his job. Consequently, he thought it was futile to give up his salary.

Sublimation seems to be the last resort in the moral battle. It means to engage in some superficial good work as an attempt to soothe a guilty conscience. In my case, I became involved in justice and peace issues before I resigned from Lockheed. I built bombs for a living and worked for peace as a hobby -- a dichotomous activity leading to much interior turmoil.

I was fortunate in understanding these four tools of self deception because that understanding helped me to avoid them. My basic resistance was fear. I feared for many things if I relinquished the status quo. But when I finally did resign, hardly any of those conjured-up dreads became real. Those that did came gradually and could be handled separately. This fear of unknowns in the future is intangible. To overcome it requires another intangible -- faith. It is when I practice unswerving faith in the truth that I stay on the right course.

When I was a soldier during World War II, I was scared to death during basic training. As I got closer to the front lines my fear diminished. In actual combat, while tangible events were being encountered, I was less aware of fear than at any other time. Facing a moral battle is the same. Anticipation is

scary but as we become involved we grow less afraid. Also, we can be encouraged knowing that when many people engage in this spiritual/moral battle, through the exercise of faith in their ideals, the arms race will be reversed and justice and peace will flourish on our planet. Indeed, happy will be the warriors whose fate it is to fight such a war.

# # # # #

## 9 -- PURITY AND SELF-PURIFICATION

I would be true, for there are  
those who trust me;  
I would be pure, for there are  
those who care;  
I would be strong, for there is  
much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is  
much to dare.

-- Howard Arnold Walter

Do not pray for easy lives.  
Pray to be stronger men!  
Do not pray for tasks  
equal to your powers.  
Pray for powers equal to  
your tasks.

-- Phillips Brooks

Purity is of great concern to me, particularly as a father. Psychologists say that a child's personality development is influenced mostly by the home. That may be true but with the systematic brainwashing regularly administered by the printed media, Hollywood, television, and peer pressure, I have trepidations about how well parents can prevail.

Although purity involves more than sexual purity, or chastity, I shall first address the sexual aspect because it epitomizes the broader problem of our impure society. Many years ago I was shocked to read that unwed couples living together had tripled in a decade. There were other statistics given in the commentary but the gist was a growing disregard for the institution of marriage. To me, a believer that marriage and family are the building blocks of society, it was appalling to read of such disintegration. I agree that those building blocks have not been all they should be, and I see that as the primary cause of our present problems. But I do not believe we can improve our condition by further downgrading marriage in the public perception. The solution seems to be to correct the basic problem. The question is, are we up to that challenge?



If young people were to gain all knowledge from the media and literature, which is almost the case, they would feel expected to get into bed as soon as they fall in love, or maybe not even wait for love. Columnists who are hailed as a good influence on teenagers still leave room for pre-marital or extra-marital sexual activity. Articles by physicians frequently use the term "sexual partner," rather than "husband" or "wife." Respected authors almost invariably have their leading characters join in sexual intercourse as soon as they become serious about marriage -- conveying the idea that if you follow it up with marriage it is all right.

I am sometimes asked to deliver guest lectures to college classes. On one occasion I was invited to San Jose State University to address a sociology class regarding nuclear weapons. While walking down the hallway looking for the classroom, I ran upon a course description posted on one of the doors. It read:

SPRING IS HERE  
HAVE SOME FUN  
ENJOY "COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE"  
SOCIOLOGY 75

LEARN HOW TO:

- \* SELECT A MATE
- \* PLAN A WEDDING
- \* HAVE A SUCCESSFUL DIVORCE
- \* SAVE \$\$\$
- \* KEYS TO HAPPINESS

"COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE" MWF 8:30 AM  
ROOM: DMH 226A

What astounded me most about this notice was that a successful divorce and saving money were presumed to be sociological goals equal to courtship and marriage -- or should I say, an integral part of courtship and marriage. It could be that the course adequately addressed the moral values, but to me that notice seemed geared toward attention-gathering sensationalism to advertise the course. I did not get the idea that the course was geared toward preparing couples for a lifetime partnership. If my feelings were correct, and this were a

true sampling of the manner in which college youth are taught, then this country is in for still bigger troubles.

A Chicago Tribune column described a teen-magazine forum on sex education. It told of two teens, describing themselves as "in love," writing in to find out about a new method of natural birth control by drinking ice water after intercourse. Other letters alluded to more hokus-pokus means of avoiding pregnancy. The column pointed out that teens are extremely ignorant about sex but not unpracticed -- that half will have had sexual intercourse by the time they graduate from high school and forty percent of the girls will become pregnant at least once during their teen years. That percentage exceeds one-million pregnancies and about a third of them involve girls under the age of fifteen. [San Jose, CA Mercury, 29 July 1983, p. 1C]

Those were 1983 statistics and have probably risen since that time, as have the figures in another survey by the Alan Guttmacher Institute and Ortho Pharmaceutical Corp. It showed that in 1987, 76 percent of the unmarried women between the ages of 18 and 44 were sexually active. That is up from 71 percent in 1982. [San Jose, CA Mercury News, 28 July 1988, p. 6E] No statistics for men were given.

This is the backdrop against which concepts of chastity enter contemporary American life. How do we make chaste decisions in America today, where sexual permissiveness is accepted conduct and connubial licentiousness abounds? Moralists and religionists conjure up fear -- fear of sin, fear of disease, fear of loss of self-respect, etc., ad. infinitum -- but they seem to have little effect on the general populace. According to a 1969 Gallop Poll, 68 percent of the people believed pre-marital sex was wrong. That number dropped to 48 percent in 1973 and 39 percent in 1985.

I view the love between a man and woman as a sacred thing which must not be cheapened. It is fragile. It needs careful nourishment. Mutual respect is loving respect, and is the basis for a happy marriage and a happy family, which in turn I believe is the basis of a healthy society. Trivialization of this sacred relationship spawns nothing but cultural sickness.

I do not view commitment to marriage, or a married partner, as something which happens at the altar through the exchange of vows. That is too late. I believe it must be cultured and nourished from early childhood by active preparation -- beginning before one even knows who the married partner may be and ending only when by death do they part.

Preparing for marriage is more than just saving our virginity for a future husband or wife. It is building our own wholesome attitude toward marriage and family. Even more, it is the development of personality characteristics which defy physical description, but which give us a good concept of ourselves. The self-respect accompanying sexual purity gives us confidence that we can master our emotions and direct them into benevolent channels, and that confidence has ramifications far beyond just sexual restraint.

I once read that teen-age sex was sparked by nuclear-war fears. Nuclear fears undoubtedly aggravate the problem but I believe the cause stems more from a bad feeling about oneself. That is, a love-starved self-image which in turn spawns a poor attitude toward life and toward others. This breeds the hopelessness associated with fear. As we become less pure, in every aspect of that term, our self-esteem withers further. As we conform to the crowd, our self-image becomes faceless.

I was impressed when Mother Teresa stood up to deliver the "Class-Day Address" at Harvard in 1982. Preceding her at the rostrum was a student orator who, in describing her four years at Radcliffe, said jokingly about sex: "We know

about it, we talk about it, and we have sex like everyone else." In the wake of that, the 72-year-old nun commanded the respect of all by taking an unpopular stand. She encouraged everyone to abstain from sex until marriage, saying the husband and wife who consummate their marriage on their wedding night will grow in love for each other. She added that "virginity is a lovely thing. The joy of loving is in sacrifice." [San Jose, CA Mercury, 10 June 1982, p. 2A]

I have presented these examples to illustrate my worries about our youth and future citizens. It is not that they are any worse than our present citizens, but if our world is to get better it is necessary for each generation to purify itself to a greater extent than the one before it. Purity is what Gandhi called brahmacharya. Charya means course of conduct and Brahma is God or truth. Therefore, brahmacharya is conduct in the search for truth (God). I, too, call this purity. It is irrespective of the mores of society. It is conduct aspiring to higher goals than mere majority opinion.

Gandhi had very strict opinions on this which, for him, eventually went as far as complete celibacy in marriage in order that his life would be totally consecrated to the realization of truth. Most people are not motivated to accept such extreme measures so they dismiss the entire idea. But he had some important points which should not be overlooked. Although they are certainly not popular in our modern permissive societies, I feel they will have to be considered if our peacemaking efforts are to be fruitful.

Gandhi pointed out that brahmacharya is more than just control of animal passion. Chastity is only one dimension of purity. Morality, honesty, selflessness, humility, and many other personal traits are forms of purity. I have used sex because it stands out as representative of the overall picture which includes prejudices of all kind. Self-gratification in sex can be a form of violence (non-love). Cultivating the attitude of sexual purity is in itself a

cultivation of the loving attitude which has a purifying effect in so many other areas.

I know only too well that good traits don't come easily. It is a tremendous effort for me to merely form the attitude which summons a will to be different. I have experimented with taking a bold stand in the face of public opinion and found that it works. It works not only in gaining respect from others who are looking for someone to take the first step, but it also works for enhancing my own self-respect. When I show myself that I can do it, I naturally gain more confidence and feel good about that accomplishment. This is a form of self-purification.

Self-purification is frequently and rightfully identified with prayer. Prayer means different things to different people. I have trouble repeating memorized phrases or repetitive mantras. I'm sure there is good attached to them which I have not yet learned to appreciate -- possibly some day I will. Nevertheless, I do desire some spiritual exercise, some feeling camaraderie with others of like sentiment, but the atmosphere of most churches discourages me. Maybe I am too self-righteous but I just don't relate to what seems a cozy atmosphere amid so much injustice in the world. I have a hard time digesting sermons which all too frequently focus on the collection basket and institutional building projects. Still, there are other uncomfortable atmospheres to which I do not relate, and probably should. I know I have not yet learned the truth of this situation.

For now, I must do the best with what seems to work for me, and that is frequent conversation with God throughout the day. This occurs mostly in the form of thought as I ask for help to accomplish some task. For this type of conversation to work I find that it must be two-way. I have to take time to listen to the advice I request and that means being alert and paying attention

because the guidance comes in peculiar and insignificant ways. Many times it is just a new concept that flashes to mind, or a thought which puts everything into proper context. Just listening to what Gandhi called the "small inner voice" provides much self-purification.

I said above that taking a rightful position in the face of contrary public opinion, and gaining confidence in the process, is a form of self-purification. I believe that such action is also a form of prayer. My temperament has always assigned more value to action than to words. Although two-way conversation is necessary for guidance, action is to me the ultimate expression of my love for anyone, including God -- or of my love for God through helping my suffering brothers and sisters.

Forms of self-purification through prayer seem to be inexhaustible. I mentioned the Cursillo in a previous chapter. I made my Cursillo in 1963 and that was the first time I heard the Spanish word "palanca", meaning lever. In the Cursillo sense it was synonymous to prayer -- prayer being viewed as a lever with which to achieve (pry loose) a goal. This is how it works. People who have previously made Cursillos are asked to provide palanca for the new cursillistas, and to explain their form of palanca (prayer) in a note. At the appropriate time during the Cursillo, this palanca is read aloud to the new cursillistas, thus stimulating awareness that a wider community is involved in the Cursillo process.

One woman who sent palanca to my Cursillo was dying of cancer. She said she was offering the pain and anguish of her death in the hope that we would be enlightened by the little course in Christianity we were experiencing. Her palanca has remained in my memory ever since. I have felt the love from that unknown woman for 25 years. It seems that she has placed some sort of trust in me, something for me to live up to.

Hers was an act of redemptive suffering. I also discussed in a previous chapter how suffering endured with the proper attitude can be redemptive. In a personal sense, she offered her suffering for my purification; that I would use my life to foster a clearer perception of truth and a stronger atmosphere of love in this world. Her palanca certainly pried my consciousness in that regard. In all humility I believe it accomplished her hope to some degree. To the extent that it did, her palanca was purifying.

The self-purifying act for her was the offering. But that offering was also purifying for the wider community. The best way to purify oneself is to help others. Not the self-righteous "redeeming" which was often the attitude when missionaries went forth to Christianize "heathen" cultures, but a humble offering of oneself to the service of others. I recall a short verse which has lingered in my memory:

I searched for my soul but my soul I could not see.  
I searched for my God but my God eluded me.  
I searched for my neighbor and I found all three.

My understanding of a self-purifying attitude coincides with Gandhi's principle of denouncing the evil deed but loving the evil doer. Toward the end of my time of designing nuclear missiles for Lockheed and the Navy, the duplicity in my life was tearing me apart. I knew that what all of us were doing there was wrong and I couldn't understand why others couldn't also recognize that. I fought self-righteousness leanings as I became more exasperated with my colleagues. During one meeting, as the discussion droned on about the nuances of the Trident missile design, I pulled my thoughts away from that subject and concentrated on each person's face, one by one. I visualized each one as loving and being loved by their families -- how they acted with their children, their values, their joys, their fears. As my thoughts imagined their humanity I was

able to love them more. To some extent I have done this type of exercise all my life.

On the other hand, I have a hard time feeling compassion for the exploiters who are causing so much misery in the world to satisfy their selfish ends. It is hard for me to think good thoughts about people who are so greedy that they devastate others to accomplish their goals. Yet I realize that this attitude is nothing more than the "enemy" image which has divided people since the beginning of life on this planet. I often force myself to recall my Lockheed experience and those meetings where I studied the faces of my colleagues. Perhaps if I could attend a Lockheed board-of-directors meeting and do the same thing I would find something there to love also. For Saint Francis of Assisi the proof of his faith was kissing a leper. Maybe my proof will be the ability to hug a corporate board chairman.

# # # # #



## 10 -- SELF-DISCIPLINE

For the very beginning of her  
[wisdom] is the desire of  
discipline;  
And the care of discipline is  
love.

-- The Apocrypha

The Ventana Wilderness is possibly the most pristine area in California. In 1972 Janet and I and three of our daughters backpacked 50 miles through that rugged area. We spent five days and four nights on the trail. That portion of Los Padres Forest has some of the steepest trails in the country. To get from the north fork to the south fork of the Big Sur River for instance -- a flat-map distance of perhaps one-half mile -- we had to climb a 1,000 foot ridge, only to drop down again upon reaching the crest. Such constant and abrupt changes of altitude is typical of that trail system -- no sooner had we accomplished a plateau than we lost it and had to start all over again.

Although we had taken shorter over-nighters to get in shape, the rigors of the Ventana Wilderness were taxing. On the hot upward stretches the girls wanted to pause frequently. It was a temptation for them to take off their packs and flop under a shady tree. But I insisted that they rest standing on their feet with their pack on their back because that is least tiring in the long run. I also coaxed them to take short steps on the steep climbs -- similar to shifting an automobile into a lower gear. They griped some but kept at it, and were psychologically and physically rewarded upon reaching the top.

Some years later one of my daughters was working at a job requiring painstaking application. She told me that the lesson of the Ventanas stayed with her -- she disciplined herself to stay on her feet and continue with short steps until she eventually reached the crest of her project. By focusing on one step at a time, one summit at a time, she was able to succeed.

Self-discipline in life is much the same as hiking a rugged trail. It involves minimizing the tendency for immediate gratification in favor of what is best over the long haul. I encounter daily examples of people using faulty logic to satisfy their immediate preference. The National Rifle Association shibboleth that "guns don't kill people, people do" is a striking example. It glosses over many considerations too numerous for this discussion, including the psychological effects of the gun mentality. I once saw a letter to the editor using a takeoff from that adage: "Tobacco and alcohol advertisements don't kill people." (My emphasis.) This was at a time when banning such ads was being considered to prevent influencing impressionable young people. I admit that these examples are extreme but they illustrate the blatant lack of self-discipline when monetary profit is placed above common-sense morality and public well-being. We all face less conspicuous occurrences daily.

Self-discipline means control of my own senses -- mastery over my palate, my thoughts, my emotions, and over the entertainment and activity I pursue. In the search for truth, self-discipline involves all the interior attitudes of a Satyagrahi which I have discussed so far -- faith, fearlessness, selflessness, humility, patience and perseverance, morality, and purity. I can perfect none of them in the absence of self-discipline. Self-discipline is putting those interior exercises to work. It is training myself to be a responsible person and to make the best decisions in the context of truthfulness.

Someone once told me that as a person changes it is first shown in speech, then in action, and always last by interior attitudes. Since becoming aware of that sequence I can see how it has been true with me. When I first thought of going to college I talked it over with others and eventually registered for classes. But it wasn't until I actually started studies that my interior attitude adapted to academic life. The same thing happened when Janet and I

were married. First we prepared ourselves through discussing our relationship and then we performed the externals of exchanging vows and setting up a home. But it wasn't until we started living our partnership that we adjusted to being husband and wife.

I can see the same process taking place in my attempts to be nonviolent. After complaining about the immorality of my Lockheed job (speech), I finally quit (external action). But I was shocked when I then recognized that my own home and loved ones presented the biggest challenge in my struggle to overcome violence (internal awareness). I had to stop and look deeply into many things. I had to reevaluate the manner in which I was guiding the lives entrusted to my care. In many ways I was imposing rules because of convenience and that is a gross misuse of authority -- a subtle type of violence that stifles meaningful personality development in children. I also recognized that I was placing too much emphasis on tactical discipline which forces immediate response while neglecting the strategy of love which achieves lasting results but requires time for those effects to mature. Both proper thinking and caring action require willful self-discipline. Nobody should attempt what they are not yet prepared to do, but I found it necessary to guard against procrastination and remain open to the motivation which tells me when I should begin.

Gandhi suggested the concept that people live by habit whereas it would be better if they lived by the exercise of will. [Bondurant, p. 175] Living by habit is action without thinking. Habitual existence is fostered by most schools and parents who, themselves, live by habit -- thus error perpetuates error. Such teachers and parents train children to follow prescribed practices in a predetermined manner -- whether that be with regard to social events or solving engineering problems. I have much respect for the more insightful teachers and parents who are trying to instill in children the ability to think, a difficult job

in a habit-prone society. Thinking involves objective analysis and that means overcoming the habit of self-deception. If I can better understand the mental process which prompts me to cling to the status quo, and to seek immediate satisfaction, I can then think more objectively. The first goal of thinking objectively should, I believe, be to define a set of principles which will respect my individual freedom but also adjust my personal autonomy to the needs of others. That is something we can help children to accomplish at an early age.

An important aspect of self-discipline is being trustworthy. I have heard some people bewail the fact that we don't trust one other. That is probably true. I have a hard time trusting people to do something when promised. They have to prove to me that they can be trusted because I have been disappointed too often. A cogent example is a 35-millimeter slide presentation I once prepared to add some visibility to my lectures. People asked to borrow it. After numerous times of loaning it out, getting it back late, and finding the slides all mixed up and sometimes missing, I resolved to never loan it again. Then a woman pleaded to use it and promised to return it promptly on a specific date. It got lost while she was moving and was returned three months late. Again I resolved to never -- that is, never -- loan it again. But a good friend had persuasive reasons for borrowing it. What could I do but agree? Alas! It again came back late with pieces missing. My cynicism grew because every time I trusted a person I was let down.

Gandhi said that we should always trust once more and be prepared for failure. That disturbs me because I have a hard time disciplining myself to do that. A quick engineering analysis of statistics makes me expect the worst. My disturbed feeling grows as I ponder Gandhi's statement that "it should be an article of faith with every Satyagrahi that there is none so fallen in this world

but can be converted by love." [Young India, 8 August 1929; cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 77]

In another writing he puts his concept of trust into a context aimed more at the opponent: "Distrust is a sign of weakness and Satyagraha implies the banishment of all weakness and therefore of distrust, which is clearly out of place when the adversary is not to be destroyed but to be won over." [Satyagraha in South Africa, p. 302.] Trusting the opponent as part of a truth-force campaign strikes me as another matter, whereas colleagues within the movement certainly cannot be classed as adversaries. The practice of truth force requires making ourselves vulnerable to the possibility of being deceived. Gandhi's response was to then escalate truth-force (and trust) until the opponent was won over. Nevertheless, truth-force was always applied toward the end of reconciliation, not unconditional surrender.

As far as the Satyagrahi movement, itself, was concerned, Gandhi recognized deficiencies and frequently fasted for the movement's purification. He forestalled some actions and even cancelled campaigns because the Satyagrahis were not properly disciplined. He loved them all but apparently couldn't rust them to be nonviolent.

In a similar situation, I love my family but I do not necessarily trust each member in all things. That brings up the point that things are never all black or all white -- all good or all bad. In a specialized case, I trust my wife, Janet, to handle family finances and to care for the children when they are sick, but I would not trust her to fly me to New York. That is an extreme example but it illustrates my point. I would not trust Janet to fly me to New York because she simply doesn't know how to pilot an airplane. Could that inexperience be the case of other areas of being trusted? Maybe the friend who failed to bring my 35-millimeter slide show back in a timely manner just didn't

know how to manage time. It seems to be merely a matter of self-discipline but possibly it is not that simple for some people. There may be some aspects of that person's life, admittedly mundane but nonetheless real, which have not reached the maturity of conscious concern. Perhaps that is why Gandhi says we should trust again -- as a means of maturing that awareness in another, which is nothing more than converting by love. Nevertheless, as simple as it seems, trusting is a complicated subject. Maybe someday I will understand it better -- or people will become more trustworthy.

Yes, I am critical of people and frequently focus on their worst points. That is because those are the points that bother me the most. Even with my children I am sometimes so harassed by some aspect of their behavior that I become too critical. On the other hand, I believe it is a disservice to be satisfied with mediocrity in either myself or those under my care. I recall how my dad always showed me how to improve on jobs I had done. Once I overheard Mom telling him to give me more praise and less criticism. Dad replied that anything worth doing is worth doing right and there is nothing wrong with constructive criticism. I feel fortunate that I found his criticism challenging and I really felt fulfilled when at last I completed a task that met Dad's satisfaction. Gradually he showed more confidence in me to do things. He then trusted me but I had to earn that trust.

So it seems to me that it is not so much the need to be trusting of others as to become trustworthy myself. Right now, at least, I place more emphasis on deserving trust than on trusting blindly. When others show responsibility toward commitments I then find I can trust them. But the important thing seems to be disciplining myself to be responsible and follow through on promises -- or going just a little farther than required by doing

that little extra bit which makes a good job superb, and conveys the message that I do care.

Janet and I were discussing the need to trust one evening during our daily walk. We came to a busy, multi-lane street with a pedestrian crosswalk but no signal lights. I suggested that if we could completely trust others to be alert and drive with care that we could proceed across that street blindfolded. Of course that would be like playing Russian Roulette and Janet pointed to the difference between risking our life foolishly and risking a piece of property. Rather than pulling the blindfold caper, we should be more alert and careful ourselves while we drive, thus preparing ourselves to be more worthy of trust.

That brings us to the crux of the matter. Sure we can afford to trust someone with a slide show where the consequences aren't great if that trust is broken. But in an action campaign we must have complete trust in nonviolence (love) if that campaign is to have any merit. That means, as was discussed in a previous chapter, trusting with our lives. Trusting our lives to nonviolence likewise means trusting others in the campaign to that same degree. Perhaps the reason nonviolent campaigns have not achieved greater success is not because we are incapable of trusting, but because we are not yet capable of being trusted. That is all the more reason to discipline ourselves to a greater degree of trustworthiness.

Gandhi was a tough disciplinarian, but he always disciplined himself first and then his co-workers. My problem seems to be transposing that sequence and being too critical of others. It is difficult for me to refrain from "preaching" or "nagging" when someone close to me does something that does not measure up to their potential. Perhaps I am too anxious for immediate results. I find it hard to have the patience of setting an example and waiting for the effects to show. Yet that is exactly the course of conduct necessary if I am to have a

long-lasting influence on others. Self-discipline leads to group-discipline. The element builds the whole. The best way I can help my loved ones to discipline themselves is by being visibly willing to discipline myself to live the truth as I perceive it.

One area in which Gandhi stressed rigorous self-discipline was in the ashram community. He considered prayer, spinning yarn, and writing in the daily diary to be essential. So essential, in fact, that during the strenuous Salt Satyagraha March to Dandi in 1930 he insisted that these three disciplines must still be observed daily. Prayer was pretty much automatic because that was scheduled into the daily routine. But it was up to the individual to find time and equipment for spinning and writing. Gandhi accepted no excuse. If fatigue precluded those activities then he considered there to be something wrong with that person's daily schedule, and he asked that person to consult with him for help in rectifying that problem. Gandhi admonished the marchers that it was important to keep this self-discipline because later they may be separated and proper conduct would be each individual's responsibility -- there would not be a leader to insist that necessary things be done in a timely manner.

Self-discipline in the ashram is no different than self-discipline in the home and family. Children are, or should be, taught to schedule their activities so that the important things get done. Gandhi's warning that the ashram members will not always have others to lean on is repeated so frequently by us parents who tell our children that "you won't have us around all your life to tell you what to do." That phrase has been overworked to the point of banality. Nevertheless, the point is most cogent and should be implemented by example and gentle coaxing.

I do fairly well on the example part but I fail miserably on the gentle coaxing. Using the example of keeping the bedrooms tidy, I have harped and



harangued incessantly at my children to do so. My approach is wrong but the motivation is true. Failure to get across this idea of self-discipline could result in procrastination throughout their life unless some more influential force changes their outlook. Procrastination is the virus which breeds irresponsibility. We often think of procrastination with respect to important things but it relates all the way down to our every action. If I take off my shirt at night I usually do one of several things with it -- I can drape it over a chair, I can drop it on the floor, or I can hang it in the closet. If it is still clean and I don't intend to wear it the next day I will hang it in the closet, and if I do plan on wearing it the next day I will drape it over the chair. If it is dirty and ready for the laundry I will drop it on the floor so I can take it to the washing machine in the morning.

These are actions which I have consciously planned and if I procrastinate they don't work out smoothly. If I say that I am too tired to hang up the shirt, and drape it over the chair, then clutter begins. If in the morning I don't take time to place the dirty shirt in the garage clothes hamper, clutter begins. When this procrastination is multiplied by all the things we do day after day, my room becomes one incomprehensible mess. The answer is to adjust my schedule to take care of things at the time. The shirt routine is a daily discipline but some events need a quicker response formulation. But I have found that as I practice the routine type of self-discipline that it is easier to make the spontaneous decisions when they are called for.

The shirt example carries over into our lives. If we continue to put things off, pleading a cramped schedule or fatigue, our lives soon become an incomprehensible clutter. Then we feel overwhelmed by the disorder -- our efficiency diminishes as mental anxiety mounts. This can lead to psychological and physical duress. I am convinced that much fatigue, which in turn is used as

an excuse from further work, results from frustration over how to accomplish all the accumulated tasks. That is why I consider self-discipline to be important. Just as Janet must learn to control an airplane before she can fly me to New York, so must people be able to adjust their lives in order to seek the truth in a fruitful manner. That is my perspective, anyway.

Some hold that the military services are good for teaching discipline. I used to also think so, but now it seems to me that they merely elicit desired responses in a timely manner -- habitual responses. There is no room for thinking -- no margin for personal belief or for questioning what is presented as authority. Self-discipline, on the other hand, is freely chosen within the context of other values. Gandhi likened the discipline of a Satyagrahi to the discipline of a soldier when he said, "Victory is impossible until we are able to keep our temper under the gravest of provocation. Calmness under fire is a soldier's indispensable quality. A non-cooperator is nothing if he cannot remain calm and unperturbed under the fierce fire of provocation." [Young India, 25 August 1921; cited in Nonviolent Resistance, p. 56.] Gandhi emphasized that there is no nonviolent action or non-cooperation without discipline, and no group discipline without self-discipline. He also pointed out that it is not enough that we give only ourselves that assurance. Contrary to the enemy image projected by military institutions, self-discipline must be so obvious that the opponent has confidence that violence will not erupt. Gandhi maintained that true self-rule at the government level -- the goal for which India was striving -- comes from within. That is, through self-discipline.

So self-discipline can only be applied from within. Others can put forth ideas and concepts which might enlighten us, but when it comes to application we must individually discipline ourselves. Self-discipline, when once applied and

functioning, puts order into our lives. We are than less overwhelmed by  
circumstances -- a hopeful and hope-full condition.

# # # # #

11 -- HOPE IN A SEEMINGLY HOPELESS TIME

If I could close up  
all the hatreds of the world  
into a single bullet  
last bullet in the last gun  
So that my breast could receive it  
as the hand gathers the last grape  
rotted on the cluster  
Then the lute of a thousand voices  
would sing

-- Vo Van Ai

In 1982, Janet and I were asked to give a series of workshops at the annual Ministries Institute for the Catholic diocese of Juneau, Alaska. We had been increasingly concerned about the prevailing hopelessness in our society so we decided to try one session called "Hope in the Nuclear Age." This happened to follow our workshop on children in which we explained the five levels of personality which must be developed equitably in order to produce a well-balanced human being -- the levels ranging from the highly-visible physical, through the increasingly obscure social, psychological and moral, to the final and most elusive spiritual aspect.

1. Physical
2. Social
3. Psychological (both intellectual and emotional)
4. Moral
5. Spiritual

We pointed out that the attention usually given to each level is in direct proportion to its visibility whereas the importance of each level is in reverse order. In other words, when raising children we tend to give the most attention to the least important things while neglecting what should receive highest priority.

During our presentation on hope we somehow fumbled through our understanding of our beliefs while trying to project some feeling of hopefulness. The ensuing discussion indicated that we hadn't been too successful in

stimulating hope until one of the participants pointed to the five personality levels which were still on the chart from the previous workshop. He said, "Maybe one reason it's so hard to find hope is because it takes place on the invisible spiritual level which we don't pay much attention to." It was a simple observation but most profound in bringing clarity to a hazy subject. Hope is directly proportional to the development of the spiritual level of our personality.

Later we asked Bishop Michael Kenny, our host, for his evaluation of the workshop. His critique provided more insight and encouragement. Little by little Janet and I experimented in clarifying our feelings about hope and where to look for it. In a way what I have to say is very basic, but in another sense it is the most important thing to address while living in the shadow of "The Bomb."

It is difficult to write about a subject as intangible as hope. I have trouble even facing up to the fact that hope is an intangible and should be treated as such. That is not easy when my life becomes so habitually tuned to the visible and physical events which occur around me. It is a case of the squeaking wheel getting the grease and intangibles don't emit a very loud squeak in our material world. Having said that, let me proceed with some sort of a description of how I perceive hope.

In the traveling and speaking I do I run into many questions, but the one that bothers me most is, "Where do you see hope?" Many insightful people have confided to me that they don't see much hope in stopping the arms race before nuclear weapons are used again. Others exhibit a downright hopelessness and make no attempt to cover it up. This is particularly true with younger people. It is painful to me to continually encounter this lack of hope.

I have said many times over that I believe the decision which stops the arms race will be a spiritual/moral decision. I had that conviction before I ever

started exploring the nuances of hope. But it is precisely that spiritual and moral realm from which hope springs. It may then spread to the other aspects of our personality, and it definitely will influence the other aspects, but it is important to understand that hope emanates from those intangible spiritual and moral characteristics.

I am now convinced that the reason many of us fail to feel hopeful is because we mistakenly look for it in the most visible physical, social and psychological realms. We expect to see immediate results from our peacemaking efforts in the same manner that a business executive expects to glean instant profits. We urge higher values upon society. We appeal to people's intellect by showing ways we can have a better world through putting our resources and efforts in other areas. We address their emotions to illustrate the horrors of nuclear war and to demonstrate the suffering resulting from the nuclear arms race. These approaches are effective and necessary but they don't necessarily lead to visible results unless there is a solid moral and spiritual base for both our presentation and the receiver's perception.

Let me use an example of how I see the spiritual and moral values influencing our total personality. In the work I do, I have to pore through volumes of Pentagon testimony, posture statements, reports, propaganda documents and the like. Being constantly bombarded by military thinking sometimes makes me feel discouraged and often frustrates me. I recognize two choices -- either give in to my immediate feelings or appeal to a higher overview.

In like manner, when we don't see immediate results we tend to become discouraged and frustrated. Some people confuse those feelings with hopelessness but I believe there is a difference. Those feelings take place at the psychological level (both intellectual and emotional). If we have no grounding

for hope in our more obscure moral and spiritual levels, then we may allow those feelings to deepen into hopelessness. But if our deeper perception is hopeful we can overcome the more fleeting psychological pangs.

Proper and proportional development of the five personality elements are so dependent on truth and nonviolence that they can only be perceived as parts of the whole. If truth is God, then truth is definitely part of the spiritual level. But since God is all-pervasive, so is truth on all five levels. Nonviolence being love is also applicable to all five levels although in a different form on each.

Although the five personality levels which Janet and I presented in that Juneau workshop pertain to the individual, they could just as easily be the collective personality existing in our society. I believe they are. My opinion is based on the same principle as Gandhi applied when he said he could not believe that nonviolence would work for individuals and not work for society which is made up of individuals. Our nonviolent works for peace and justice will eventually replace the whole foundation of society which now draws heavily on military solutions and violence. During the 1980s, glimpses of that transformation have been perceptible on the semi-obscure social level. We can see the transformation in public attitude toward nuclear weapons -- what used to be avoided in conversations or hotly defended is now open to critical discussion. One place this is happening is in media editorial policy. It is also happening in professional organizations -- physicians, lawyers, educators, etc. Religious organizations are providing more specific guidance to their followers rather than mouthing abstract generalities. All of this represents the surfacing of many years of peace and justice work and is a visible cause for hope.

This surfacing at the social level is a flow from less tangible spiritual and moral convictions which are in the embryonic stages of social change.

Nevertheless, it takes a very perceptive person to see these visible signs and recognize a force at work which is beyond our control. God does welcome our help in making our world better but God also acts unilaterally under some circumstances when we fail to help. For instance, all of the technical, financial and management difficulties which have delayed weapons production cannot be directly attributed to the peace and justice movement. Nevertheless, these occurrences have provided more time for peacemaking activities to take hold.

Let me use another story to illustrate this point. Over a decade ago I started alerting people that the US was developing a first-strike capability and warned of the consequences when that capability is achieved. When Phil Berrigan was asked to respond to my prediction, he said that by all that is rational and humanly possible, my prediction is correct. But he also pointed out that by those same parameters we should have had a nuclear war long before this. Phil observed that there must be some superior force protecting us and that is a source of much hope.

It is hard for me to explain my perception of these intangible phenomena. At the risk of seeming overly simplistic I'll say that I try to conceptualize God in some form familiar to me -- I believe God is truly all things to all people and the reason we have so many religious traditions. But as a parent I want my children to love me. That is something I cannot force as long as they have the free will God has given all humans. I must show my love for them and respond to their rightful requests for help so that over time they will come to love me. During that time, however, I would try to remove any dangers they may unwittingly encounter. The analogy is that God helps to keep us from getting burned as we play with fire during our evolutionary development.

Going back to the visible signs of hope, one reason I believe the peace and justice movement of the 1970s and 1980s has been effective is because of its



wide-spread spiritual base. We have had adverse court rulings, legislative indifference, administrative bellicosity, institutional apathy and much more, and these have naturally been frustrating. These things can be discouraging if we put our hope in the wrong place. When the vast majority of people have the deep and true hope we will see a reversal of these events which can be viewed as a severe backlash intended to cause greater discouragement. When seen that they are the natural reaction of our successes, that backlash is another sign of hope. We must prevail. We are apparently now entering into that backlash stage -- the inordinately harsh prison term for resisters is a case in point -- and it is important that we recognize it as a sign of success, and draw hope from that recognition to continue our efforts.

When I say that spirituality is the wellspring of hope I am not referring only to Christianity. God is all things to all people and I believe God works through other traditions than just western. A few years ago I ran across an example of hope springing from the beliefs of our Buddhist brothers and sisters.

In early 1982 the Japanese government ran a survey of youth in that country. To a randomly-selected sample they asked the question: "Do you have an objective in life such as what you would like to accomplish or what kind of person you would like to become?" Only 24 percent responded that they did have an objective, 65 percent said no, and the balance said no but they would like to have. This same question was asked of 100 active Buddhist students and the result was 70 percent yes, zero percent no, and 30 percent that they didn't have an objective but would like to have one. Although there are differences in the way these two polls were taken, the results certainly attest to the hopefulness associated with religious beliefs. I believe the main reason people do not plan for the future is because they feel hopeless about attaining their goals. On the other hand, hopefulness stimulates an expectancy of a future and

we then plan to meet it. These polls indicate to me that a spiritual base fosters the more hopeful attitude.

But look at the escalation of the arms race, I am told. Nothing of any significance has been stopped and military spending is soaring. The weapons are getting more dangerous and world tensions are increasing. Well, what can we expect? One thing we can certainly expect is some sort of backlash when our peace and justice efforts start to show fruit. The big money makers aren't going to simply throw up their hands and cash in their chips. It is probably true that we are experiencing only a small fraction of the backlash which will eventually happen when our efforts really become effective. In a very real sense there is truth in the old adage that "things are going to get worse before they get better."

Ronald Reagan will certainly go down in history as the president who pulled all the stops on the arms race. I believe his so-called mandate to build up this country's military power is really a backlash because too many weapons systems were floundering and the weapons industry was seeing a decline in profits. Trident missiles had been delayed, the submarine programs were enmeshed in management and manufacturing problems, MX was bogged down, the B-1 bomber was cancelled, Europe didn't want Pershing-2s and ground-launched cruise missiles, and assembly of neutron bombs was prohibited. Furthermore, headway was apparent in SALT negotiations and, even more threatening to Pentagon contractors, a comprehensive nuclear test ban seemed imminent. It was only predictable that vested interests should commandeer the reins of government and ride roughshod over public sentiment in order to revitalize their grisly business.

No, I don't believe we have seen the real backlash yet. But when we do it will be a formidable challenge to nonviolence and spiritual convictions. That is a compelling reason why we should direct our efforts toward purifying our own

way of living rather than exerting all of our energy trying to change others. We need to practice the self-discipline to live a life in complete accord with our spiritual/moral beliefs. Empowerment depends on one's ability to exercise his or her faith. Hopelessness stems from the inability or reluctance to put living habits in accord with values. That latter creates a duplicity of character which ultimately results in lack of self-respect, and self-respect is essential to success in our peace and justice undertakings.

Hope comes from confidence -- self-confidence. It is stimulated from our ability to fulfill our highest moral ambitions, or at least make some discernible progress toward their fulfillment. Hope is the strength that overcomes our tendency to feel frustrated when our efforts don't produce visible results as fast as we would like. Self-confidence is more attainable when we focus on our own behavior because that is the area over which we have the most control. Sometimes there are prices to pay but, paradoxically, that is often the source of greater hope. For instance, in the type of society in which we live, living according to our beliefs may lead to jail. But going to jail can often be more fulfilling than compromising our values and attempting to pacify our conscience. Probably one of the most hopeful signs today is that people are again going to jail for their spiritual and moral beliefs.

Hope often comes from being inspired by others who are struggling to live what Gandhi called the "nonviolence of the brave." Although we may conduct ourselves in a completely nonviolent manner, the military-corporate backlash may unleash profound violence against us. Be that as it may, Gandhi was convinced that even large military exercises could be stopped by small bands of people completely dedicated to nonviolence and willing to accept all consequences, even death. A successful experiment of this concept occurred in 1983 when the Peace Brigade entered the Central American war zone at considerable personal risk.

Ten people spent two weeks on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border in a peaceful vigil to protect one local village. Battles ensued all around them and neighboring villages were attacked, but the village in which the ten Peace Brigade members were present remained unscathed. A similar Witness for Peace, as it is now called, has been going on ever since. It is obviously a work of great value.

Hope is seeing "value" in our values. For something to be valuable it must have worth -- the things we believe in cannot be cheap. In this regard, as I brought out in an earlier chapter, I do not believe that modern religions challenge their faithful enough. Churches have been much too quiet in the face of the nuclear threat -- too complacent as millions starve each day because of our misplaced priorities. We Christians, in particular, seem to be oblivious to the first three centuries of our tradition, when Jesus' teaching was still fresh, and when Christians died rather than compromise those teachings.

To make any compromise regarding nuclear weapons and human rights is a lack of faith in God's power. It seems to be a human failing that we are reluctant to take first steps until we can clearly see the outcome. The unknown is fearful to us so we cling to the status quo. I received a lesson in the error of such hesitation from my friend, Jim Douglass, which he wrote while imprisoned in Boron federal penitentiary for praying in front of nuclear weapons bunkers:

As to how we might begin to touch that spiritual dimension -- the Kingdom's presence -- which would make hope visible in action, I think one problem is our attitude as activists that we can "figure out" a means of doing that. As if it were a question of methods or strategy. The traditional way, which we've lost touch with, is that if we pray deeply enough, with a faith that moves mountains, the Kingdom will come through a doing of God's will that at present we can't even begin to see, much less do.

What we see and do now are only nonviolent "actions," good in themselves but not the way. Living out and following the way would mean that hope would be so deeply embodied in us and eventually in

action that it would become present in the sense your letter seeks. People would become united and divided in a clearer, more decisive way. The question of yes or no would become much more real by contrast between that hope and current despair. Touching the Kingdom means not necessarily doing the truth, but at least facing it.

Facing the truth is the central point at issue here. Nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence represent a multi-faceted evil and that evil should be unconditionally condemned. In denouncing it we should call for noncooperation with any country possessing nuclear weapons, and then we will be able to refreshingly take up our cross and follow Jesus.

I must repeat again, an intangible subject is a tough one to discuss. But let us clearly recognize that hope does spring from the intangible realm of God's spirituality. It is a gift which we must desire and ask for. In that light I cannot describe a panacea for despair but possibly this intellectual rambling will stimulate some insight. The important thing is to want to feel hopeful and then to act according to our true and deepest convictions. Then, if we observe keenly, we will start seeing hopeful signs.

# # # # #

PART III -- OUTER WITNESS

We must combine the voices of all conscious people, the voices which come from moral and spiritual convictions, and bring them together into one voice -- the one voice of the awakened people of the world; so that we may reach the hearts of the two great nations, the USA and the USSR, and create peace on this world forever.

-- Nichidatsu Fujii  
Tokyo, 1981

Although indispensable to a nonviolent and truthful personality, inner activity is not enough. Outward witnessing of that nonviolence and truth is also necessary to enhance -- yes, even to fulfill -- inner attitudes and values. I shall first discuss unity as an outward activity which begs for practice.

As I start this chapter on unity I have in the forefront of my thoughts an elder Buddhist monk who had a large influence on me, a Christian, since our first meeting at Hiroshima in 1975 -- the late Nichidatsu Fujii of Japan. Called Guruji (honored leader) by Mohandas Gandhi, he was born on the southernmost Japanese island of Kyushu, close to Nagasaki, on August 6, 1885 -- exactly sixty-one years before the Hiroshima holocaust. He considered the date and place of his birth a mandate from the Creator. Nichidatsu was ordained a monk in 1903 and, after spending almost the entire 20th century working for unity and peace, departed for a better life at the age of 100.

Nichidatsu had a way of coming sharply to the point with few words. At the conclusion of the Continental Walk for Peace across the United States in 1976, he addressed a massive gathering at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. With these words he challenged the American people:

The United States of America is celebrating her bicentennial this year. Congratulations. She has now become the world's greatest military power. With her military force she is enkindling war in various places throughout the world ... and is incessantly conducting military intimidation. This has become a danger to humanity.

The power to restrain and eliminate this should not be sought anywhere else. The consciousness of the American citizens toward peace, and their nonviolent efforts alone, can eliminate the military force of the United States of America. [Buddhism For World Peace, p. 132.]

When I studied history in grade school I learned that a classic military tactic is to first divide and then conquer. That is precisely what is happening today in America. Enlightened people seeking a better way of life have been fragmented into small and inefficient groups which pursue their own goals and frequently expend much of their energy duplicating and even opposing the efforts of each other. These schisms extend farther than the US borders. Most if not all developed societies are splintered in numerous directions by religion, race, wealth, age, and a multitude of causes.

One of Gandhi's efforts toward unity was "equality of all religions." He maintained that the infallible truth can be found in all Faiths. It is the human interpretation of those truths which have caused fractures, schisms, and disunity. We are displaying the utmost in arrogance if we restrict God to only revealing truth in one manner and to one culture. The search for truth (God) entails finding that truth in all philosophies. Gandhi wrote over a half-century ago:

... my own innermost desire is not that the brotherhood of Hindus only may be achieved, but it essentially is that the brotherhood of man — be he Hindu, Musalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew — may be realized. For I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths, we would find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another. [Harijan, 16 February 1934, pp. 6 & 7; cited in Untouchability, p. 15.]

The worldwide ecumenical movement, at least as far as Christian denominations is concerned, has gained some headway during the past several decades, but a long distance remains to be traveled. Perhaps the most profound



obstacle is what Gandhi called "entrenched orthodoxy." [Nonviolent Resistance, p. 69] It is a tribute to the peace and justice movement that interfaith activities flourish, even beyond the Christian sphere -- that entrenched orthodoxy has been overcome to a large degree. But in other forms of division the progress is not so pronounced.

Today we have anti-nuclear-power groups, anti-nuclear-weapons groups, anti-hazardous-waste groups, environmental groups, etc., ad infinitum. Many of these are splintered into smaller segments. Opposing nuclear weapons are anti-Trident coalitions, stop-cruise-missile campaigns, weapons-laboratory-conversion projects, economic conversion, and more. Environmentalists are likewise divided into Save-the-Whales, Save-the-Seals, Save-the-Redwoods, Save-the-Bay, etc. Similar elements spin off in other areas. By and large these groups attempt to cooperate with each other but still pursue their separate goals while everyone's energy is stretched to the limit. One thing they all have in common, however, is middle-class extraction.

The absence of lower-income sectors in these movements is due to further division by social and economic strata. Springing from this form of segregation are numerous class struggles: Black Power, La Raza, Women's liberation, Gay rights, and other factions addressing chiefly the issues of race, status and sex. These are all prominent barriers exploited by the powerful.

The criminal-justice system (sic) further divides a nation by isolating the losers and nonconformists in the power struggle -- those who become impatient and do desperate things, or those who will not cooperate and who sound the alarm. Most prisoners are in jail because their behavior -- often violent and inexcusable, sprouting from problems unrecognized and uncorrected -- is a backlash against serious injustices. But to alleviate their problem would cost the winners too much -- it is less disrupting to simply build more jails.

Gandhi's efforts toward anti-untouchability can be expanded to include anti-racism, anti-sexism, and anti-age discrimination. Regarding all the division in humankind, he said: "When untouchability is rooted out, these distinctions will vanish and no one will consider himself superior to any other. Naturally, exploitation too will cease and co-operation will be the order of the day." [Harijan, 10 February 1946, p. 4; cited in Untouchability, p. 16.] Although those words were directed toward the Indian society they pertain to everyone on this planet.

These examples merely highlight the divisions which pit people against each other, but they illustrate the point. Upon closer inspection we can recognize that all of these problems really spring from a deeper sickness afflicting everyone, and that real cause is not adequately addressed. Henry David Thoreau aptly described our predicament: "There are thousands hacking at the branches of evil to one striking at the root." [Walden, 1, Economy, 1854.] While it is true that many bad things must be stopped before irreparable harm is done, we mustn't lose sight of the core problem. Effective resistance to the basic sickness can only occur when all of us, widely-scattered and disorganized, coalesce to work with unified purpose and coordinated direction. There are good signs. There are hopeful signs. But we dare not tarry as too much is at stake.

Central to achieving unity is to first recognize the root problem to which I have been alluding. It is not communism or capitalism; or even the arms race or the military-industrial complex. Those are all created by the real sickness. What is that sickness? Reducing everything to the lowest common denominator it is lust for power -- our own, very personal grasping to get ahead. In the secular sense, power may be equated to riches and ownership. Greed and selfishness afflict all of us while our social institutions do nothing more than cultivate that affliction. Individual selfishness then conglomerate into

corporate greed and military power, where profits are the measure of success and patriotism the indicator of respectability.

Through this grossly oversimplified model of the power struggle, power (wealth and ownership) concentrates in those who are most adept at manipulating the institutions of our society -- and in particular, the state itself. As power merges to fewer and fewer hands the number of oppressed rises and the degree of oppression intensifies. This leads to tighter law-and-order, barely-perceptible but steady erosion of human rights, and the almost undiscernable rise of a police state which is so necessary to keep people divided and exploited. Meanwhile, the necessities become harder and harder to obtain -- food, health care, housing, meaningful re-creation. People are kept so busy using their ingrained attitude of self-fulfillment to survive that they become impotent to improve their condition. I am not talking just of the poverty-stricken population. One only need to recognize the cost of housing and food, and the expenses to give children and youth an education, to realize how far up the economic ladder this oppression has climbed.

What is the answer? Not the violence which this mounting oppressiveness so easily sparks. That is the farthest from finding a cure for humanity's ills. Violence merely changes the seat of power. Nichidatsu Fujii's feeling toward the United States was not all cynical. During his speech in Washington, D.C. on 17 October 1976 he expressed great optimism for American unity:

I have witnessed here in the United States the sight of the quickening of a nonviolent revolution. In general, the term "revolution" is always backed by murder and seizure of power. The Soviet Union was the first to incite revolution in the modern age, followed by communist China. Both countries are now failing in their revolutions. A revolution which foster hatred in the hearts of men and tyrannizes over others must not exist in this world.

America is a country inhabited by many ethnic groups of people. If these races, all the races throughout the world, can become one, the nonviolent revolution of the world will certainly be successful. An example is now about to be practiced here. A revolution can be

accomplished by loving others. The very first step has already been taken in America. I am deeply grateful. [Buddhism For World Peace, p. 135.]

An example of how the peace and justice movement can unite to be effective is illustrated in the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Movement. The first Nuclear-Free Pacific conference on Fiji in 1975 drafted the Charter for a Nuclear-Free Pacific. But in the years that followed interior squabbling among the various factions threatened that movement. Some wanted emphasis against nuclear weapons and others wanted to stop nuclear power. Environmentalists were concerned about nuclear waste dumping and some islanders demanded an end to nuclear-bomb and missile testing. Many Pacific nations were struggling for self-determination. These varied interests threatened to strangle the Nuclear-Free Pacific Movement in its infancy. The prognosis was not rosy.

Then a miracle seemed to happen during the 1980 conference in Hawaii. All factions recognized the interrelationship of all these malefactions as well as their own interdependence on each other. Self-determination was the unifying theme which caused the whole movement to coalesce. The name was expanded to the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Movement and since that date it has flourished. Palau adopted a nuclear-free constitution and New Zealand has banned visits from nuclear warships and aircraft. Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides) and the Solomon Islands also banned nuclear ships and the South Pacific Forum of nations signed the Raratonga Treaty setting up a nuclear-free zone. The Philippines adopted its nuclear-free constitution in February 1987 and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been considering a zone of peace and neutrality. A former US ambassador to Fiji and other South Pacific countries labeled the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific Movement the greatest barrier to US strategic policy objectives in that area. This all came about because a degree of unity was achieved.

A much more difficult unity to achieve will be to harmonize activities of the middle-class peace movement with the struggle of poverty-stricken people and minorities. For the peace movement to be effective it must eventually unite with those seeking jobs and human rights. There can be no peace without justice. That is why I always refer to the movement as the peace and justice movement. Unity will require more than just offering material help -- that is a necessary interim measure but must be recognized as only hacking at the branches. So what can we do to bring about this unity? My opinion is that I won't become unified by looking "out there" to find my course of action. I need to look in the mirror. I must continue to try to change not them, but me. When that happens the other things will start falling into an orderly arrangement.

Dorothy Day explained: "The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us? When we begin to take the lowest place, to wash the feet of others, to love our [brothers and sisters] with that burning love, that passion, which led to the cross, then we can truly say, 'Now I have begun.'" [Loaves and Fishes, p. 210.] That passage did much to purge my arrogance. I was only condescending when I looked for a way to go out and stimulate unity. My job, first and foremost, is to make myself deserving of unity. Peter Maurin's lucid logic on self-organization helps:

People go to Washington,  
asking the federal government  
to solve their economic problems,  
while the federal government  
was never intended  
to solve men's economic problems.  
Thomas Jefferson says that  
the less government there is,  
the better it is.  
If the less government there is,  
the better it is,  
then the best kind of government  
is self-government.  
If the best kind of government

is self-government,  
then the best kind of organization  
is self-organization.  
When organizers try  
to organize the unorganized,  
then the organizers  
don't organize themselves.  
And when the organizers  
don't organize themselves  
nobody organizes himself.  
And when nobody organizes himself  
nothing gets organized.  
[Radical Christian Thought, pp. 12-13]

Peter is simply telling me that if I want an organized society I must first organize myself. By that same logic, if I want a just society I must make myself just, if I want a peaceful society I must make myself peaceful, if I want a united movement I must put myself in harmony with others. Where do I start?

Peace Pilgrim had a rule of living that inspires me: "Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, hatred with love." [Peace pilgrim, p. 97] It is the essence of Saint Francis' prayer and so simple to understand. But the simple things are not always easy. In this case I have found it is the most difficult and challenging task I have encountered in my life. During the following two chapters on "Stewardship" and "Constructive Activity" I shall explain some ideas and concepts that have helped me. I hope they will also stimulate your search for truth.

I cannot resist Peter Maurin's persuasive logic. I would like to close this chapter with one more bit of his wit:

The world would be better off  
if people tried to become better.  
And people would become better  
if they stopped trying to become better off.  
For when everybody tries to become better off,  
nobody is better off.  
But when everybody tries to become better,  
everybody is better off.  
Everybody would be rich  
if nobody tried to become richer.  
And nobody would be poor  
if everybody tried to be poorest.

And everybody would be what he ought to be  
if everybody tried to be  
what he wants the other fellow to be.  
[Radical Christian Thought, pp. 18-19.]

# # # # #

There is no wealth but life.

-- John Ruskin

Unto This Last

For most of my life I have been obsessed with the plight of poor people. In the prologue to this book I related a post-war story about a Filipino boy scrounging for food in the outskirts of Manila. That and similar first-hand encounters with destitution certainly helped to mold my concern. A contribution of earlier years stemmed from the love I experienced from my parents. They brought me to understand that everyone in the world, even the least fortunate, is dear to someone. I seldom sit down to a meal without thinking of those who starve. Amid the beauty of nature I am often aware that natural wonders need to be preserved. I believe these feelings are the essence of what I call responsible stewardship of our planet. That is, we should judiciously use the resources which have been entrusted to our care and protect them from the greediness of our human cravings. If we do that effectively, future generations may enjoy the same abundance we do.

California's drought of 1989 brought out the greediest in many people. What happened in the Santa Clara Valley was a precursor of future reactions when natural resources and our environment become more threatened. When water rationing became a reality the debate over how allotments should be determined reeked of self-interests. People argued the points most favorable to them, but not necessarily to the goal of saving water.

Most municipalities legislated a 25 percent cutback from the amount used two years previously, before voluntary conservation was requested. However, in the city of Santa Clara where I live a different scale was formulated. The total amount consumed two years before was averaged and then cut by 25



percent. Thus all families were allotted the same share, with adequate provisions to appeal extenuating circumstances.

To me this seemed to be the fairest method to meet vital needs and conserve water. I was proud that my city was so insightful. But alas, the big water users started screaming. A group of wealthy home owners formed a special interest group called "Fair Allocation In Rationing" (FAIR). Although unsuccessful, they lobbied for a formula which would give them larger water supplies to keep their landscaping green and satisfy other luxuries.

The crux of this story is that many people sought personal gain and convenience rather than what would benefit the community as a whole. Vital needs and future conditions were not taken seriously. This same attitude on a broader scale results in maldistribution of food, depletion of natural resources, and degradation of the environment. I would like to elaborate on each of those three conditions.

Maldistribution of food also embraces medicine and other necessities of a healthy and wholesome life. I call it maldistribution because there appears to be no shortage of food. The United Nations World Food Program in 1989 was begging for 417,000 tons of food just to meet current emergencies. Yet one has only to visit the supermarkets in local shopping centers to see a goodly assortment of sustenance in massive quantities with people picking and choosing what they want. A journey to the rear of those supermarkets to see the volumes of wholesome food thrown away each day is even more convincing. Many communities resisting social injustices feed themselves and large numbers of poor from these discards. There is plenty of food available. It just tends to concentrate where the money is. Food has been commoditized to maximize profits for the food industry. The same can be said about health care and other life needs.

Meanwhile, starvation and disease are rampant in poor countries. UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant reported that for "almost nine hundred million people, approximately one sixth of mankind, the march of human progress has now become a retreat." He says that some "fourteen million children are still dying each year from common illnesses and undernutrition, most of which could be prevented by relatively simple, low-cost methods." [State of the World's Children 1989] That amounts to a child needlessly dying every 2.2 seconds. It would only take \$100 each to save those children. Grant concludes that the "persistence of poverty on this planet is therefore ultimately inseparable from the issues of violence, instability and environmental deterioration which affect us and will affect us increasingly as we move toward the opening of a new millennium." [State of the World's Children 1989] People should be as entitled to sufficient food and adequate housing as they are to air and sunshine. Fortunately, no one has yet been able to monopolize the air and sunshine in order to profitably control their consumption. Unfortunately, by polluting the atmosphere we all contribute to the lessening quality of those still-free commodities.

Depletion of anatural resources is a related problem of equal magnitude. We in the United States make up about five percent of the global census but we consume over forty percent of the world's resources. The world's population now exceeds 5-billion people and is expected to double by the year 2025. We can readily see that this planet cannot support everyone at America's current standard of living. While the first and second worlds compete for the available resources, the third world is kept in destitution to satisfy the voracious appetites of developed countries.

For there to be the global justice which brings true peace there will have to be a fairer distribution of resources, and even then we cannot continue the present rate of resource depletion. Besides sharing with people now living, we

must also plan for several generations ahead. That gets to the root of stewardship. We, as trustees of the world, are obliged to preserve it in such a fashion that we can turn it over to our children and grandchildren in as good a condition than we received it.

One way to preserve our natural resources is by recycling. Some legislators have enacted laws which encourage recycling. Oregon and Massachusetts have a redemption value on used bottles and cans to motivate people to take them to reclamation centers. In my state of California, unfortunately, legislators have been easy prey to the lobbying of industries whose profits would decline with responsible recycling. As a compromise measure, a one-cent redemption value for beer and soft-drink containers was enacted -- somehow the wine industry escaped this modicum of effort. But a paltry penny is hardly enough to motivate indolent Americans to pack their empty bottle to a recycling center. In this case economics stole the show and responsible stewardship suffered. But I have always insisted that morality cannot be legislated. Stewardship is a personal attribute and when each of us develops that characteristic the recycling centers will be booming.

Degradation of the environment is a gargantuan problem. Along with depleting non-renewable resources (such as fossil fuels and minerals) and consuming renewable resources faster than they can be renewed (such as timber), environmental problems arise from extraction. To minimize expenses and maximize profits, industrialists obtain resources in the most expedient manner possible. Strip mining of minerals, for example, disturbs and dilutes topsoil to the point of making the land infertile. Another example which I have witnessed is the overcutting of forests. The Philippines, for instance, has the world's most rapid rate of deforestation. As trees are removed the litter, duff and humus on the forest floor disappears, and the once-spongy soil becomes hard and packed. Rain

water is no longer absorbed and stored for the dry season, but runs off to cause floods.

Pollution is major form of environmental endangerment. A book would be necessary to cover the subject. Most pollution is from the process of production (such as radioactivity and chemicals) or from the products of production (such as smog from automobiles). In many localities of the Santa Clara Valley where I live, water is no longer safe to drink because of the solvents and chemicals used by the electronics industry. Even where the water is supposedly safe, most people view such assurances with a jaundiced eye and buy bottled water to drink.

To more fully illustrate the dangers of pollution, I shall describe two areas of monumental importance in some detail -- global warming and ozone depletion -- because they epitomize the systemic forces resisting any germane practice of stewardship.

Global warming is the so-called "greenhouse effect" caused by industrial gasses, mainly carbon dioxide. The gasses collect in a layer high in the atmosphere and simulate greenhouse windows which admit sunlight but prevent heat from rising and escaping into space. Global warming of the earth's atmosphere was first described in the 1800s. It causes heat waves and drought accompanied by severe weather activity. Glaciers and the polar ice caps melt faster causing ocean levels to rise and shorelines to recede. In the last century, sea level has risen about one foot, partly because of global warming.

Scientists say that global warming under present conditions is inevitable, it is only a matter of how soon and how bad. Average temperatures have risen by one to two degrees F. since 1958 and are expected to rise another three to four degrees F. by 2010. The average global climate may increase by nine degrees F. over the next century, with warming of as much as 20 degrees F. near

the poles. The 1980s were the warmest decade of recorded history. A panel convened by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program concluded that the planet is heating up faster than human beings and ecosystems will be able to tolerate.

What is causing global warming at a faster rate is the rising use of chemicals and the burning of fossil fuels. Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is expected to double in the next 50 years. One member of the above-mentioned panel estimated that to keep global warming within the tolerable increase of two degrees F. over the next century will require a 60 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions (burning fossil fuels including petroleum products), a halt to deforestation in the tropics and elsewhere (trees inhale carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen), and halving the release of other contributing gases such as methane and nitrous oxide.

Global warming is exacerbated by another phenomenon known as ozone depletion. The ozone layer extending from nine to thirty miles above the earth provides a protective screen from sunlight. It absorbs about 99 percent of the ultraviolet radiation. Several years ago scientists found that a hole about 3,000 miles across has formed in the ozone layer near the south pole. This hole indicates that the layer is getting thinner -- presumably because of ozone reaction with chemicals released by modern industries. Atmospheric scientist estimate that the ozone layer has declined about two to three percent since 1969, and by even larger amounts near the earth's poles. This allows more ultra-violet radiation to reach the earth, resulting in an upswing in skin cancer (about 5.5 percent increase for each one percent decrease in ozone) and other harmful biological and environmental effects (such as decreased agricultural and fisheries productivity). Over the next century, stratospheric ozone is projected to fall 4.9 to 9.4 percent.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), also culprits in the greenhouse effect, are suspected of being the chief cause of ozone depletion. CFCs are widely used in industry and appear in many household commodities. One of their main applications is as a propellant in aerosol cans containing everything from paint and cleaners to deodorants and shaving cream. Solvents used by high-tech electronics manufacturers are also a major cause of CFC release into the atmosphere. Other sources of chlorofluorocarbons are various foams and insulations, refrigerator and air conditioner fluids, and hospital disinfectants and sterilants.

While some corrective steps have been initiated, it has not been easy to rally the global concern required to slow global warming and ozone depletion. Although a 1989 Harris poll taken for the United Nations Environmental Program showed that people worldwide in every economic bracket are acutely worried about environmental problems, that same poll rated governments from poor to intermediate in dealing with those matters. Governmental recalcitrance is a major obstruction to correcting pollution problems. In American particularly, there is a long history of hiding pollution effects, to wit:

- In 1978 the Carter administration discredited findings of its former scientist, Dr. Thomas Mancuso, which showed government radiation-exposure safety limits were too high.
- In 1986 the Reagan administration's Office of Science and Technology Policy accused a General Accounting Office report (GAO/NSIAD-86-62) of giving more validity to the nuclear winter theory than was warranted, and urged the GAO to change the tenor of its report.
- In 1987 two scientists resigned from the US Public Health Service because their report, prepared for Congress on lead poisoning in children, was diluted by the agency. The report called for more far-reaching remedies and expenses than the Reagan administration was willing to accommodate.
- In 1989 the Bush administration censored the testimony to be given to congress by Dr. James E. Hansen, a top government scientist studying the effects of global warming. Nevertheless, this senior NASA climatologist defied White House pressure to say that human

activities are definitely behind global warming and that programs should be funded now to remedy that situation.

So what can be done? The answer to that rhetorical question is personal involvement. In order to practice responsible stewardship we -- especially we in developed countries -- will have to possess less and share more. I have found it best to live more moderately. I was impressed by an example of moderation several years ago. Someone asked "Shorty" Collins (six-foot-two Rev. George L. Collins of San Jose, CA) why he didn't buy a new belt and throw away that out-of-style thing he was wearing. Octogenarian Shorty courteously replied: "Well, I've had this for quite a while and I just like to make things last." I believe that is the key to the whole question of stewardship -- to just make things last. This is an example of a small thing but it is the small things that make a strong beginning. We are living in a world of limits and it is urgent that we adjust our lifestyle accordingly.

Moderation is an attitude toward possessions. One may have stewardship over much property to be used for the benefit of others and still have the detachment of personal moderation. We do need some material things or property to help us fulfill our purpose in life. These should be taken care of and made to last, as if they were loaned and must be returned in good condition. Reasonable need for possessions may vary with different people. A handicapped person may require expensive equipment and more medical attention than a physically and mentally sound individual. Larger families need more food and a bigger house than a smaller family. All of these considerations should be taken into account.

An example in my case is the word processor on which I am writing this chapter. For many years I resisted temptations to buy a computer because I considered it a luxury. What finally changed my mind was a friend telling me that a word processor, in addition to doing the job faster with less effort, also

helps one to do better work. Since I am in the business of helping people inform themselves regarding the injustices and moral opportunities in society, I recognized that something which helps me do that job better is a good investment. Although it hasn't been easy to transcend the feeling of ownership, I have tried to adopt the attitude of stewardship over the computer I use.

Gandhi's principle of aparigraha, or "non-possession," is synonymous with stewardship. It means using only what we need for today -- not hoarding for the future. This is, of course, contrary to the common urge of establishing security through pension plans, insurance, and bank accounts. That urge simply feeds the institutions which finance destitution and widen the gap between rich and poor. Non-possession, on the other hand, can be instituted only by faith in God's promise that our material needs will be provided if we focus our attention on improving our spiritual/moral outlook.

When we worry about the future and amass material goods, we become slaves to those goods and the wage which provides them. Responsible stewardship means acquiring only those goods which we actually need, and those should be the most durable we can obtain. If we do that, we conserve the earth's resources so others can have their share with still enough renewable for future generations.

Spiralling inflation is an indicator of the greediness of a society. It is nothing more than everyone trying to get ahead of everyone else in making money. In that respect, labor unions should be viewed critically. At a point in their development, unions served the valuable function of obtaining justice for the wage earner. Today unions tend to be too parochial and do not aspire to benefitting society as a whole. Given the political and economic power which unions enjoy, they have degenerated into a special-interest group.

I do not support labor strikes which aim for higher wages. Reducing the chasm between rich and poor cannot be done by making union members richer. We



come back to moderation. If there were a voluntary and spontaneous determination to reduce our consumption, most demands for higher wages would be meaningless.

Strikes and boycotts are instrumental in obtaining healthy and safe working conditions, as well as protesting an activity endangering general health and safety. Those political activities are also effective against injustices such as the disparity of wages between men and women, or where intellectual work is viewed as more valuable than manual labor. Possibly the best solution in these cases is to reduce wages to the lower scale. What I am trying to point out is that most people's "needs" are less than current wage scales. The only reason for the high norm presently existing is to support a consumptive lifestyle.

In conclusion I would like to pass on this observation. It seems to me that most people are aware that changes must be made to protect our planet. The issues are clearly discussed in the media and people seem more willing to talk about these subjects. But although more people are aware, there seems to be a reluctance to take action. There is the feeling that we just have to learn to live with existing conditions -- a tacit acceptance of the problem because it appears too big to change. This apathy is frustrated by a lack of perceived urgency. We simply relegate to tomorrow what should have been started long ago.

What I am describing is a hopelessness based on false perceptions. We can and must change the picture. Action, when started by a few, is contagious, and the unknowns we face can be challenging, even romantic. We should revive the pioneering spirit which made America grow, only this time to make it grow in fairness and concern. Transcending hopelessness with responsible action breeds a good feeling about ourselves and our potential, and provides the assurance that we are not alone.

No longer can we afford to relegate our security to nuclear weapons and the doctrine of deterrence which reflect the pervasive violence in our society -- a violence stemming from the fear of losing what we have arrogated to ourselves. This violence reaches the ultimate in the Third World. It seems inconceivable that a child's life is worth less than \$100. Is it really true that to us of opulent America the demise of black or brown babies doesn't seem to matter too much -- as long as they die someplace else? Conscientious stewardship is the alternative.

# # # # #

#### 14 -- CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITY

The spirit of self-help is the root of  
all genuine growth in the individual;  
And, exhibited in the lives of many,  
It constitutes the true source of national  
vigor and strength.  
Help from without is often enfeebling  
in its effects,  
But help from within invariably invigorates.  
-- Samuel Smiles

My annual pre-Christmas lament is not what to buy for the grandchildren, but what to make for them. I have found that putting a bit of my own effort into the gifts makes them more meaningful for both the giver and receiver. It doesn't always save money but it always provides greater gratification. I have learned from others the tremendous advantages to doing things for myself.

For our outer activity to be constructive it must be beneficially useful toward understanding the truth and living nonviolently. One such activity is self-help. Earlier in this century, Gandhi introduced the discipline of swadeshi -- self-help -- as a means of freeing India from the British. Two significant and symbolic activities were spinning yarn and making salt. The spinning wheel, now a logo on the Indian flag, was a means of breaking dependency on the British textile industry. Spinning was actually only one step in the manufacture of homespun cloth, or khadi. When the Indians adopted this do-it-yourself project they had to learn the entire process from carding the fibers, through spinning the yarn and on to weaving the cloth and sewing the garments. Besides being of pragmatic economic and political value there was the bonus psychological advantage of taking care of oneself -- it fostered a spirit of power in the Indian masses which had for too long been repressed. Observed as a daily discipline, spinning was a constant reminder of that newly-realized power and it was a significant activity in loosening the chain that held India to British rule.

Making salt was an act of civil disobedience to the salt law which endowed the British government with a salt monopoly for the purpose of raising revenues. When the Indian people recognized that they could even save money while resisting British domination, salt making became a routine domestic chore in every family.

Self-help can foster that same spirit of worth in other people, but it is a little understood practice in modern times. With the development of specialization, which isn't all bad, we have become dependent on high technology and mass production. At the same time we become enslaved to those who control this technology and production -- and those people manipulate their control to yield the highest cash gain. In this context, we in developed countries are also oppressed although we don't realize it. We are captive to the corporate compulsion for profit and we are also enslaved to our own cravings which motivate us to gain the most with the least effort.

Our family has been trying to be responsible in our stewardship of the resources entrusted to our care. We have moved toward simpler living habits which do not require the high-paying jobs of high-tech industries to maintain. In doing this we have accomplished several things. Besides taking care of available resources so that children of the future can have a wholesome life, we do not have to spend so much time earning the money to support expensive living habits. This frees us to do more things that benefit humanity. By not earning so much money, we pay little or no taxes that are used to perpetuate the militarization of this planet. By not consuming so much we cease to be a market for the big companies which repress the Third World. We find these advantages gratifying and it helps our self-concept to know that we are doing some good while living on earth. "

But while living lower on the economic scale we do not have the money to pay for expensive labor to keep up our house and transportation. Therefore, some of our time has to be budgeted toward doing these things ourselves. Anyone with a will to learn certain tasks can learn them well enough to perform their own maintenance. There are a plethora of how-to books on various subjects. Another means of learning which I found indispensable is watching a construction project or visiting the local garage and asking questions of the mechanics. Many people are willing to help by sharing their knowledge. A person can learn to do a lot.

Self-help then introduces a new attitude. That attitude may be called by many names -- service to others, pride in one's craftsmanship, the value of other things besides money, the satisfaction of creativity. Possibly it is a medley of all these values, but there is a definite change of attitude. Stimulated by this new attitude is the ability to think -- the ability to devise new and innovative concepts for making a living, or getting a job done, which yields results beyond the immediate sensation of turning a profit or saving money.

My son, Dan, is a good example. He didn't relate to academic education but is a marvelous craftsman. His interest and talents lie in doing things with his hands. He eschews desk jobs and supervisory work, of which he has had opportunities. Several years ago he took a job with an upholsterer. Gradually he was able to master all the nuances of that skill from stripping and repair of the frame to cutting, sewing and installation. He acquired a few necessary tools over time and set up a shop in his garage. He doesn't always work at it full time -- he often takes other jobs of service to the poor -- but he has that craft to practice whenever he wants to or needs to. His services are much in demand because his work is excellent and his prices are reasonable.

Anyone who can provide outstanding service at a fair price becomes much in demand today. The old notion that big companies can outsell small firms, and force them out of business by temporarily lowering prices, is not necessarily true. I know of several shoe-string operations which have thrived right alongside the big chains. But it does take a different attitude toward the people for whom you are providing the service. A necessary ingredient is the genuine desire to serve and help, sprinkled with a dash of personal moderation which allows a reasonable but fair price. This results in providing services or products which surpass the quality of mass production but match the price.

Self-help certainly has application today where capital-intensive assembly lines turn out cheap goods of limited life while unemployment and poverty soars. Ingenuity can provide many small jobs which, marketed with the attitude of just but modest profit, will provide our needs. The time is again ripe for the small craftsman who takes pride in his or her labor. The concept of self-help can help to free people from the clutches of monopolistic capitalism just as it helped to free the Indians from the imperial grasp of Britain.

The concept of constructive activity can often be associated with manual labor. Gandhi considered manual labor important for nonviolent living. He referred to it as "bread labor" and introduced the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel provided a scheduled routine for working with one's hands. Some people work with their hands all the time but it is important for all people to do it some of the time. Those who work in intellectual positions need to discipline their routine by performing some manual labor. This provides a balance in their lives and also keeps one in touch with the "working classes" which provide out daily needs.

My chief form of occupation now is research and writing, with an occasional speaking engagement. On one occasion I was giving a lecture to a university

class when a man asked how my hands got so soiled in the type of work I do. I frequently have deeply-ingrained grease stains from working on automobiles. In one way this activity is a hobby as I've always liked mechanics. Constructive activity can also be recreational -- re-creational for us. In another way, as I described above, it is a form of self-help by doing my own maintenance and repairs when they are needed. In still another, mechanical work is a way to help others -- I frequently assist others with their car problems. But in a fourth and profound way, this work provides me a much-needed break from my intellectual routine. I'll have to admit that car repairs can sometimes be overwhelming, but over the long haul they give me a feeling of fulfillment and keep me in practice with my hands. The same can be said of home repairs.

Recently we had to replace the roofing on our house. I enlisted the help of those children still living at home and we made a family project out of it. I usually pick the hottest time of year for these big jobs and it is even hotter on the roof. Consequently we would start early in the morning when the air is cool, and only work a couple hours a day. By keeping up this routine the job is completed in a remarkably short time. In addition we are doing something together, the kids learn how to rip off and install shingles, we have the satisfaction of maintaining our own home, we save money, and we experience creativity with our hands.

One divisive element in our culture is the condescending attitude of the white-collar worker toward the blue-collar worker, as though the gift of intellect were of higher status than the gift of manual creativity. With our compulsion toward labor-saving devices it seems that those who avoid manual labor look upon themselves as smarter, or more successful. Maybe we elite have to learn to get our hands dirty. There would be many good ramifications if we did. One problem that I have observed in my profession is that engineers and

technicians who are trapped in the weapons industry, but would like to do more germane work, have such a narrow area of expertise. They have never known anything except the type of work they are doing and weapons work is the only place which offers the opportunity to use their skills. Had it been a society goal to introduce everyone to manual labor as part of his or her education, there would not be that fear of an unknown and threatening world when conscience dictates a change in occupation.

Maybe self-help would be of assistance in this case. Engineers, for example, could learn to do many household and automotive repairs for themselves. It is only a question of getting out the manual and learning -- and getting one's hands dirty. Clean hands, in the long run, may be the biggest hindrance.

Time is another problem -- we should discipline ourselves for time to perform manual labor. That means setting up some sort of a schedule. I have always hated routine but sometimes it is a necessity. We would have a mouth full of rotten teeth if we didn't brush them regularly. I believe the same thing applies to our mind -- that many attitudinal problems could be avoided by culturing our manual dexterity.

I've always liked woodworking but have just recently found time to do more of it. Also, woodworking is one manual activity that seldom gets your hands dirty. A friend of mine relates how his mother used to say that "wood chips and sawdust are clean dirt. Anyway, making meaningful gifts rather than buying junk or war toys has become important to me. This is especially true for Christmas. At no other time is the gap between rich and poor so pronounced to me as during the Christmas season. For that reason this is a very difficult season for me. Often at Christmas I feel compelled to vent my frustration by posting a Gandhian quote to which I relate very strongly. Gandhi once published in the paper he edited:



"I have never been able to reconcile myself to the gaieties of the Christmas season. They have appeared to me to be so inconsistent with the life and teaching of Jesus.

"How I wish America could lead the way by devoting the season to a real moral stocktaking and emphasizing consecration to the service of [hu]mankind for which Jesus lived and died on the cross."  
[Young India, 31 Dec 1931]

Yes, great potential lies in the conversion of America. Massive metanoia (change of mind, heart and soul) in the United States would have a tremendous impact on the rest of the world. But as far as my personal frustration is concerned, I have found that making gifts is the remedy. Gifts, in my opinion, should not only please the recipient, but should also reflect the personality of the giver. In no manner can the giver put more feeling into a gift than to include his or her own toil and sweat. The gifts I make are sometimes useful -- step stools to help the young grandchildren reach the bathroom sink, wooden tool boxes or vanity cases, a bird house with plans for assembly. One Christmas Janet and I put together photo albums of the favorite family vacation place in the Los Padres Forest, for all our grandchildren. The hand-made wooden albums with leather hinges matched the rustic atmosphere of the wilderness. They were full of pictures over the past several decades. Our hope was that the albums would foster a spirit-creating family tradition as well as promoting an appreciation of God's creation.

Constructive activity is, in my opinion, a necessary part of a healthy society. It is an outward expression of Sarvodaya, which means that the good of all resides in the good of one. During a lecture at the Muir Central College Economic Society meeting on 22 December 1916, Mahatma Gandhi said: "In a well-ordered society the securing of one's livelihood should be and is found to be the easiest thing in the world. Indeed, the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among the masses." [Published in Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 350-351;

Madras, Natesan & Co., 1933] Constructive activity, or what Gandhi called his "constructive programme," can start off by providing self-help to a people, but if it is followed to its ultimate it will certainly result in a non-exploitive style of living and earning a living.

# # # # #

15 -- TRUTH FORCE

The spirit of truth  
and the spirit of freedom --  
they are the pillars of society.  
-- Henrik Ibsen  
Pillars of Society [1867]  
Act IV

While both [Plato and truth] are dear,  
piety requires us to honor truth  
above our friends.  
-- Aristotle  
Metaphysics, bk. XII, ch. 6

I think that we should be men first,  
and subjects afterward.  
It is not desirable to cultivate a  
respect for the law,  
so much as for the right.  
-- Henry David Thoreau  
Civil Disobedience [1849]

Inner attitudes and outward activity compliment each other in forming and maintaining a nonviolent personality, but emphatic expression of inner values is necessary. Given the condition of today's world, forceful outward expression appropriately resists prevailing injustice and helps to bring about correction. Gandhi called this activity satyagraha, or truth force. Satyagraha is a Sanskrit word coined by Gandhi which related to the Indian people. I use the English translation -- truth force -- because it is easier for the American people to identify with.

Truth force is the ultimate outward expression of all the internal development of nonviolence and truth for which I have been striving. But in reverse, I find that interior development needs truthful outward activity. Although I have analyzed these interdependent aspects in isolation, interior attitude is not separable from outward activity. They belong to the whole, and as one of these personality traits grow, so does the other -- when one ceases to grow, so does the other. I believe it is the separation of these

interdependent parts (by my ego?) which fosters arrogance and self-righteousness.

One common form of truth force is what Gandhi called "civil disobedience." In his definition, and in his circumstances, civil disobedience meant disobeying repressive laws in a civil manner. The British law prohibiting private salt manufacture in India, for instance, protected British interests and revenues while provided no benefits for the Indian people. The salt law actually made it harder for a destitute population to survive. Breaking that law in a polite and nonviolent manner was a means of breaking away from the repressive clutches of the British lion -- hence it was called civil disobedience.

Today in America I do not believe the term "civil disobedience" is properly used. There are many good laws -- statutory, constitutional and international -- which guide this country. My contact with these laws has been through the resistance to nuclear war preparation. International laws prohibit mass destruction, and even the "planning" and "preparation" for a war of aggression, such as the disarming first-strike capability the United States is pursuing. The Constitution of the United States makes these laws part of the "supreme law of the land" which is binding over any other laws the US Congress or the individual states may enact. Statutory laws derived from common-law principles, which are nothing more than common sense, allow for cases of "necessity" which make it permissible to break lesser laws in order to uphold higher laws or to prevent a greater harm. Preventing nuclear war, the gravest harm imaginable, should justify many such actions of necessity. That the courts have failed to recognize this necessity does not mean that justification does not exist.

Against this backdrop of international, constitutional and statutory law I do not see that it is "disobedient" to enter weapons-making facilities to expose the vulgar activity taking place, or to beat illegitimate instruments of

destruction into more benign shapes. To refer to such life-affirming actions as "disobedience" reduces the effectiveness of those actions. In a society like ours, which places high value on semantics and respect, the idea of disobedience does not persuade the public. Since so many of these actions are symbolic in nature and aimed at influencing the voting citizens, it behooves us to use correct language. Some prefer to call these actions "Nuremberg actions" because the principles of international law derived at Nuremberg are foremost in endowing ordinary citizens the right and duty to non-cooperate with wrongful government activity. Others refer to such actions as "civil obedience," "plowshares actions," and even "divine obedience."

I prefer the term "citizen intervention" for two reasons. First it highlights the responsibility of citizens to act in the face of immorality. The Nuremberg Principles emphasize that merely following orders and leaving the decision-making to leaders is no excuse for guilt when atrocities are committed. Secondly, the concept of citizens intervening to correct the course of their country is the essence of democracy -- it is deeply-rooted in our heritage, dating back to the beginning of US history:

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly all experience hath shown that [hu]mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. [Declaration of Independence, United States of America, paragraph 2]

In the final sense, actions of citizen intervention, undertaken with genuine commitment to truth and nonviolence, can properly be called truth force. Far from being a passive endurance of oppression, truth force is an active resistance to things immoral and unjust. My experiments with truth force have been in resisting weapons of mass destruction, but it can also be used to free

those suffering under apartheid or other forms of dictatorship. Truth force can be used by those who feel unjustly discriminated against regarding food, housing, insurance costs, military service, ad infinitum. It can effectively be used by a child to correct a family condition arising from arbitrary rules laid down by an egoistic parent (I know from having been on the receiving end).

But it is important to remember that truth force seeks not a victory by the practitioner, but an enlightenment in truth by both the one who implements such force and the one against whom it is directed. Truth force goes farther than not doing harm to the opponent -- it scrupulously looks out for the opponents well being and feelings. Only in that sense can an activity be an outward expression in the search for truth (God) which is conducted in a nonviolent (loving) fashion. The validity of truth force is automatically negated when notions of conquest or unconditional surrender are entertained.

I have found that to keep a truth-force action in proper perspective it is helpful to recognize the humanness in the opposition. One way of doing this is to perceive the opponent's vulnerability with compassion. I had one such experience in 1975 as I stood in the Hall of Unity and Brotherhood at Malacanang Palace -- White House of the Philippines -- attending an audience with the noted dictator, Ferdinand Marcos, and First Lady Imelda. Upon my first return to the Philippines since World War II, I participated as an observer during the First Asian Ecumenical Congress which was held in Tagaytay City, just outside of Manila. In the cities and throughout the countryside I saw that the plight of the Filipino people had not improved since I had left in 1946. This continued repression angered me and fueled my antagonism toward the policies of Marcos.

Since the Congress I was attending had some national significance, it was arranged for all attendees to have a group audience with the President and First Lady. I was somewhat concerned about how much my prejudice would show

since I considered Marcos the personification of all things evil in that land. As I stood in the audience hall I looked upon this man who wielded so much power and had accumulated so much illegitimate wealth. I saw that he lived in perpetual fear. Security guards prowled everywhere. We were arranged in such a fashion that armed sentries could patrol our rear flank.

Marcos himself, as well as his wife, Imelda, gave only half their attention to what was being said. Their eyes darted to and fro, like wild birds, alert for a predator. They did not recline comfortably, but sat on the edge of their chairs, one hand braced on the seat, ready to jump and dodge. In their fear they seemed so mortal and vulnerable that my sympathy went out to them. Although I detested what they were doing to their country, I nevertheless felt less antagonistic. When it came my turn to greet them, I felt more confident to speak with truth and compassion. Recognizing their human vulnerabilities made me feel sorry for their plight.

Another observation of this sort took place in 1981 during the Plowshare-8 citizen-intervention trial in Pennsylvania. Eight citizens, following the biblical mandate to beat swords into plowshares, entered the General Electric plant at King of Prussia and hammered on warhead cases for the Minuteman missile. The judge was openly hostile and verbally abusive toward the defendants. He was so obviously prejudiced that I developed a strong resentment toward him. Then one morning I happened to be in the hallway as he entered the courthouse. He was completely surrounded by bodyguards -- federal marshalls who pushed their way through the people to escort the judge to his chambers. When I looked into the judge's eyes they were wide and rolling like a hog-tied steer. It seemed so ridiculous of him to fear these people who were committed to nonviolence that his behavior appeared grotesque. But he didn't seem to know that, and I did feel some sympathy for him.

Maybe sympathy isn't the purest form of compassion but it did reduce my antagonism in both these cases. My disgust with their actions was not changed but it seemed to me that I was able to think of them on a more human level.

It is my belief that only widespread grass roots consciousness can avert disaster of some sort in the near future. The most effective way I see of achieving that consciousness is through nonviolent confrontation, including non-cooperation and responsible citizen intervention. Let me explain that through a question I have been asked many times: what caused me to change my mind about working on weapons? There is no simplistic answer but I do recall one incident that caused me to take better stock of my job. I came to the breakfast table one morning in the late 1960s, the Vietnam war was in full fury and I was not about to accept the growing opposition to US involvement. I was a missile engineer at Lockheed and deeply involved with testing the MIRVs, the multiple independently-targeted reentry vehicles (warheads), for the Poseidon submarine-launched missiles. After all, I believed, wasn't it the duty of a brave nation to prevent the spread of communism? Wasn't preserving democracy and freedom the reason I fought in World War II? But as I picked up the paper a photograph of people burning draft files caught my eye. The caption described a protest against the Indochina war. I was infuriated! My thoughts were so turbulent that I couldn't enjoy my breakfast.

My turned-off reaction is why many people denounce citizen intervention. Making people angry, some say, is not productive and does not pave the way toward reconciliation. But although I was disenchanted intellectually, the symbolism of that action reached the feeling part of my emotions and started a subconscious questioning. Awareness took root and grew. I became more alert during day-to-day events. I asked more questions and became more critical. That incident sparked many changes in my lifestyle and profession. Disturbing a



person can stimulate the thinking/questioning/awareness process, whether that stimulation be conscious or subconscious.

It seems a paradox that educational approaches, such as lectures and writing, fail to stimulate questioning in many people. Maybe that is because we have developed such effective barriers to the numerous intellectual approaches which demand our time and money. With all the writing and speaking I have done I still feel that I do not reach many new people. It seems that a lifelong conditioning to blindly accept the direction of government is stronger than any disturbing facts I can present. Sometimes it takes an emotional shock to reach our feeling nature.

Another reason I see symbolic action as necessary to supplement educational approaches is that the human mind perceives in symbols. When someone mentions a tree I visualize a tree, not the letters spelled out as in this sentence. Symbolism bridges the gap between knowing something and understanding it, although the understanding may take a while to emerge amid the clutter of outdated values. In my case I could find no intellectual exercise to mitigate the disturbing connection between burned draft files and napalm-burned babies in Vietnam -- and future victims of the radiated cremation I was helping to prepare.

These are examples of why I believe nonviolent confrontation is an effective means of raising public consciousness of injustice. To some the word "confrontation" raises objections but I feel it most adequately describes the process as long as it retains all the qualities of truth force. Nonviolent confrontation is the pressure for renewal. Pressure is the phenomenon of life that causes growth. Pressure is necessary for birth. Pressure causes the flower to bloom and the stalks to break through the earth. Likewise, it is pressure which causes the moral crisis that motivates people to reevaluate

their behavior. It is this pressure which keeps society well and healthy. Without it the cultural death spasms of greed, apathy, depersonalization -- even genocide -- is all that remains.

Non-cooperation is an effective form of truth force. Tax resistance is a form of non-cooperation with promising prospects if practiced by more people. Over half of each income-tax dollar is used for military purposes. That fact highlights the words of a friend that peace is not impossible, it's just unlikely given the emphasis on war. When a large sector of the population stops paying that fifty-plus percent it will have a significant effect. The government is already concerned over a small minority who are refusing to pay for war. A July 1981 General Accounting Office report is appropriately titled "Illegal Tax Protestors Threaten the Tax System." [GAO report No. GGD-81-83] In merely two years the number of tax protestors (actual protestors, not including those who avoid taxes for selfish reasons) had increased by 170 percent. The GAO said that although "the number of IRS-identified protest returns is still relatively small, the growth rate is alarming." It continued that "people from all walks of life are involved."

Apparently, and unfortunately, that trend did not continue. If the 20,800 identified tax protestors in 1980 caused enough concern to touch off a GAO investigation, think of what can be done if the growth rate again starts doubling every year. Tax resistance allows us to challenge unjust use of public funds and it is a medium for bringing public officials into line. We common people may not at present be able to put the candidates we want into office, because the powerful rich control existing major political parties, but we can reduce misuse of government power by withholding funds.

As a so-called expert on nuclear weapons, I have been asked to testify at numerous citizen-intervention trials. In many cases I was not allowed to present

testimony because citizen intervention, by its nature of challenging government policy, is political. The courts, being an arm of the government, are hesitant to deal with such sensitive matters. It is not uncommon for a judge to declare that nuclear war is not the issue on trial, or that international law is irrelevant in his or her courtroom. I have been greatly disillusioned to learn that most courts fail to uphold the rule of law when it comes to the political arena.

It is a principle of necessity that all "legal" and less-offensive actions be exhausted or proven ineffective before resorting to the more-drastic corrective means of breaking lesser laws. Such "legal" activity has been taking place for years in an attempt to put nuclear weapons on trial. An organization called Concerned About Trident sued the Pentagon in the mid-1970s over the Trident submarine base that was proposed along the Hood Canal in Washington state. That litigation was thrown out because it touched on national security issues. In Honolulu, catholic Action of Hawaii (small "c" for the basic meaning of "universal" and "broad in sympathies, taste and understanding") sued the Navy for transporting nuclear weapons through and over public areas without completing an environmental-impact study. The courts ruled that military services must perform environmental studies but don't have to announce the result -- they need only say the study was made. A computer-science professor at Stanford University sued the Secretary of Defense for illegally operating a policy that would launch nuclear missiles on computer warning, a system he knew to be fallible. The judge, a retired navy officer, dismissed the case twice on technicalities. A researcher in Maryland asked the courts to order a comprehensive investigation of how stray radio and radar waves can cause aircraft to crash, missiles to fire, and explosives to detonate. She had hard facts to support her case but the government requested and was granted a

protective order which prevented the "discovery" of evidence. That order prevented the researcher from introducing her findings so the government asked that the case be dismissed.

These cases only sample the many attempts at legal redress which have proven to be ineffective. Yet when a citizen-intervention case comes to trial, the courts continue to rule that "legal" means are available and chastise the defendants for trying to make the courtroom a forum against nuclear war. It is precisely because of this "Catch-22" situation that Norman Solomon in 1985, while Disarmament Director for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, analogized that "insisting that the basement is ablaze, while urging everyone to write letters to the fire department, will hardly inspire the organizing of a vigorous bucket brigade." [Hot Autumn 1985, p. 6] In this metaphor, writing letters depicts "legal" channels, but the bucket brigade describes effective citizen intervention. Solomon added that relying on normal procedures for solutions "is whistling past a very large nuclear graveyard in which several billion unmarked graves have already been plotted." [Hot Autumn 1985, p. 6]

Although truth force in the form of citizen intervention has not been effective in gaining judicial reprieve, it does have a strong power of moral persuasion. I have already explained how the burning of draft files nudged changes toward ending my contribution to the nuclear arms race. Now I shall close this chapter with another story about the final shove.

In 1972 Janet and I were working as peace-program coordinators for the National Association of Laity (NAL) while I was still earning a living designing the Trident missile. In March of that year, two people in Hawaii penetrated Air Force security at Hickam Air Base and poured their own blood on top-secret electronic warfare files -- Hickam was the intelligence and targeting center for the Vietnam air war. Facing felony charges of destroying government property,

their trial was set for the following August. Janet and I were asked to attend as visible symbols of support from NAL.

During the week of the trial there were morning vigils in front of the courthouse, noontime rallies in a park across the street, and evening symposia on "War, Conscience and Law" at the University of Hawaii. This was our first intimate contact with people actively resisting war and it had a profound effect on us. It was during these events that I learned about Nuremberg -- that it is a "Crime Against Peace" to not only initiate and conduct a war of aggression, but also to plan and prepare for one. I was shocked to realize that my work was indisputably planning and preparing for a war of aggression. I was committing a serious crime under international law.

I don't feel that I handled my enlightenment very well. At that time it seemed to be more confusion than enlightenment. I was too ashamed to admit that I had a key job in designing nuclear missiles and I still felt too bound by secrecy to warn of what was forthcoming in the nuclear arena (the focus was then on Vietnam). During the last evening of the symposia I was asked to respond to the talk of noted international lawyer, Mary Kauffman. I could not say what I felt. I wanted to but didn't have the courage. I made a few stupid remarks and sat down.

That trial was a major turning point in my perception of reality. Janet and I talked over our feelings. We had for some time planned that I would disengage myself from weapons design, but the actual disengagement was always kept comfortably pushed to the future. Now it was no longer possible so we set the date. Janet, after 25 years as a homemaker, found employment in a public school to offset my loss of salary. Six months after the Hickam experience the guarded door of Lockheed slammed behind me for the last time.

I have had much experience with truth force -- mostly on the receiving end. As one whose life has been turned around by truth force I can attest to its effectiveness. But that turning around was not by coercion. No one in the resistance community told me I should quit my job, or threatened consequences if I didn't. Those who knew I worked at Lockheed accepted my friendship without reservation. The change I experienced came by gentle persuasion which allowed me to see the true picture. That, after all, is what truth force is all about.

# # # # #

## CONCLUSION

On some positions, cowardice asks the question: "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question: "Is it politic?" Vanity asks the question: "Is it popular?" But conscience asks the question: "Is it right?"

-- Martin Luther King, Jr.

In this book I have outlined my understanding of Mohandas Gandhi's approach to living a life based on truth, nonviolence and a high standard of moral values; and how I feel this approach can be applied to seek justice in the culture of a highly-developed country. It has been difficult discussing the various elements in isolation because they cannot actually be separated. All interact in varying degrees under different circumstances.

Abundant analysis has already taken place regarding Gandhi's search for truth and his application of nonviolence. I have given those two subjects only superficial treatment in this book, confining their treatment to the first two chapters. The main purpose I hope to achieve in this book is to emphasize the complimentary essentials which Gandhi advocated in his quest -- essentials which are mentioned fleetingly by most modern commentators on Gandhi but which are not explored in great depth. My treatment is also far from comprehensive but I hope it does put these other elements of the total Gandhian way into better perspective.

I do not believe Gandhi was any more holy than any other human being, or that he was so perfect that we have to follow his example scrupulously. What I do believe is that he was gifted with an extraordinary talent for sifting fact from fiction. He had a penetrating grasp of human nature and human needs and was able to concentrate an awesome amount of truth into one philosophy. In our personal search for truth it is prudent that we recognize the volume of truth

Gandhi has already acquired in his experimentation. That accumulation is a valuable contribution to humankind, and to be of practical value it should be applied in its fullest.

I heard a saying from a friend, I don't know its origin, but it went like this: "Practice does not make perfect. It makes permanent. It is practice of perfection which makes perfect." So why should we be satisfied with half-way goals. Why shouldn't we seek perfection? Every religion, in its true sense, urges the seeking of perfection.

Although Gandhi's way is not easy, it is extremely fulfilling. Perhaps some of his teachings have to be adjusted to contemporary issues and cultural settings, but they should not be diluted. Particularly in regard to resisting the imminent threat of global nuclear annihilation, it seems that his way is most urgently needed.

As I see it, there can be no spectators in the work for justice. In order to achieve the final goal of real justice, everyone will have to participate according to their talents and motivations -- but they must do their best. Justice is not a goal which allows us to relax once it is attained. The effort to sustain justice will require just as much vigor as what was needed to achieve it in the first place. It does not appear to me that this life was not meant to be a cake walk.

Some seek comfort in spiritually cozy communities and settings. Such an environment may be necessary at times to "retreat" from the struggle and get some rest and rehabilitation. But comfort as a lifestyle is a danger sign which we should promptly acknowledge and correct.

Too many people try to make living a simple, truthful life too complicated. Regarding peace and justice, as an example, there is too much intellectualization of the issues. I have contributed to the intellectual faldral through my



technical descriptions of a first-strike capability and all that the military programs imply. Nevertheless, the decisions are quite simple if we ask "What would Jesus do?" (or Buddha, Allah, Yahweh, or whomever we recognize as creator). Four Americans who have cut right to the heart of the issue in their speaking and writing are Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, Martin Luther King Jr., and Peace Pilgrim.

Gandhi declared that these ideals are not just figments of the imagination. As long as one person embraces them they are real and attainable. Even if they are embodied piece-by-piece by many people, that embodying shows that they are real and attainable. It is just a case of practice, persistence, attitude and faith to make them real in their entirety in each one of us. [See Nonviolent Resistance, p. 49]

In applying Gandhi's principles to America, however, it is well to note the differences set forth in a letter by an Indian student in America to the editor of Mira Magazine, an Indian publication:

The more I see and understand America, the more I see the difference between the underlying values of Indian life and those that govern the conduct and character of people here. Here is a demonical pursuit of pleasure for the sake of indulgence, and getting tired and falling half dead to rest, and then to wake up again to pursue "fun" and pleasure. It is so shocking to hear every American saying to others when they separate, "Have fun!" That is what the friends say when they depart; that is what a brother says to his sister, wishing her the best. These two words give a full idea of what values this society has. [Quoted in India's Social Miracle, p. 125.]

India had in Gandhi's time, and still has, a massive challenge in attaining the justice which fosters nonviolence and motivates the search for truth. A vivid lesson in the Christian gospels was that Jesus first took care of the people's physical needs before teaching them about God. Many physical needs are crying for attention in India and these have been recognized by Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and others. In America there is poverty and suffering but not on the scale of India. Poverty and suffering in America cannot be ignored but neither

can the other overriding problem highlighted in the above student's letter --  
"the demonical pursuit for pleasure for the sake of indulgence."

It is obvious that Gandhi's principles have to be adapted to this different challenge existing in highly-developed countries. That is what I have attempted in this book, as best my knowledge and experience will allow. It is undoubtedly far from the best treatment but I don't think it is the worst. Setting my ideas down in print has helped me to clarify my own beliefs, and I hope that the reader will also be sparked toward further enlightenment. My intention is to add to the ongoing search for truth and nonviolence, and possibly motivating others in that search. Of one thing I am convinced -- that truth and nonviolence (spirituality and love) is the road, no matter how imperfectly the road is perceived and followed, which will ultimately lead us to a peaceful and just planet on which to live.

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