

NON - VIOLENCE

"Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire . . . "

Gandhi

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INTRODUCTION

There are hundreds of areas across the country where communities are seething with unrest. People who have been denied the development of their potential are frustrated. They are in a box and all sides are crushing in upon them. Religion is no solace; hard times is no explanation; a lie is no solution. This is a rotten predicament in which we find ourselves and we are all short-sighted.

We are short-sighted because of our own situation in life. We can see no further than our own personal box. So that in communities across the country, boxed in, they wait for the "Freedom Riders," or the "Snick Boys" or "Dr. King," or the "NAACP." They wait for radical leadership. Of course we are looking into the mind of our own people. We know that they can do it themselves but they can see no further than the sides of their dimly-lit box. From here we can all see what must be done --break away the box and let the man see himself as he really is and then as he can be. This is how I understand mobilization --minus the problems.

With the problems--that is, with the box--mobilization must be dealt with in detail, for the nature of the atmosphere inside the box must be known. Our people here live in fear and suspicion--black and white. The whites have long been afraid of the blacks and the blacks have so long had good reason to fear whites. But the tradition developed between the two has dehumanized both. On both sides, falsehoods have become the rule; they have grown higher and stronger, fear deeper, and hostility more apparent. The potential for mass violence is very great.

But we enter the situation with an invincible instrument of war--the instrument of non-violence. Non-violence as a way of life is a long way off for most of us. The best that can be said is that our great advantage is the work of the church in the South, or lack of the same. For even the hypocrisy of this great fellowship bears the seeds of the ultimate victory of Truth. The point where the church stops must be our point of entry. Do not be fooled here; do not let resentment of the Church's failures and the writer's point of view prejudice you. This would be naked pragmatism. No one working in the Southern states can expect to "beat the box" if he assumes --both verbally and practically in his work -- that one does not need the church as it exists. This is a part of accepting the people "you have to work with and you must accept them where they are."

The only questions to be asked are: How much suffering are they willing to accept, and, how much are we willing to bear in our bodies and in our minds?

Finally, somehow the white community must be moved. We are concerned with the total preparation and the total involvement of the total community. Small groups of two to twenty will not attain it. We must become social scientists with a "bag" -- a common "bag" made up of our knowledge of the past two years of preparation. We must be able to deliver hundreds in a cross-section of the communities in which we live--all ages and religions and economic groupings.

We have a choice to make; we can suffer under the brutality of unjust men in the South or we can suffocate in the North--we must

suffer. It seems good sense, then, to suffer one last time, that all may not have to suffer in the same way that all of us have. Millions in the South feel that they have no such choice to make. We are the last Negroes and liberals; if we are victorious over this system, human beings will be our posterity.