

TROUBADOUR

The Newsletter of St. Francis House, New London, Connecticut



Center Section: Celebrating the Life & Work of Paul Jakoboski, TSSF

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Building the Beloved Community

Address delivered by the Rev. Canon Edward W. Rodman

April 4, 2008 in New London, Connecticut on the occasion of the
40th Anniversary of the Assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What did Martin Luther King, Jr. mean by the Beloved Community? The cultural anthropologist Alan Lomax spent some considerable time in the 1930's going around the country and recording folk music before the culture died. He was particularly intrigued by the work songs he heard from prisoners on chain gangs - the call and response, the relationship between the men and the leader. He asked the leader how the men learned the music. "Well, captain," he slowly replied, "the men learn the music by doing the work." And how did you become the leader? "I guess I become the leader because I did the work the best."

Woke up this mornin' with my mind stayed on freedom, (3 times) Allelu, allelu, alleluia

Walkin' and talkin' with my mind stayed on freedom, (3 times) Allelu, allelu, alleluia

Music and work. Spirit of movement rooted in a cultural base.

How do we understand that relationship today between leadership and the work? What is the nature of the struggle for justice and human dignity in which we are involved? This truth was taught to me in a moment of riveting clarity in the early 1960's thanks to Ella Baker who at that time was Executive Secretary of the newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Now she had convened a meeting of some of the leaders of the sit-in movement at the time that SCLC was trying to figure out how to do what it was doing. It was a meeting that nowadays we would call networking (we were able to turn thousands of people out in the days before the internet!) Martin King walked into the room expecting to take over the meeting. Ella Baker told him in no uncertain terms to sit down and be quiet. And then she said these words that are fundamental to my understanding of the nature of leadership and the struggle we are in. She said, "Martin, what we need are movement-centered leaders; not a leader-centered movement." How much different might history have been if Martin Luther King, Jr. could have heeded that advice? What might have happened if he could have avoided the temptation of Jesus on the mountain top when his pride and ego got invested in his own propaganda and he allowed himself to become an icon rather than a servant leader?

If you want to be a group centered leader, you have to lift up, engage and empower everyone around you. You know it's happened when everyone steps forward and says, "I am Spartacus." Everyone did not stand up and say, "I am Martin Luther King, Jr.," did they? If you are trying to build a movement as King eventually understood and actually tried to embrace at the end of his life you have to appreciate the importance of four principles. These four principles are united at their foundation by non-violence and undergirded by servant leadership.

What would happen if I tried to light up a cigarette right now in this room? You'd throw me out, right? Who started that movement? Who led it? It was based on deconstructing the lie that cigarettes aren't bad for you. Then people did whatever they could. And finally everyone had to change their behaviors. And that led to the reconstructed vision of a smoke free environment.

So there you have the four principles: Deconstruction to reveal the lies; Behavior Analysis to see what is happening as a result of the lies; Power Analysis to see who has the ability to achieve what part of the necessary change and finally a Reconstructed Vision. The nature of the oppressive systems of this country is that we have bought into the rampant materialism based on individual gratification and not on group elevation. So now we have the four pillars of the Beloved Community: History, Compassion, Vision and Sacrifice.

Maya Angelou at Bill Clinton's first inaugural read that wonderful poem she wrote for the occasion in which she said, "History with all of its wrenching pain cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage need not be lived again." America's biggest problem is that we have amnesia. We do not learn from our history. We do not know or care about our history. As Shakespeare said, "All past is prologue," but we do not realize the truth that follows from that insight which is that prologue leads into tragedy as it unfolds.

2008 is not just the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. It is the 200th anniversary of the end of the legal slave trade as agreed to by the framers of the Constitution who set 1808 as the date on which such trade would be terminated. We can look back over these 200 years and see a certain number of individual successes. But it is critical to remember that history is written by the victors. It is not written by the people who got defeated. The celebrated linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky was once asked what is the difference between a *language* and a *patois*. He looked his questioner squarely in the eye and said, "An army and a navy."

Four days before Martin Luther King was assassinated, Lyndon Baines Johnson announced that he was giving up running for the presidency of the United States because he knew that he had failed, that the war was wrong and that he needed to try to heal the country. How many of you remember that? One of the tragedies of King's assassination was the fact that this decision was obscured. And then Bobby Kennedy was shot. And then the Democratic Convention in Chicago. What happened in 1968 was that all the struggles for justice that everyone had such high hopes for were put on hold. And the movement fragmented into groups each trying to develop its own struggle for liberation. Not that those struggles weren't needed. But the coherence around a single concept was lost.

The reason Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed was that he recognized that this was happening and the Poor People's Campaign was his effort to try to reconnect the dots - to challenge America on the basis of the three major fault lines of our system, namely, class division, race division and justice division or the misunderstanding of justice. In America we believe in retributive justice i.e. an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Restorative Justice, on the other hand, would mean that we all take responsibility for the present situation and don't seek to scapegoat anyone. And things are far worse now than they were in the 1960's. Major transfers of wealth were started under Ronald Reagan with major contributions from the current Bush administration.

Compassion: you have to see what it isn't before you can see what it is. It is not two rich city guys going for a hike in the woods and then running into a

bear. They started running, but then one of them stopped, reached in his backpack, pulled out a pair of Nikes and started pulling off his hiking boots. "What are you doing?" yelled the other. "Don't you see that the bear is going to catch us?" Whereupon the first replied, "No, my friend. You do not understand the situation. I don't have to outrun the bear. I just have to outrun you." But ultimately we cannot outrun the moral arc of the universe which bends to restorative justice. That just can't happen.

Vision is not a matter of not seeing clearly. It is a matter of having an understanding of what you are looking at. You have to look at the situation to realize there is something wrong. If you don't see anything wrong, nothing needs to change. White people and Black people have a fundamental problem within this culture and have never been able to communicate. We know why you think it's all right because it's working for you. But you don't believe that we know it's wrong because it's not working for us. There is a quote in an old English church that goes like this: "A vision without a task is but a dream." Martin Luther King had a dream, but the problem with a dream is that you wake up. The quotation continues: "A task without a vision is drudgery. But a task coupled with the appropriate vision is the hope of the world."

What is the song we have to sing? What is the work we need to do? We need to do more than just going through the motions. America is more than a bully, more than just a consumer, more than just a destroyer of creation. Everyone has a piece of the vision. Barack Obama has a piece of it; Hillary Clinton has a piece of it; John McCain has a piece of it. A lot of people have a piece of it.

But if we don't sit down together and figure out what's wrong, how are we ever going to figure out what's right? There is a West African saying, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there." Traffic jams are a compelling metaphor for our chaos and lack of vision. That's why the movie *Crash* is so powerful. Here we are crashing into each other with no compassion, no sense of history. The lay Anglican theologian William Stringfellow was asked in the sixties what he thought we needed to do to avoid the destruction of America. "The destruction of America," said he, "is not an apocalyptic event." That's really all that Jeremiah Wright was saying, too.

Sacrifice. Sacrifice is something that only occurs when you believe that it will make a difference. Why should I give up being Black, rich, male, female, white, gay, straight- whatever my situation is - why should I give it up if it gives me some advantage in this jungle we call a society? Until we have built trust and have a common interest in the common good, it's not going to happen. Until we are all ready to give up whatever it is and become Americans. Sacrifice is not giving out of your surplus. That's charity. That's chump change.

So what do we need to be mindful of as we seek to organize on behalf of the vision of the Beloved Community? Point one: Never believe your own propaganda. Understanding where people - including yourself - are coming from is very important. People from different generations have very different experiences and contexts for interpreting reality.

Point two: The most dangerous thing you can do is leap a chasm in two jumps. Concentrate on building bridges.

Point three: Nothing has a greater hold on the mind than ignorance fraught with technicalities. Huge amounts of time and energy can be absorbed and wasted by getting caught up in foolishness.

So stay focused with your eyes on the prize by learning from history, practicing compassion, owning a vision, and being willing to sacrifice. Always remain anchored in non-violence. And so create the new music to lead us to the Beloved Community.

In 2008 the Rev. Canon Edward W. Rodman was serving as Professor of Urban Ministry and Pastoral Studies at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, MA. First published in the Summer 2008 *Troubadour*, Vol.10, No. 1.

From the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's
"I've Been to the Mountaintop" address

at the rally to support the 1,300 striking sanitation workers in Memphis -- April 3, 1968

... You know, whenever Pharaoh wanted to prolong the period of slavery in Egypt, he had a favorite formula for doing it. What was that? He kept the slaves fighting among themselves. But whenever the slaves get together, something happens in Pharaoh's court, and he cannot hold the slaves in slavery. When the slaves get together, that's the beginning of getting out of slavery. Now let us maintain unity...

But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?" That's the question before you tonight. Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to my job?" Not, "If I stop to help the sanitation workers what will happen to all of the hours that I usually spend in my office every day and every week as a pastor?" The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" The question is, "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?" That's the question.

Let us rise up tonight with a greater readiness. Let us stand with a greater determination. And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be. We have an opportunity to make America a better nation...

Clarification of

Thought Schedule

Fall - Winter



2017

Poor People's Campaign 50 years later

SAVE THE DATES!

September 22
 October 6 and 20
 November 3 and 17
 December 1 and 15

This series emerges from our awareness of the need to learn from our history and to discern the signs of the times. On April 4 of this year St. Francis House sponsored a vigil at Soldiers and Sailors Monument in downtown New London. This was the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's *Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam* address delivered at Riverside Church in New York City. Next April 4 will be the 50th Anniversary of Dr. King's assassination.

We suggest everyone take a look at the original objectives of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign and at Bayard Rustin's Economic Bill of Rights.

<https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/poor-peoples-campaign-1968/>

In this *Troubadour* we include an excerpt from Dr. King's still all too relevant April 4, 1967 address. We also include the "Fourteen Steps Forward Together" from the Rev. Dr. William Barber's renewed focus on the Poor People's Campaign. We will have copies of *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove available for purchase or to be taken out on loan from the St. Francis House library.



We Remember With Gratitude

PAUL JAKOBOSKI, TSSF

November 12, 1951 – July 15, 2017

First local member of the St. Francis House board, later Treasurer and President, Francis Fund administrator, House resident and building maintenance instigator.

In our Francistide 2013 issue, Paul reflected on the spiritual meaning of sailing. This renewed ability to sail took place after several bouts of cancer treatments. He was in residence at St. Francis House at this time.

“...So pushing off from the dock that day was as a huge statement of independence, fortitude and collaboration with many very dedicated, very loving friends who saw this as their mission as well.

As I pushed away from the safety of the dock, the fear, anxiousness and welling up feelings of being overwhelmed by the demands of life were quickly and joyously supplanted by the exhilaration of a leap of faith into freedom. A freedom from the doctors, medications, and limitations, along with the freedom from debilitating fatigue of years of illness, dis-ease. A leap into that Celtic tradition Rick Bellows so aptly describes in his book, *Peace That Passes Understanding – Hope and Healing For Anxious Times*: ‘The Thin Place. In Celtic Spirituality, a thin place is where the barrier between heaven and earth is thin. The term describes naturally mystical places where people tend to sense the presence of God...’ Sailing. Sailing is for me a thin place. This boat, my friends and I found, is especially set up and rigged for singlehanded sailing. With further help we reworked the rigging a little to be even more accommodating for my breathing disabilities and exertion limitations.

Now I just need to take my time, be deliberate; proceed with caution and sail away, resting in God. Discerning my direction and tack comes with contemplation and prayer. Being rooted in daily, Morning Prayer, focusing on scriptural insight, while still being engaged with the tasks of each day is a lifestyle here at St. Francis House that enables me to follow my rule and live my life with anticipation.”



Gratitude and Humility The Life and Many Contributions of

From 2001 to 2011 Paul was director of the Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, the primary food bank in New London County. He has served on the Advisory Board for FRESH New London, on the New London County Food Policy Council and advisor to the Food Hub Development Task Force. His passion was "food for love not for profit."

From his lead article "Food" in the Christmastide Troubadour in 2011:

"The opportunity for value added industry is waiting for young entrepreneurial spirits to create new products utilizing the locally produced food. This will create more jobs and contribute to making the community self-reliant. While we bemoan the practices and ethics of large transnational corporations, the best antidote is self-reliance. We need to support and inspire community members to become empowered with the "can-do" values of a vibrant local community, where making a "fast buck" is discouraged, and people invest for long-term community gain. We will teach and mentor those willing to work for higher values in a cooperative manner that underscores the sacred respect for creation. To respect creation is to commit to knowing what our money is supporting. Whenever we spend, even a penny, we are investing in that product or service. By investing in a product or service we are accountable for the outcomes of that investment. If we buy products made by industrial polluting processors, we are supporting them. If we buy local farm products, we are supporting the health and well-being of our community. If we buy products made by indentured servants, slaves or laborers in abusive situations, we are accountable for injustice..."



Top left: Paul enjoys a cup of tea in his "Thin Place" mug.

Left: *Thin Place* moored on the Thames River in New London.

Right: Paul and Anne hold Sarah's painting "St. Francis Comes to New London" in front of the Wyland whale mural on Eugene O'Neil Drive depicted in the painting (mural issue of the *Troubadour*, Francistide 2013).

Below: Paul meditating in front of the fountain and Sarah Jarrett's mural of Blake's *Job's Daughters* in the butterfly garden which he and Wendy developed on the east side of St. Francis House.



Excerpt from The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s **Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam** delivered at Riverside Church, New York City on April 4, 1967:

I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. When machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth. With righteous indignation, it will look across the seas and see individual capitalists of the West investing huge sums of money in Asia, Africa, and South America, only to take the profits out with no concern for the social betterment of the countries, and say: "This is not just." It will look at our alliance with the landed gentry of Latin America and say: "This is not just." The Western arrogance of feeling that it has everything to teach others and nothing to learn from them is not just. A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: "This way of settling differences is not just." This business of burning human beings with napalm, of filling our nation's homes with orphans and widows, or injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of people normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields, physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, and love. A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.

"Fourteen Steps Forward Together"

by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II
with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

from *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*, Beacon Press, Boston (2016).

Note: The book tells the story of Rev. Barber's life and work leading up to and beginning the development of Moral Mondays and the foundations of a renewed justice movement across racial and class and issue lines. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is a founder of Rutba House in Durham and is part of the New Monasticism movement. Both of them live and work in North Carolina. In 2014 Repairers of the Breach was started to share the lessons learned from this local and statewide organizing with leaders from other state-based coalitions. The following steps provide a framework for that work:

1. Engage in indigenously led grassroots organizing across the state. There is no end run around the relational work of building trust and empowering local people. Crises will bring out crowds and draw attention, but a sustained movement depends on local people who know one another and are committed to working together for the long haul. "Helicopter" leadership by "national leaders" will not sustain a moral movement. Equip and resource small groups of people who will meet regularly in their home communities to talk about the coalition's concerns.

2. Use moral language to frame and critique public policy, regardless of who is in power. A moral movement claims higher ground in partisan debate by returning public discourse to our deepest moral and constitutional values. Any moral movement must study Scripture and sacred texts as well as state constitutions. We cannot allow so-called conservatives to hijack the powerful language of faith; neither can we let so-called liberals pretend that moral convictions are not at play in public policy debates. Every budget is a moral document—or it is an immoral one. We must reclaim moral language in the public square.

3. Demonstrate a commitment to civil disobedience that follows the steps of nonviolent action and is designed to change the public conversation and consciousness. A moral movement draws power not from its ability to overwhelm opposition but from its willingness to suffer. The Second Reconstruction brought large-scale nonviolent direct action to America through the Montgomery bus boycott. A Third Reconstruction depends upon escalating non-cooperation in order to demonstrate our capacity to sacrifice for a better future.



April 4, 2017 St. Francis House witness at Soldiers and Sailors Monument, New London

4. Build a stage from which to lift the voices of everyday people impacted by immoral policies. A moral movement must put human faces on injustice and amplify the voice of the voiceless. We do not speak for those who can speak for themselves. We do not create a platform for politicians to speak for those who can speak for themselves. Directly affected people are the best moral witnesses. Our movement exists to let their voices be heard.

5. Recognize the centrality of race. America's First and Second Reconstructions sought to heal the wound of race-based slavery, America's original sin. Our Third Reconstruction must likewise be decidedly antiracist. Some will ask, Is the real issue today race or is it class? We answer: Yes, it's race and class. Our class divisions cannot be understood apart from a society built on white supremacy. Our moral movement must be committed to the long-term work of racial equity.

6. Build a broad, diverse coalition including moral and religious leaders of all faiths. All faith traditions are not the same, but the common ground among faiths is a firm foundation upon which to stand against the divide-and-conquer strategies of extremists. We must be intentional about reaching out to marginalized groups in our states. Though they are a minority in this country, our Muslim sisters and brothers are essential to the Third Reconstruction.

7. Intentionally diversify the movement with the goal of winning unlikely allies. Often the groups most impacted by injustice have been convinced that they are enemies. Fusion politics is about helping those who have suffered injustice and have been divided by extremism to see what we have in common. We do this by bringing people together across dividing lines and helping them hear one another. We have no permanent enemies, only permanent issues, rooted in our deepest moral and constitutional values.

8. Build transformative, long-term coalition relationships rooted in a clear agenda that doesn't measure success only by electoral outcomes. We must be clear: Fusion coalitions are not about simple transactions where I support your issue if you support mine. We must learn how our issues intersect in a comprehensive moral agenda that demands transformation of everyone—not least, of us.

9. Make a serious commitment to academic and empirical analysis of policy. Nothing is worse than being loud and wrong. Our coalitions must include activist scholars and we must commit ourselves to a serious consideration of data. Moral issues are

not impractical. They can be translated into policy that is sustainable and that produces measurable positive outcomes.

10. Coordinate use of all forms of social media: video, text, Twitter, Facebook, and so forth. Mainstream media outlets are often unable to tell a story that doesn't fit within the established narrative. We must tell our own story. Social media afford us multiple outlets for the consciousness-raising that movements have always depended upon. Use them all.

11. Engage in voter registration and education. The political power of fusion coalitions is based upon a diversified electorate that recognizes common interests. Extremists understand this. They have invested heavily in restricting voting rights and dividing potential allies. We must engage voters in each election, educating them about how candidates have voted or committed to vote on issues that are part of our shared moral agenda.

12. Pursue a strong legal strategy. A moral movement rooted in constitutional values needs a strong legal team and a commitment to mobilizing in the courtroom. The future we imagine and embody in the streets must be established in our statehouses and affirmed by our courts. We cannot neglect this key piece of our common life.

13. Engage the cultural arts. A moral movement is only as strong as the songs we sing together. Study the history of cultural arts in freedom movements and bring music, the spoken word, storytelling, and visual arts into your organizing. Make sure the images in your art and actions convey the same message you are proclaiming with words. Speak the truth, sing the truth, and use art to help people imagine the future they cannot yet see.

14. Resist the "one moment" mentality; we are building a movement! No one victory will usher in beloved community; no single setback can stop us. We are building up a new world, moving forward together toward freedom and justice for all.

To learn more about training for moral fusion organizing, visit the [Repairers of the Breach website](http://www.breachrepairers.org/)
<http://www.breachrepairers.org/>

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The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Appendix for Organizers, "Fourteen Steps Forward Together," The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement*

Center Section: Celebrating the Life & Work of Paul Jakoboski, TSSF

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