

PART 1:

## DEPTH OF GOD'S LOVE

Nonviolence has a bad reputation. Too many identify it with the snake in the following story: It seems that in a certain village a snake had bitten so many people that few dared to go into the fields. Finally it was taken to a wise person who tamed the snake and persuaded it to practice the discipline of nonviolence.

When the villagers discovered that the snake was harmless, they took to hurling stones at it and dragging it by its tail. Finally the badly battered and disillusioned snake crawled to the wise one and complained bitterly.

"You've stopped frightening people," the wise one said, "and that's bad."

The snake was incredulous. "But it was you who taught me to practice the discipline of nonviolence," the snake replied. "Oh," said the wise one, "I told you to stop hurting people, not stop hissing."

Point: authentic nonviolence does not harm, but it does know when to hiss. It hisses loud and long at every system and structure that treads the weak and powerless underfoot. It hisses so strongly and with such persistence that governments topple and dictatorships dissolve.

When the Filipino people—armed with rosary beads—toppled the Marcos government by kneeling in front of tanks, that was a hiss.

When tens of thousands of students poured into Tiananmen Square bearing this placard: "Although you tread a

thousand resisters underfoot, I shall be the one-thousand-and-first"—that was a hiss.

The Solidarity movement in Poland with its strikes, slow-downs, boycotts, prison hunger strikes, marches and 500 underground presses calling Poles to nonviolent resistance was a hiss.

So was the massive resistance to the Gorbachev coup attempt and the dismantling of the forced union of Soviet states.

Nonviolence, then, can never be equated with passivity, it is the essence of courage, creativity and action. Nonviolence does, however, require patience: a passionate endurance and commitment to seek justice and truth no matter the cost.

But I am not talking about the history or philosophy or the politics of nonviolence. I do not want to discuss whether nonviolence is more effective than violence in breaking the chains of colonialism and oppression that bind so many of the world's people.

No, I would like to talk about something even more revolutionary, something much more difficult. I would like to address the doorway to peace, a spirituality of nonviolence. Because unless we address that, unless we focus on the underpinning of nonviolent action, any advocacy for nonviolent social change runs the risk of being superficial or worse—hypocritical, masking deep hostility, self-righteousness, and a desire to defeat and humiliate others.

I would like to approach the doorway to peace, then, in the company of an old Hasidic rabbi who each morning crossed the village square on his way to the temple to pray. One morning a large Cossack soldier, who happened to be in a vile mood, accosted him saying, "Hey, Rebby, where are you going?" The old rabbi said, "I don't know." This infuriated the Cossack. "What do you mean you don't know? Every morning for 25 years you've crossed the village square and gone to the temple to pray. Don't fool with me. Who do you think you are, telling me you don't know?"

He grabbed the old rabbi by the coat and dragged him off to jail. Just as he was about to push him into the cell, the rabbi turned to him saying, "You see, I didn't know."

The rabbi models, I think, the proper attitude or approach

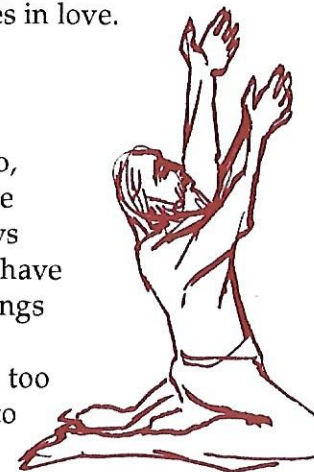
to our topic, the spirituality of nonviolence. The rabbi cautions against pretending to know the path that will lead us to a nonviolent heart.

Once upon a time I was sure about nonviolence. I had a clear vision of a nonviolent world and imagined myself walking towards it. But after many years of experimenting with nonviolence, I'm not sure about anything except Ephesians 3: 17-19. In that letter, Paul writes, "May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of your life. Then may you grasp fully, with all the saints, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love, and experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may attain to the very fullness of God."

I think a spirituality of nonviolence has something to do with grasping fully the depth and height and length and breadth of Christ's love, experiencing it and making it visible.

Obviously, then, I am undertaking an exercise in frustration. Why? Because Saint Paul reminds us that this way of loving is beyond knowledge, beyond explanation. It is a love that cannot be grasped unless we take a leap in faith while grounding our lives in love.

Therefore, I approach this subject from the kneeling position of Job who, after trying to make sense of God's ways can only testify: "I have spoken of great things which I have not understood, things too wonderful for me to know."



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JB



A spirituality of nonviolence has something to do with grasping fully the depth of God's love. When I think of depth, I go inward and down. So a good place to start the journey to nonviolence is by exploring love of self and the depth of God's love for me. Without a true love for oneself, any attempts at nonviolence easily become clanging cymbals and sounding gongs.

After I read my first Gandhi, and marched in my first anti-war demonstration, I steeled myself for a heroic lifestyle of long fasts, solidarity with the poor and civil disobedience. I spent long hours worrying that I wouldn't have the mettle to meet this self-spun scenario. I could have spared myself the agony. Bread and water fasts, rubbing shoulders with the poor, prison cells are easy. A spirituality of nonviolence makes tougher demands. It forces you to stand in front of a mirror and look. And that's not always a pleasant experience.

Gandhi said it well: I have only three enemies. My favorite enemy, the one most easily influenced for the better, is the British nation. My second enemy, the Indian people, is far more difficult. But my most formidable opponent is a man named Mohandas K. Gandhi. With him, I seem to have very little influence."

Obviously, Gandhi is not alone. Every serious student of nonviolence that I've encountered over the years expresses surprise and struggle upon discovering the violence within. They say things like: "I just realized how much I yell at the kids.... I drive through city traffic on a very short fuse.... There is a raging anger in me that explodes when my opinions are questioned.... I just discovered that my enemy is the president, or my boss, or the bishop and I can't tolerate him."

The problem is that once these violent feelings surface, peacemakers tend to panic and beat their breasts, "God, I am not worthy to be a peacemaker." That attitude, however, is not only self-defeating, it is contrary to a spirituality of nonviolence which calls us to go beyond self-knowledge and reach self-acceptance.

They tell about a man who took great pride in his lawn, only to wake up one day and find a large crop of dandelions. He tried every method he knew to get rid of them. Still they

plagued him. Finally, he wrote the Department of Agriculture. He enumerated all the things he had tried and closed his letter with the question, "What shall I do now?" In a few weeks the reply came: "We suggest you learn to love them."

To learn to love all the dandelions that live in Mary Lou Kownacki is spiritual maturity. It's only when I can say Yes to myself, as I am, that God can work in me. Otherwise I'm too busy trying to make myself better than God made me. And I get in God's way.

To say Yes to myself might mean that if I accept the weaknesses in myself, I can accept the weaknesses in others more easily. Then there is no need to be so defensive, no need to project my deepest fears about myself on the enemy: US government officials, Saddam Hussein, church hierarchy, leftist radicals, right wing advocates.

The spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen, reminds us that unless we hear and believe the voice that Jesus did, the voice that says: "You are my beloved daughter; you are my beloved son," unless we claim that voice for ourselves our nonviolent actions will be in vain.

Why? Because without a sincere self-love, actions for peace and justice can really be undertaken only to prove to ourselves that we are lovable, that we are worth loving.

Paul Tillich laid out life's greatest challenge: "Simply accept the fact that you are accepted." But we fight it and continue to slap the face of unconditional love.

A spirituality of nonviolence, therefore, has a modest goal: to invite us to self-knowledge and to leap with us to self-acceptance. This is what it means to experience fully the depth of God's love for me. Only then can we take the first step as nonviolent peacemakers.



## HEIGHT OF GOD'S LOVE

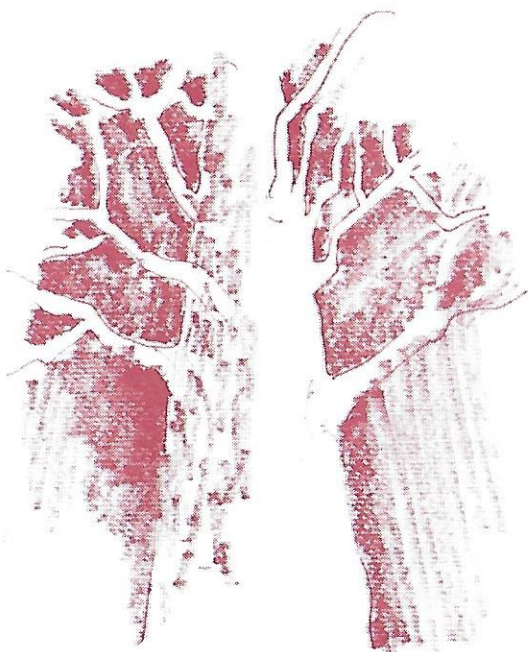
Height moves the eye upward, toward the mountaintop of God's dwelling place. The spiritual writer Anthony DeMello reminded us that we become like the God we adore. If I look back on my life, the God I search for, the God I adore, has passed through many prisms.

My earliest recollections are of a Judge God and this God frightened me. So I kept rituals and worried about rules and eternal fire. Then the novelist Leo Tolstoy introduced me to the God who lived in others, especially the poor and outcast. And I devoted my days to soup kitchens and houses of hospitality.

Then in the Vietnam War days I met the God of the prophets and I confronted the powerful who ground the powerless into dust. Those were the days consumed by picket lines, long fasts, vigils, mass marches and civil disobedience.

Then my heart was snared by the God of peace who is never glorified by human violence. So I went about trying to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

Lately, I have been searching for and seeking the God of this quotation by Thomas Merton: "I have overshadowed Jonah with my mercy...have you had sight of me, Jonah, my child? Mercy within mercy within mercy." My heart is restless for this God because it is a God I cannot comprehend. Yet I believe that to experience fully the height of God's love I must swim in this ocean of compassion.



So all I do is repeat the mystery and watch carefully. "Have you had sight of me, Mary Lou, my child? Mercy within mercy within mercy." Now and then we catch sight of this unfathomable mercy, now and then we get a glimpse of this compassionate Love.

One of my earliest memories of meeting a compassionate heart took place in the early 60s and it is what attracted me to nonviolence. I can remember being transfixed before the TV as I watched blacks and whites sit at segregated lunch counters. They refused to move until they were served, while angry whites poured ketchup on their heads, smeared mustard through their hair and eyes, and pelted them with racial slurs.

I wondered how people could absorb such hatred and violence without striking back. Then I read an account in the Catholic Worker newspaper where a black man was quoted as saying, "I will let them kick me and kick me until they have kicked all hatred out of themselves and into my own body where I will transform it into love." That unidentified black man is a glimpse of the height of God's love.





Another place where I found it was in hearing the story of Pax Christi's birth. Pax Christi is the international Catholic peace movement.

Pax Christi, Latin for the Peace of Christ, was born in a prison. Not just any prison, but a prison filled with resisters who were waiting to be sent to the concentration camp at Buchenwald. It was World War II and France was occupied by Germany. Herded together in a French state prison were French resistance fighters and others—mainly priests and religious—who had harbored hunted Jews. One of the resistance fighters asked a fellow-prisoner, Bishop Theas, to celebrate Mass. Bishop Theas was in prison for nonviolent resistance—he had condemned, through a pastoral letter, the persecution of Jews, the deportation of French workers to Germany for forced labor, and the reprisal-destruction of whole villages.

The prison was seething with hatred and anger because a few weeks before—in retaliation for the killing of a few Nazi soldiers—the inhabitants of a small village had been herded into the village church and the church set afire. Bishop Theas agreed to celebrate the prison Mass, but he chose for his homily the theme, "Love your enemy." He read to these brave, honorable, courageous French freedom-fighters what they least expected: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for those that persecute you." Some of the prisoners disrupted the bishop. "This gospel is terrible," they said. "This gospel is impossible to live." Bishop Theas replied, "I cannot preach anything to you but what Jesus said, 'Love your enemies.' Not more—not less."

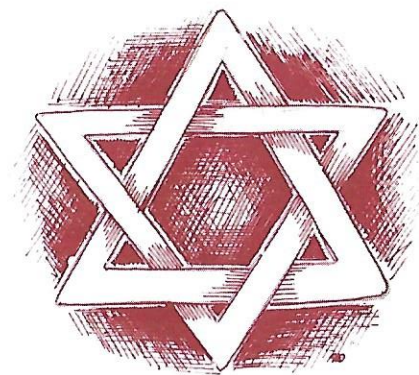
Then he led the prisoners in the prayer that Jesus taught us. When he came to the line, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," he paused and added one word—"Germany." We can only imagine the terrible pain and anguish, the shouts and screams ripping through the hearts of the prisoners, "They've killed our children." Certainly, we can understand any explosion of grief and anger. But Bishop Theas gently insisted that this was necessary. He repeated the word—"Germany." Many could not finish the prayer. Some did. All understood, perhaps for the first time, the height of love to which Jesus called us when he taught us

how to pray.

Bishop Theas was eventually released from prison, but the incident altered his life. Because of it he was determined to devote the rest of his days to reconciliation efforts between France and Germany. When a French lay woman, Madame Dortel-Claudot, approached him about organizing a prayer crusade for reconciliation between the French and German people, Bishop Theas blessed the effort. This prayer crusade was the beginning of Pax Christi.

Or how about Etty Hillesum, a young Dutch Jewish woman who died in Auschwitz, and whose journals were recently found and published. In a concentration camp, Etty writes an imaginary conversation with a friend: "Yes, life is beautiful and I value it anew at the end of every day, even though I know the sons and daughters of mothers are being murdered in concentration camps. Do not relieve your feelings through hatred, do not seek to be avenged on all German mothers, for they, too, sorrow at this very moment for their slain and murdered children." And in another journal entry, "I believe that I will never be able to hate any human being for their so-called 'wickedness,' that I shall only hate the evil that is within me...."

What does it mean to love like that? What does it mean to bathe creation in such mercy? Certainly the unidentified black man, Pax Christi's birth and Etty Hillesum's journal, offer us an incarnation of the height of God's love.





## LENGTH OF GOD'S LOVE

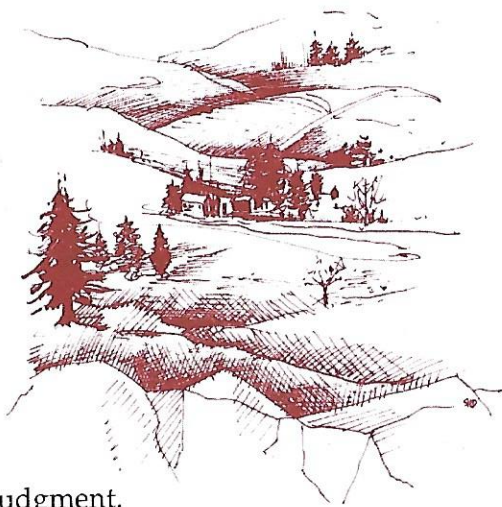
To climb the mountain of God's love and reach its peak puts the rest of the world in perspective.

To view salvation history from the merciful heart of God shatters our human definitions of justice and right judgment.

Because our concept of time is so limited we often equate our sense of justice with God's, the success of our actions by daily headlines. But those who experience the length of God's love, measure time and history differently. With the psalmist they pray: "A thousand years in your sight are as yesterday that is past." One struggling to be nonviolent comes to know that God's story is still unfolding and that our lifetime is merely one short phrase in the library of humankind.

With this view of time, how can one despair? And how can one harm another or kill another? Given the vast expanse of God's love affair with humanity, who of us can claim that our truth—no matter how clear it seems today—is the truth. If we wound or kill another, a part of the truth is lost forever and we are the poorer for it.

The point is that we can never know the final outcome of so called good and bad events. For example, all of us rightly rejoiced at the Cold War meltdown in the early 1990's. Certainly, this was an undeniable good. And yet, the 1991 Persian Gulf war became possible only because the Soviet Union no longer held the United States in check. Good event or bad event? Or again, was the Persian Gulf war a completely unredeemable event, or might some good be born from its



anguish and labor? Did the Gulf war, for instance, pound the last nail in the coffin of the just war theory, and delegitimize war forever in the church?

Let me offer another example, one closer to my heart, a situation that has tested to the breaking point my faith in nonviolence, my facile words on the length of God's love. My personal journey to nonviolence is closely connected to a country so pathetic, so inconsequential in the eyes of power, so fly-like that even you and I might be tempted to swat it and end its misery. That country is Haiti, a land and people that I have grown to love deeply over the past four years.

The first time I visited this forsaken country it was a land of fear and despair, with peasant groups meeting in secret, the armed police and military patrolling every road, terrorizing the poor at random. The people's only hope—Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide. When I returned from my first visit, I wrote: "This thin, frail, bird-like man is Aristide, the revolutionary priest? There must be some mistake. What is so dangerous about giving penicillin to the poor in the make-shift clinic he opened? In Haiti, one child dies every five minutes from malnutrition, dehydration, and diarrhea. What is so threatening about putting thin mattresses on concrete floors for hundreds of homeless boys in the old house he bought for street children?"

One million people inhabit Port-au-Prince; 40,000 of them live in the streets. What is so frightening about teaching boys and girls to read and write in the classrooms he opened? In Haiti eighty percent of the population is illiterate. What is so revolutionary about running a clinic, an orphanage, a school?"

Only when Aristide opens his mouth do we understand. A fire-brand prophet, his words detonate dreams dormant for centuries in city slums and countryside shacks, setting peasant hearts aflame. He preaches human dignity. He demands equal distribution of wealth and land. He insists that the church divest itself of power and privilege and stand with the poor.

If it's true that dictatorships totter when one person dares to say NO, then Haiti's foundation is crumbling. In slumblock after slumblock the poor scribble the name, ARISTIDE, on public walls and fences and billboards. A poet once said, "Revolution only needs good dreamers who remember their



dreams and the love of the people." Aristide has both. For this reason the soldiers shot at him in the night. For this reason the military tried to machete him. For this reason his church was fire bombed and torched. For this reason his order expelled him. For this reason he was stripped of his pulpit. For this reason Aristide is a dangerous man, a revolutionary priest. Certainly, 1989 was a dark time for Haiti and I expected Aristide and those who had hosted the Pax Christi delegation to be dead or in prison within the year.

But this is the scene from my second visit, just fifteen months later: A human wave of joy sweeps over Port-au-Prince. In slum section after slum section, the radio begins to record election results and the cry of the poor erupts in jubilation. Against the power of the United States government, against the threats of the Haitian elite and Duvalier cronies, against the might of the military, against the terror of the secret police, the death squads of Tonton Macoutes—against all these, this destitute, illiterate people held a free election and swept Titid, their beloved Father Aristide into the presidential palace. All of Port-au-Prince is awash with shouts of gladness.

On my third visit I represented Pax Christi International at the inauguration of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And what an inauguration invitation he issued. "Come," he said, "come you who are hungry, come to the banquet. All who have no money, come. All who are lame and sick. Come. Come to the presidential palace. You who have nothing are honored guests at the feast." And the poor came. And they came. And they came. Some hobbled on crutches, others crawled through the presidential gates on leg stubs, cautiously, proudly, they came to eat breakfast with their president.

So many came that they moved to the courtyard where—before the television cameras of the world—Aristide invited the poor to speak about their lives, their hopes for the future. A man without fingers or feet, a beggar who lived on the street, pleaded for a chance to own a bit of land. "Even without fingers," he said, "I can plant crops." "Come," Aristide said to the rich. "Come to the banquet. Bring your money and food. Give this man a chance. Give all of Haiti a chance.

Together we can build the new Jerusalem." Then, the new president of Haiti lifted a bowl filled with food, walked across the lawn, knelt in front of a woman going blind, and fed her breakfast.



Indeed the reign of God drew nearer and Mary's prayer that the lowly be filled with good things and the rich sent empty away seemed fulfilled.

And then...and then...the shattering events of September 1991—the ruthless military coup, the slaughter of the innocent, Aristide sent into exile, the violent and powerful triumphant, the bodies and dreams of the poor dashed against the rocks.

On the morning following the coup, when my community gathered to pray the psalms I could barely chant Psalm 12:



"For the poor who are oppressed and the needy who groan, I myself will arise," says God. "I will grant them the freedom for which they long." All my words on the length of God's love seemed facile and meaningless. But I did chant it, albeit half-heartedly and in a whisper. Is it true? And if it is true, when will it happen? When will God arise and grant the poor and oppressed the freedom for which they long?

Truly, only God knows. It is a faith response, then, not to be devastated by daily headline tragedies. One who fully grasps the length of God's love remembers always that the reign of God depends on God. All we can do is speak for life and leave the next sentence to a God of surprises, a God who writes straight with crooked lines.

All we can do is set our sights on the peaceable kingdom and do what we can to bring in God's reign—a glass of cold water to the weary, a word of comfort to the confused, a bowl of soup to the hungry, a letter of protest to the president, an act of resistance against the powerful, a life of solidarity with the poor. All we can do is the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

All we can do is detach ourselves from results and trust that God will accomplish God's purpose and plan in God's period of time.

All we can do is hold fast to the promise given by God to Dame Julian of Norwich: All shall be well, all shall be well, yes, all manner of things shall be well.

#### PART 4:

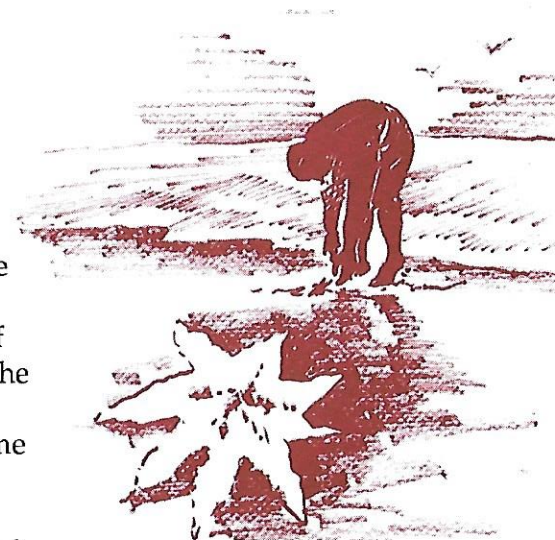
### BREADTH OF GOD'S LOVE

Gandhi hinted at the breadth of God's love when he wrote: "If you don't find God in the very next person you meet, it is a waste of time to look for God any further."

For me, the breadth of God's love is synonymous with all-embracing. To grasp fully this love poured out and overflowing is to open our arms wide that the suffering of the world may come in; is to answer each stranger's knock with "Blessed be God"; is to walk with the poor and hungry and call each one by name.

To make visible this love beyond measure is to be about abundance, is to be about largesse, is to be like the old woman in this story:

Just before dawn a young person was walking down a deserted beach. In the distance he saw a frail old woman. As he approached the old woman, he saw her picking up starfish and throwing them back into the sea. The young man gazed in wonder as the old woman again and again threw the small starfish from the sand to the water. He asked her, "Why do you spend so much energy doing what seems to be a waste of time?" The old woman explained that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. "But there must be thousands of beaches and millions of starfish," explained the young man. "How can your effort make any difference?" The old woman looked down at the small starfish in her hand and as she threw it to safety in the sea, she said, "It makes a difference to this one."





In this old woman we find a portrait of the breadth of God's love. Try not to think of her as someone simply doing an act of love, like giving drink to a thirsty person, or handing a slice of bread to a hungry child. Imagine her instead as one whose entire life is absorbed by the pain of others, whose every waking hour is oriented towards relieving that pain.

Rather than a beach awash with stranded starfish think of a world filled with suffering children. And picture this woman so moved with pity at the sight that she spends herself doing what she can to help the victims, even if it means challenging systems that support such suffering.

Behold, in this old woman who throws starfish after starfish into the sea and gives life to those on the edge of despair and death, we recognize someone who grasps fully the breadth of God's love.

Like this old woman, we, too, are invited to be love unfailing. We, too, are asked to be "starthrowers," to fling star after star against the wide sky and brighten a dark and desolate world.

To become the breadth of God's love would seem unreachable were it not for sacred guides, people who have gone before us, who have searched for and found the Beloved and can show us the way. Scripture calls them the cloud of witnesses and the church refers to them as the communion of saints.

These are biblical figures like David, abandoning himself to praise and dancing naked before the ark; and Mary Magdalen pouring expensive perfume over Jesus' feet in an outrageous and extravagant gesture of love. These are mystics and poets like the Sufi Rumi who says of God, "I leapt from you and you devoured me," or Thomas Merton who says that if we could see with the eyes of God our problem would be that we would fall down and worship one another.

These are modern prophets like Dorothy Day—50 years of feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and saying NO to war—her life an outpouring of her favorite quote: "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams."

Or Daniel Berrigan—ah, Daniel Berrigan, a lovely lyric poem that I want to memorize. There are artists like Vincent

Van Gogh swimming in yellow sunflowers and starry, starry nights and Shug from the novel, *Color Purple*, praying to the God of purple flowers in a field somewhere.

There are contemporary martyrs like Martin Luther King, Jr., who held so fast to his dreams that even an assassin's bullet could not destroy it. Or the four women martyrs of El Salvador, their faithfulness to death so simply explained by Dorothy Kazel: "We wouldn't want to run out on the people...we wouldn't want to run out on the people."

Yes, in a Day, a King, a Kazel, we see reflected the breadth of God's love. "Touch men and women like these," Walter Burghardt writes, "and you will touch the stars, you will touch God." But observation and inspiration are not enough. If we want to grasp fully the breadth of God's love, we must imitate, we must practice being loving.

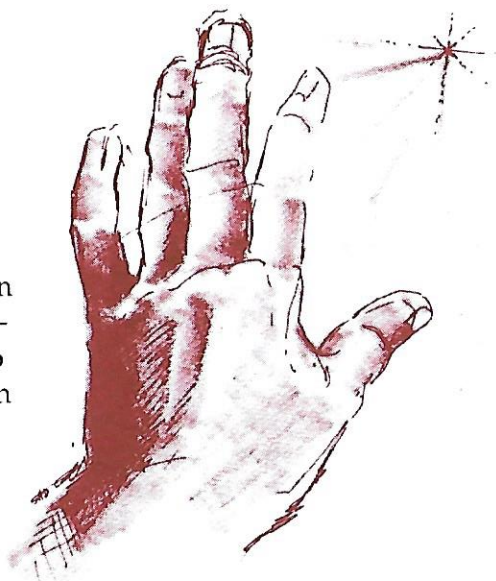
Make no mistake about it, the habit of love—like all habits—is something we learn. We will experience fully the breadth of God's love only by loving, only by bending down to help over and over again. To be kind and gentle through mean-spirited and hard-hearted days, to offer one's simple gifts to a broken world, to give of self with abandon, though there is no consolation, no evidence of good results and no end in sight, to keep courage and hope alive during the worst of times, is all we are asked to do, is everything we are asked to do.

"Do you want to be a saint, do you want to make visible the breadth of God's love" a mystic asks. "Then be kind, be kind, be kind."



## CONCLUSION

These are some limited thoughts on a spirituality of nonviolence, some attempts to bring logic to love, even though love, by its nature, leaps beyond and can never be contained by the rational and logical.



But how, you may ask, how does this happen? How does nonviolent love become the root and foundation of our lives?

Again, we look to our cloud of witnesses. Daily prayer and meditation; simplicity of life; service to others, especially the poor; nonviolent actions against injustice; building of human community; a commitment not to harm any living thing—all are integral to nonviolence, to becoming those beams of love that William Blake said we were put on earth to be.

In a world that depends on massive slaughter of civilians to settle conflicts; in a world held hostage by unimaginable and unparalleled weapons of war—nonviolence is a beacon of hope.

In a world where exploitation and injustice are the daily bread of two-thirds of humanity; in a world where three-fourths of the world's poor are women—nonviolence is a comet against a dark sky. In a world where neighbors shoot each other for parking spaces and children carry machine guns, not lunch boxes, to school; in a world where consumerism and overconsumption are robbing the next generation of healing sunlight and drinkable water—nonviolence is a star leading to life.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step,"

observed Confucius. To open the Doorway to Peace is one small step, but a step nevertheless on the long spiritual journey of nonviolence, a step toward that time when we experience fully the height and depth, breadth and length of God's love.

Or, as an ancient story tells it: A seeker searched for years to know the secret of achievement and meaning in human life. One night in a dream the Holy One appeared, bearing the answer to the secret. The sage said simply, "Stretch out your hand and reach what you can." "No, it can't be that," said the seeker. "It must be something harder, something more satisfying to the human spirit." The sage replied softly, "You are right, it is something harder. It is this: Stretch out your hand and reach what you cannot."

Isn't that what the spirituality of nonviolence is all about? It challenges us to chance the Christ, to risk all we have on love, and to stretch out our hands to reach what we cannot. Only in the striving for a nonviolent spirituality will our restless spirits find meaning, only in the struggle for a nonviolent heart will our restless spirits be satisfied. Leo Rosten warned: "The purpose of life is to matter, to have it make a difference that you have lived at all." If you choose a life of nonviolence, if you enter the doorway to peace, your life will have a purpose. It will matter. It will matter to you and to others that you have been here at all.

My prayer for you is that you choose to make a difference, that you choose to hiss, but not to harm, that you choose to hear the Voice that calls you Beloved, that you choose to be compassion within compassion within compassion, that you choose right action, not results, that you choose to throw star after star against a dark sky, that you choose to stretch out your hand and reach what you cannot.

My prayer for you is that you choose to open the Doorway to Peace, and enter into the spirituality of Christian nonviolence.