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SFFS Talk
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Key Concepts of Nonviolent Direct Action

Bruce: I was active in the Selma campaign, voter registration, Grenada, Mississippi, the Meredith march…And the truth is I got arrested a lot—quite a lot—and so you're talking here to a jailbird—the worst sort. One of the things I need to just ask you right now is…um…See, I grew up in what we used to call the wrong side of the tracks. And I used to work on the docks as a long shoreman. I worked with the marines and the fact is that my normal talking—I tend to use certain kinds of language that you're not supposed to use in the polite company. And this is just the normal way I talk. It's not—you know, it's not to like, insult, but—if, I just want to say that so if I slip up, you know, and a "shit" comes out or a "fuck" comes out—why it ain't, you know…it's just—it's just the way I was brought up, and you know, I apologize to offend somebody in advance, but I'll try and keep it decent, but once I get rolling, I may not be able to remember that. Anyway, uh…I was assigned the topic of nonviolent resistance. There is no way I can teach nonviolent resistance in one session—even if the session was all day. So what I'm gonna try and do is go over just a few key words and key concepts which I've listed up there on that board. And frankly, I doubt we'll even get through all of those. We're not going to do a workshop here so if you've got questions or comments or want to say something, you know, raise your hand or you know—indicate that and we'll just do that as—as it goes along. Now, they told me this was a freedom school, so since this is a school we're gonna start off with a pop quiz. And the pop quiz is, who can tell me what these six words mean and why they're up there on the board? Can anyone do that? Can anyone tell me what these three words on the left are? Countries—right… Georgia the nation—not Georgia the state is what I'm referring…Georgia, Lebanon,

Ukraine. Now why up these up here? Anyone know? In the last year, in the *last* year…each of those three countries had a nonviolent revolution that overthrew a dictatorial police-state government that ruled through violence, terror, arrests, brutality, murdering people. Each of those countries had a nonviolent revolution that overthrew the government. The reason you have the word orange here is that in the Ukraine—one of their tactics was they adopted the color orange as the symbol of their nonviolent revolution, and people started wearing orange, started carrying orange flags, started using orange as the symbol, and so it became known as the "orange revolution." In Georgia, they really got rolling at the funeral of someone who had been murdered because they spoke out against the dictator. And so at that funeral they carried roses to put on the grave or the memorial. And then later, whenever they had demonstrations, they would carry these roses because it's obvious to anyone that someone carrying a rose is not about to start a fight—is not carrying a gun—can not be accused of, you know, threatening the life of the poor helpless policeman. Uh, so it became called the "Rose Revolution." Now, by this time the media was used to giving nicknames to—to it…so when Lebanon happened, they didn't know what to say—so, but the symbol of Lebanon is the cedar tree, just like the symbol of America is the eagle. So the press just said, "Okay, we're gonna call this the cedar revolution" and that's what they did. Um—the reason I'm saying this or telling you about this is that…is to make the point that nonviolent resistance is something that is active and powerful today. It's not something just happened back in the past with Gandhi or the civil rights movement. Also I'll point out that the reason none of you knew—didn't really know how to answer my pop quiz is that the media we have in this country—they focus on really important issues like what—uh…Michael Jackson's maid found in the garbage and Paris Hilton's newest boyfriend…and the murder trial of somebody…see that's the important stuff. The fact that people nonviolently rose up and overthrew a dictator—well that, you know, that's page 10—if that. So

don’t feel bad that you didn’t know the answer, but do feel that you gotta start paying attention to what’s happening—little tiny little articles, little stuff—this is where the real news is—not the stuff, you know, that they lead with as what’s important. Now, you notice, I said the topic here is nonviolent resistance. The reas—and I’m sayin’ that—I’m, all my life I’ve been talking about nonviolence. The word nonviolence—it sucks. What nonviolence the term is—is that it—it defines it negatively. It says what it is not. But it doesn’t say what it is. So now I am trying to train myself to always say nonviolent resistance, because, see—somebody who does nothing, somebody who doesn’t hurt anybody, doesn’t commit any violence against anything, well that’s not nonviolent resistance. That’s being docile. Nonviolent resistance is active resistance against injustice and oppression. Nonviolent resistance is active resistance and—and struggle for justice and peace and opportunity. So “active” is the key word. Resistance has the word—gives a sense of “active”, doing something. So most people when they hear nonviolence—to them it just means well you don’t do anything, but that’s not what it is. Now, Gandhi had this term, which I’m no doubt mispronouncing, “satyagraha”, which in Hindu could be translated as the power of truth or soul force or something like that. He had an active word, but nobody knows that word here in the States so—so we’re trying to use nonviolent resistance. Again, the point is doing something. We used to have a slogan: Where the broom don’t sweep, the dirt don’t move. Who can tell me what that slogan means? That’s right. Where the broom don’t sweep, the dirt don’t move... If you want something changed, you gotta do it yourself. You gotta take some action to do it yourself. Now, one of the problems we face is that western culture, our culture, so emphasizes violence that most people assume that to take action against or for something, you have to be violent. And that if there is no violence, then there is no action, but obviously that is not the case. That’s why we have nonviolent resistance. Now—so that’s the introduction. Now let’s get down to the [shit]. The foundation of

nonviolent resistance is courage. It is the duty of a nonviolent resister to actively resist and to actively resist against oppression and injustice requires courage. Now, in our society, every day in movies, t.v., newspapers, radio, music—oh, let me—let me go back…what is courage? Somebody define courage for me…somebody. I think the key point is…it's not the absence of fear. It's doing what you need to do even though you are scared. Now in all of our culture in our media we're constantly presented with images of courage, and those images all imply that the brave hero or heroine has no fear. They're blazing away with their guns—they ain't scared. They're driving their cars over cliffs—they ain't scared. They're doing all this heroic stuff. They don't seem to be bothered by it at all. They just have a grin on their face and they're "Oh, Hey, you know, it's me against 200 guerillas. What the hell! You know?" But that ain't the way real life is. In real life courage is doing what you have to do no matter how scared you really are. Without fear, there can be no courage. If you ain't scared, you can't show courage. And the reason I want to emphasize that is even in movies like this—and in other things—reading today in the textbooks—you would think that all of us in the civil rights movement—we weren't afraid of nothing. Uh uh…WE WERE *ALWAYS* SCARED. In fact, one time—one time I was so scared in Mississippi on the Meredith march that I could not piss for three days. Uh—we had medics along. I went and said "Look, gimme a pill I ain't pissed in three days." He says "Ah, don't worry about it. You'll piss when you gotta piss." I was so scared I could not piss for three days. Now, the purpose of those nonviolent training sessions that you saw in the movie that I used to run was not to make us fearless—that's impossible because if there's danger you're gonna be scared—but to give us the tools, the mental tools, to keep on going despite the fear. One of them was when you're confronting up against the police or the Klan or whomever and you're really scared, you put your hands behind your back and you grab your wrists like this—so you're like this, and that way they can't see your

hands shaking, um—and that way also, you're clearly not gonna be, you know—they can't say well he raised his hands and hit me! You know—this, this dumb person! So another tool we used was the songs. They didn't show that very much in Nashville because actually in Nashville—was just the movement getting started and they hadn't begun to use the singing. It was in Nashville that they first started using songs which unfortunately they didn't show. But Bernard and some of the others were—and Diane—were major song leaders. They wrote songs. The songs helped to get us through the fear. Now, I'm gonna spend a fair amount of time on this courage issue because to me it's the single most important thing to come away from this conference. In our society the images we see of courage—nine times out of ten—is an image of a man with a gun. Courage is a man with a gun—they say. But that is not true. You don't need to have a gun to be brave. We—we had no guns. We—we were not armed. And you don't have to be a man. I've been all—I was active in the movement. I was in Vietnam. I've been to Afghanistan. I've been to a lot of places I probably shouldn't even talk about. And I've met a lot of courageous people. But the bravest person I ever met…was a 15 year old black girl in Selma, Alabama. And I want to tell you her story.

[Mary Hamilton Court Case]

If you were white, you were always addressed as Mr. and Miss. If you were not white, if you were Asian, or Latino, or Black, or Indian, they never used Mr. and Miss. So when the prosecutor asked her to plea, he said, "Mary, what's your plea?" She said "I will not answer any questions unless you address me as Miss Mary Hamilton." And they refused to do that and they charged her with contempt of court, threw her in jail, and it took us a month to get her out. They abused her. They beat her. But her case went all the way to the Supreme Court. And it sometimes is referred to as the Mary Hamilton Case, sometimes as the Miss Mary Case. It's studied in law schools to this day because the Supreme Court ruled that failure to address every single person by an honorable name was grounds

for a mistrial. So now if you look at “Law and Order” on the T.V. or if you ever get arrested yourself, you’ll see that they’re very careful to always address you as Mrs., Miss, Mr. because if they don’t, because of Mary Hamilton, they’ll lose the case. So that was—but again, that was one of hundreds. Alright, let me go back—let’s talk now about—there are two kinds of courage. The first kind is physical courage, and that’s the kind of courage that Diane Richards has—the courage to stand up to violence and jail. Now for the political situation we have today, that may not be as relevant as it used to be. Although there’s still some police violence on demonstrations—you know, they were shooting at people with rubber bullets over in Oakland last year—you know, cause of an anti-Iraq. And another place where you might run into issues of physical violence is that the state police have become sophisticated enough to send in provocateurs to pretend to be fellow demonstrators and then they go and break windows and make it look like the demonstrators are being violent so if you’re going to organize a nonviolent demonstration, you may have to physically confront the paid provocateur who will of course try and use violence on you, but mostly what is needed today is the other kind of courage, which is moral courage. And moral courage in many ways is much tougher. Moral courage means the courage to stand against your family, your friends, your society, and to refuse to conform to the social norms of the day, to refuse to go along with what everyone else is doing. You know how hard it is, how much courage it takes to not go along with what everyone else is doing—to participate in a demonstration for an unpopular cause, to be in a group listening to music and hear some rap lyrics that you feel are misogynist and brutalize women and to say something about it. Or somebody in your group, you’re with your friends, and somebody starts off a joke “Two fags come into a bar…” Now sometimes jokes about an ethnic group or something, you know they’re just harmless jokes. They’re funny, you know, and not every joke that starts that way is something you want to resist, but you know this guy, and you know he’s going to tell this

joke as a way of dehumanizing and disrespecting and denigrating people because of their sexual orientation. What do you do? What do you do? You're in your group—"Two fags come into a bar…" What do you do? This is not—you know, some people say, "Well, gee, I really didn't like the joke so I frowned and I refused to laugh." Well, alright, that's something, but it takes a lot more courage to stop the guy and say, "Hey Joe, I don't want to hear those jokes. If you want to tell those jokes either you leave or I'll leave" or whatever you're going to do. But in your social group that takes moral courage. That moral courage is really harder. If you were to take a random survey of a hundred people, just picked at random, the percentage of people who would be willing to risk danger, physical danger for their beliefs, is greater, much greater, than the percentage of people who will take a stand against their family and their community on an issue of principle. And this is not so dramatic as the kind of courage that we saw in the movie where—how do I be brave enough to—so if somebody hits me I- I'm nonviolent or even to put myself into that position, but today in a society where the manufacture of consent through the media is the main tool of oppression and the main tool of political control the courage we need today more than anything is the courage to say "NO, I will not go along with this." "No, I do not agree with this." "No, you will not tell a fag joke in my presence without me saying something about it. And if we gotta get into an argument about it, we get into an argument…" If you all get all my friends to laugh at me—you know, how many of us here—you're in a group and you say," Gee if I do that they're all going to laugh at me." Well, that takes courage. You know it really does. Nobody likes to be laughed at. I know it sounds silly compared to the Diane Richard's story but it's where we're at now. Now, let me roll along here and go on to two NVR, which means two kinds of nonviolent resistance. Back in the day, we used to talk about two kinds of nonviolence, philosophic nonviolence and tactical nonviolence. Today I think the terms are principled nonviolence and strategic nonviolence. I'll

use what I grew up with which was philosophical vs. tactical. Now, it's really not true that there are two kinds of nonviolence. What it is is there are two kinds of people who practice nonviolence. The actual nonviolence that you do is pretty much the same whether you're philosophical or tactical. But philosophical nonviolent people and tactical nonviolent people come at using nonviolent resistance from two different places. Now in the movie you saw, all of the people who were spokespeople were adherents to philosophical nonviolence: Diane Bernard, John Lewis, whom I assume you know is now congressman John Lewis, Reverend…, they all—they are all adherents to philosophical nonviolence. Philosophical nonviolence is nonviolence as a way of life—nonviolence in everything you do in every aspect of your life. Gandhi was philosophically nonviolent. Dr. King was philosophically nonviolent. For a philosophically nonviolent person, they would say that the foundation is organized love. Love your enemy. Win your opponents over by an appeal to the heart. Through our redemptive suffering, we win over our opponents. And Bernard basically put forward that view. And this is the view that is put forward in most of the media, in the school books. Most images you see today will be of philosophic nonviolence. And if you see a leaflet or something saying nonviolent training session, odds are it will be in philosophic nonviolence, but, only a small portion of the people active in the civil rights movement were philosophically nonviolent. Most of us were tactically nonviolent. I was an adherent, and I did trainings. I did from a point of view of tactical nonviolence. For tactical nonviolence, you don't need to love your enemies. That's not required. And I guarantee you, that most of us, when we were standing face to face with the Klan and the Posse in Selma singing "We love everybody!,"—did not love them. We were lying. That's the truth of it. That whereas the philosophic nonviolent person hopes and intends to win over the hearts of those of the adversaries, the tactical nonviolent person—our goal is to create a political dynamic that will win whatever it is we wanted to win—that we were tactically

nonviolent in order to win something—to win a voting rights act, to win a Civil Rights Act of '64, to win a school desegregation, and we used…

Kathy Emery: To win over the rest of the community. I mean one of the things that impressed me about the documentary this morning was that when the students who were not really from Nashville, right—they had come to Nashville to attend the university, but what they did is that they got the community by their actions, by their tactical nonviolent actions, that they aroused or stimulated the Black community in Nashville to join them—

Bruce Hart.: And the national media and the country as a whole.

Kathy Emery: And we saw another documentary earlier, and I think it was the confrontation with Jim Clark […] Lee? Leigh? And he was explaining, when he was analyzing later on about his confrontation with Jim Clark is that it was at the point when Clark started to poke him and to push him—he said that's when he knew was beginning to succeed. He said you don't walk away from that. That's the point where you get a reaction and it's the reaction that then makes them hang themselves sort of and gets other people to say "Oh! Well, this is outrageous what Jim Clark's doing to these people who are just standing there." And "That's outrageous", and it sort of exposes the system for what it really is, and to me, you know, that to me is something relevant to today—that one of the things that we have to do—and I like what you said about the media being a major force of oppression today, you know, somehow we've got to provoke, you know, a reaction in order to get other people to sort of wake up. It seems to me anyway. That's what I'm thinking.

Bruce Hart: Yes, although—today when you look, people assume that the civil rights movement was covered by the media as the major story, and it was in the later years, but in the first few years, you know, it's like they said in the movie, "Oh, it was on page 10, if that…" And for several years up until really Birmingham, there was very little coverage, but—

Sherri: But there was in the Black newspapers.

Bruce Hart: Yes, in the Chicago Defender, you know Jet, Ebony…there was a lot of that.

Sherri: But you're right in terms of the national media to reach…

Bruce Hart: So, we adopted nonviolent resistance as the tactic because that was the tactic that could win, the only tactic that could win because the power structure, the people we were going against, they are prepared for violence. They are organized, equipped, trained for violence. Violence is their game, on their field, with their rules, with their equipment. And it's stacked against you. It's their strength. It's our weakness. We could never "outviolence" them. America is the premiere par excellence of violence. So you can not win [throwing?] your weakness against their strength. But tactical nonviolent resistance plays to our strengths against their weaknesses. As I said, I used to be a longshoreman, and there was a time, when I was a kid, but in my parents' generation, when the longshores were on strike, and the president threatened to call out the National Guard to break the strike. And Harry Bridges, the leader of the longshoremen's union, he said "Well, you can't load ships with bayonets." And that's true. Yes, they could call out the National Guard but it wasn't going to get those ships loaded and unloaded. So, the power—now, one other thing, you start talking about nonviolence to people and they will almost immediately come up to you with: "Well! If you tried nonviolence against Hitler, what would have happened!?" Well, actually in the movie, in one of the parts of the movie they didn't show, they actually show where some people did try some nonviolence against Hitler with some success, but there point is that…yeah, if nonviolence is a tactic, there may be tactical situations where it ain't going to work, so what? We ain't fighting Hitler. We're fighting Bush and Iraq War and economic policies here in the states. That's what we're talking about. So, when you get hit with the question, "Well, you're not violent, what if you had a chance to kill Hitler and save 600 million people, would you do it?" You don't have to defend

that position. It depends on the tactical situation. We're talking about what we're talking about here. And here and now, the three main bases for political power—political power for social change—it rests on three main types of power: violence power, which also includes the power to arrest and imprison, money power, and people power. And these three kinds of power are very interrelated. If you have violence power, you can coerce people into doing what you want, or you can seize their money—Texas, for example. If you have money power, you can buy people's opinion through PR campaigns or just paying them. And you can hire violence. John D. Rockefeller once said, when there was a big strike going on against him in Ludlow, Colorado, he said I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other if I need to. People power can raise money and resist violence. So these three kinds of power are all interrelated. The reality, though is, that for us, the only power we have access to is people power. We don't have violence power. They have all the violence power. We don't have money power. If we had money power, we wouldn't be in this room. We'd be […] somewhere. So the purpose of tactical nonviolent resistance is to mobilize people power through direct action. Direct action is a key concept of nonviolent resistance because a court case is not violent. The lawsuits that resulted in Brown vs. the Board of Education to desegregate the schools was not a violent act, and in a sense could be considered a type of nonviolence. But tactical nonviolent resistance relies on direct action. And there are different kinds of direct action. There's protest, picket lines, marches, rallies. There's civil disobedience, just—I ain't gonna obey that law. You saw in the movie, civil disobedience, violating the law by sitting at the lunch counters. Now they said in the movie that they had not broken any law. I think that's a mistake. Most southern cities and towns actually had laws that it is illegal for black people to ride the front of the bus or sit at the lunch counters. Now we have some of those laws for Birmingham on our web site if you want to look them up. They're like—you know, it blows your mind. In South

Africa, they had a law that all people of color had to carry a passbook, an ID thing. And in the nonviolent resistance, they burned their passbooks. Back in a certain time period, certain people associated with me, burned their draft cards, which was illegal, a felony—it said so right there "You destroy this card, you go to jail." Another kind of direct action is noncooperation. See, the power of the ruler depends on our consent. If we withdraw consent in an organized way, their power crumbles. That's how these resolutions were accomplished. Refuse to obey their orders. Refuse to pay your taxes. Refuse to register to the draft. In Montgomery, after they arrested Rosa Parks, people refused to ride the buses until the buses were desegregated. Noncooperation. Economic boycotts is another form of direct action which they referred to in the [movie]. Economic boycotts were used throughout all of the nonviolent resistance. Strikes and hartals—now you all know what a strike is, I assume—a hartal is sort of the opposite side, which we don't see very much in this country. But a hartal is where businesses refuse to open. They just don't open their shops. India used hartals a lot. In South Africa they used hartals. In some of these countries there were hartals.

Audience: But that's—that's the cooperation, that's the counter thing isn't it?

Bruce H. That's noncooperation economically.

Audience: But at least in Germany, that's being used by the corporations to punish the unions because they basically then—

Bruce H. Okay, that's a lockout.

Audience: Oh, okay. That's different.

Bruce H.: And a lockout is where management says we want to break the union so we'll lock the gates, but very often—and it might be a hartal in one sense—but very often, they say we lock out the union and we bring in scabs to replace them and therefore we stay in business. But a hartal is a political closing down of the economy for a limited time as an expression of resistance. So, and then depending on the situation, if you're in a really oppressive situation like South Africa, or Nazi Germany, or Mission High

School, you can—you find some form of symbolic defiance, wearing a union pin if it's a labor issue, a color day, "To show our opposition, tomorrow we're all wearing something orange—orange scarves, orange pins, orange socks, whatever." In Chile, which is also in this movie in another section which we didn't see, the first mass demonstration against the Pinochet dictatorship was they called on the women that at a certain time at 6 or 9, as soon as the sun went down, all the women went out into the streets of Santiago or Valparaiso, and banged pots. Bang! Bang! Bang! Spoons against pots. Well, what the fuck is this? You're going to bring down the Pinochet military dictatorship that slaughtered thousands of people by a bunch of women banging on pots. Yes. Yes. Yes, because it was symbolic defiance that what you saw when everybody showed up wearing orange, all the women were out in the streets banging on their pots, it said we are united, we are not alone. Because one of the dynamics of oppression is that they make you feel singled out, that it is little teeny, teeny, teeny little you against huge big oppression. And it's just you, against them, and they make you feel that way, but when you see everybody else wearing orange or banging pots, you realize, yeah, we're a bunch a teeny little fish, but there are a lot of us. And then we used to have this cartoon, where, in two panels, there was one panel where this big mean fish chasing—gonna eat a little fish. And then the next panel, there were hundreds and hundreds of the little fish, arranged like big teeth to go attack the big fish. So that is—that's mobilizing people power. Now another kind of nonviolent direct action is speaking truth to power. Simply, simply publicly saying the truth is a way of confronting power. The anti-Vietnam War movement in this country really took off with what were called "teach-ins", and they started over at Cal, where for all day, people, there were just discussions and panels and presentations about the truth about the war. In the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, the first undermining of those communist regimes were what was called [….], which were flyers that were sent around by fax machines simply telling

the truth. Speaking truth to power is a powerful weapon of nonviolent direct action. But it takes courage. It takes moral courage. And in some cases, if it's a police state, it takes physical courage and if it's Mission High School, it takes willing to—you might end up getting expelled, so it takes courage. Now, before I finish this part, I just want to say one other thing, if you get involved in nonviolent resistance, there's gonna come a point where you become totally, you become very frustrated and despairing because nothing is changing…we're doing all this, we're marching, we're going to jail, nobody is showing up…nothing is changing…it's all hopeless…

Kathy: Yes…yes…I feel that way…

Audience: laughs

Bruce H.: Yes, yes, alright. I have to explain to you now the rubber band theory of history and social change. There is a natural human assumption that social change is like—uh, building a brick wall or something, you put in a day's labor, the bricks are a little bit higher, you put in another day's labor, the bricks are a little higher, and each day, each month, you see the fruits of your labor, the movement is stronger, but social change, social movements don't work that way. If you're fighting, for example to go from $5 minimum wage to $10 wage, you're organizing a union, you're doing social protest to raise the minimum wage, it doesn't happen that after a month the wage goes from $5 to $6 and after another month up to $7 and after another month—that ain't the way it happens. What really happens in social change, it's like, imagine you a have big block of wood sitting on a table, and attached to that block of wood is a long rubber band. And you want to pull that block of wood to you by pulling on the rubber band. Well, what happens? You start pulling on the rubber band, but the rubber band just stretches, the block don't move. You pull the rubber band some more, the rubber band stretches, but the block ain't moved an inch. It ain't like it moved part of the way to you. It is still there. And you keep pulling, and you keep pulling until one moment, and you don't know when that

moment is gonna be, suddenly the block moves, and it moves so damn fast that it slaps you into the hand. And sometimes that happens in social revolutions. Now, the problem is, when you're in the pulling of the rubber band stage, you don't see the block moving cause it ain't moving. And you could try to build a mass movement and you say, "Okay, well, here…we got, what, about 20 people here? This is our mass movement…okay. We're gonna work hard and we're gonna put in some sweat and tears. And two months from now, why, it'll be 40 people. And two months after that, there'll be a 100 people." Usually don't work that way. Usually after a month's work, this 20 group goes to 25. After another month's work, maybe 30. But at some point, if conditions are ripe, then, it's going to go up like that. Just as we showed in the movie, after the bombing of [Lubey's??] house, well first—after the first arrest, and then second after the Lubey, things went up. Now the problem is, that when you're in that pulling the rubber band stage, it don't mean that it's always going to work. Sometimes you pull on that rubber band forever, until you give up and the block never moves and there is no way to know while you're pulling on that rubber band if it's ever gonna move. And that is why social activists have to have a high tolerance for frustration and a lot of "stick-to-it-ivity" and a lot—you know, uh—Bush uses this faith—he's like faith-based this and that…Faith-based corporate greed or whatever he calls it…The civil rights movement was a faith-based movement, any social change movement is a faith-based movement cause you have to have the faith that the work you put in will eventually show fruit even though you know that it might not.

In nonviolent resistance, generally speaking, the major leadership has to come from women. Now let me first draw a distinction. Let me analyze this in relationship to two different kinds of leadership. First of all is what we call visible leadership. This is what normally most people think about leadership—the person who holds the office, the president, the chair, the

minister, the whatever, the person who is, the public spokesperson, gives the speeches, does the media interview, the person who leads the demonstrations, the person whose the media darling. They're the ones the media wants. Those are all kinds of visible leadership. People say, "Oh, that's the leader! I can see that right there." In the civil rights movement, there were many women who were visible leadership. They may not be mentioned in very much any more in the textbooks and in the media. Women like Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, who you saw in the movie—and by the way I saw Diane last March. She is still giving nonviolent workshops. She is still engaged in social struggle. Gloria Richardson, who led the huge Cambridge movement. Dorothy Cotton. There were more women than you would imagine from what you hear today. Invisible leadership in the civil rights movement, and not just the American Civil Rights movement. I'm sure everyone of you know who Gandhi is. How many of you know who [Sarajeni Nidou???]? How many know that name? Gandhi was the main leader of the Indian nonviolent resistance. She was the number two leader. She was the one who led the demonstrations when Gandhi was in jail. Some of you may have—had the opportunity to see this movie called Gandhi. It's very long movie. It's too long to show here. Terrific movie. Wonderful movie. There's a scene in this movie where Gandhi is leading the Salt March and he's leading this whole column of people, and they come to a juncture in the road, and another column of people merge in. That column was led by [Sarajeni Nidou?]. In the Indian struggle, the climactic battle, if you use the word battle for a nonviolent struggle, was the struggle at the Dharasana Saltworks where thousands of people were beatened and arrested. Gandhi was going to lead that but they threw him in jail the night before, so it was [Sarajeni Nidou?] who led—that was the Gettysburg, the Bunker Hill, of the Indian nonviolent resistance. Today there is a woman named Aung San Suu Kyi who is the leader of the Burma nonviolent movement against the Burma dictatorship, and every once in a while if you read the back pages of the newspaper,

you'll see a little article "Aung San Suu Kyi Thrown in Jail Again." She was in jail when she was given the Nobel Prize. "Aung San Suu Kyi Released From Jail" because tens of thousands of Burmese are in the streets or closing down their businesses. She is a major leader today of a nonviolent resistance movement. But the kind of leadership I really want to talk about is not the visible leadership but the invisible leadership. And this is the leadership from within the movement, from within the community. And women have always taken the lead in nonviolent resistance, particularly in this country. And if you look at the photographs we have on our web site, and if you look at the big, vast marches, you'll usually one or two men at the front of the line and almost all women, or mostly women, or the majority of women following along behind. And one of the reasons that women have to take the lead is because our culture tells men that in order for us to be men, we have to be violent, we have to be macho, and that was true back in the 60s, and it's worse today, with the culture, the gangster wrap: "You want to be a man. You got to have a gun!" "You want to be a man. You gotta beat your hoes!" "You gotta be a man! You gotta do this!" This is what it is to be a man! And what this culture tells us as men—now, as young men of course the main thing we're interested in is young women, and what our culture tells us—if we're not macho, women aren't going to be attracted to us. What our culture tells us is if you go out on a nonviolent demonstration as we saw in the movie and you're sitting at the lunch counter and you're a man like him, and the Klan comes up and pours milk over you and starts slugging you and you don't fight back, you're going to be humiliated in front of all the women who are watching you because you are not a man. You're not defending yourself. And what this leads to, this culturalization that equates manliness with violence, is it leads to bullshit. Because the reality is if you're a man of any color in this society—unless you are powerful and rich—you do violence, it's suicidal. They'll either kill you or put you in prison for the rest of your life. So the culture is saying, "You've got to be

violent to be a Man! If you ain't violent the women won't respect you and you'll be humiliated in front of them. But if you do do violence, we're gonna kill you and throw your ass in jail!" So, what this results in is that a lot of men "front". They take violent poses. They use bullshit rhetoric. They talk "bad". One of the problems we had in the civil rights movement was that there were so many guys who talked all kinds of militance and "badness" but you wouldn't find them on the freedom march. Bullshit rhetoric may make a man feel good, but it doesn't win any victories. One of the things that women have to do to help the men is make it clear that nonviolent resistance is the role of a warrior, and that it's a role that both men and women can play. Our society says that men are warriors. Women are not. It's somewhat breaking down a little bit now, but basically that's western civilization. Well, it's actually eastern civilization too. Women have to say that what they respect is a man who takes a stand with nonviolent resistance and that what they do not respect is bullshit. Women have to help men in this. There were times in Mississippi, I remember, where the movement in Greenwood, Mississippi did not get rolling until the high school girls told the high school boys that they were tired of the bullshit and that if they didn't put their bodies on the line in the demonstrations, they didn't want to have nothing to do with them. And if they weren't willing to do nonviolence, they were traitors. And they flat out told them this. And that's what started the student movement in Greenwood, Mississippi. There's the six girls up in the freedom library above—which was actually the original freedom school back in '62. The other reason that women have to take the lead in nonviolent resistance is that—I don't if it's culture or biology or genetics or whatever, women can use their fact of being women to calm violence. And I think most of the women in this room either have or will some day have a situation where there's two men and the testosterone and you can smell it, and you know, and the women gets in and calms it done. One of the ways in which women can calm things down is that men want to show their violence in

order to impress the girls, but they don't want to endanger—you know, create danger. So if a woman stands in between them, and says "Cool it down"…she can do stuff—you know it's interesting…I don't know if anyone's ever done a study but I've seen it in the streets. There was a big controversy over whether women should be allowed to be police. And the men police said: "Oh these women, they won't whip heads. The criminals will beat them up, rape them, and stomp them to the ground. And whatever, and we'll have to protect them. They can't do their jobs! Blah, Blah, Blah." What I've seen on the street and I will bet you if you look at police departments, the women may not be as physically able to violently overpower the thugs, but they prevent the violence from happening in the first place. And they can make the arrest without whipping heads. If they have to whip heads, I think they'll whip heads, but there's something about…it's a kind of a female power. Now as a man, I don't know much about it. And I really can't—you know, I'm not the person to be lecturing on this cause most men don't understand much about women. You're a mystery to us. But I've seen it in action. And I've seen that women taking the lead from within—not, sometimes that's invisible leadership, but always as the invisible leadership within the demonstration. Comments, questions, disagreements, throw rocks at me? Silence?

Most people don't know it but Harriet Tubman was the first women to lead United States Army Combat Troops in a war. During the Civil War, she was given a unit to lead behind the confederate lines. I don't remember how they got around the rules but they did it. Alright let me go on to—further comments on this?

Sylvia: I'm always sort of like—feeling a little edgy when, when I'm being told that the women have to help the men to be better, but I can see your point. But I'm also thinking that men also have to work on getting rid of the macho bullshit. And it's not just the women who have to tell the men that it doesn't fly.

Bruce H: But it's almost impossible for most—I mean, I'm a great hero. It's easy

for me.

Audience: laughs

Bruce H: But most men have to be told by the women that the women will still respect them.

Sylvia: Alright. We'll work on it.

Bruce H.: Yes. It's a valid point. Yes, it's easy for us to say oh, it's your responsibility. Yes, I'll clean up the kitchen but you gotta tell me. You gotta remind me.

Audience: What about kind of like coming to some sort of middle? You know, where not necessarily you have to be told but after you hear kinds of experiences and thoughts along the same lines then there isn't a sort of dictatorship that's happening...

Bruce H: Well, that's one of the things they said in the movie. We probably won't have much time to go into it is that if you're really going to practice nonviolence resistance, you have to do training. You have to do practices. You have to do discussions. You have to do actual training. And then you have to have discipline. The biggest problem the progressive movements in this country have today is this attitude that everybody should be free to do whatever they want. Well, that may be true in your personal life but on a demonstration, you have to have discipline. And Bernard was saying that. And on demonstration, you need to have some training if you're gonna use this stuff. And that's where this comes in. And yeah, the men have to participate. But, uh—anyway, let me move on to the next point which is permission. And you see I have that red international symbol for "NO". One of the biggest problems we face in our society today is what I call "permissionism"—that everyone feels that they can't do anything unless they get permission first from somebody in authority: "Well, we can't do a march. We have to have a police permit. We can't do this. We'll have to go ask the administrator. I want to do something. I gotta get permission from my peer group, from my friends, from my family. I gotta make sure that it's okay with everybody that they won't laugh at me, that

they won't scorn me or whatever. This is paralysis. Nonviolent resisters do not ask for permission. Nonviolent resisters go ahead, decide what they're gonna do, tell those in authority what they're gonna do, and go ahead and do it, and if they get punished, they get punished. If they get thrown in jail, they get thrown in jail. If they get expelled, they get expelled, but once you start down the road of asking permission, you legitimize the authority you are trying to rebel against, and you give them control over what you can do. There are a couple exceptions. There are some reasonable regulations about using amplified sound or blocking streets on a march. For that it's reasonable to say you gotta get a permit from the cops. Any other kind of demonstration is protected by the First Amendment to the constitution. You want to have a march on the sidewalk obeying the traffic laws, you do not need a permit. You want to put a picket line, you do not need a permit. You want to hold a rally somewhere and get up and start speaking, you do not need a permit. That is the United States Constitution, but they're trying to tell us now, you gotta have a permit. You gotta have the park's permission—the park's commission permission. "Oh, you can't get up in Dolores Park!" Yes, you can! "You can't hold a rally on the steps of Mission High!" Yes, you can, if you're willing to take the consequences, and recognizing that the consequences are illegal against you but that don't matter, they're gonna do what they're gonna do. So there's two kinds of permissions that people feel they have to have—that, that prevent any action. One is permission from those in authority—the police permit, the principal, the boss, whomsoever. The other kind of permission is social permission from the social group, from the community. That people feel well, we have to—I gotta check this out with everybody. Everybody's gotta agree. Everybody's going to say "Yes, you can do this." You have to have a group. You don't do things alone. Nonviolent resisters rarely do anything alone, or if they have to do something alone they're in pretty desperate straits. But this fear that if you don't go to all your friends and get them to buy in, that they'll laugh at

you, that they'll scorn you, that they'll reject you, paralyzes people. So, the slogan we had, which is still valid today, is that it's easier and better to beg for forgiveness afterwards than to try to obtain permission before"wards'—it's better to ask for forgiveness after you did it, than to ask for permission before you do it. That's the slogan. Alright, comments on that?

Sherri: Well it kind of—permission part gets back to your earlier comments about the courage, and so it all works together…I mean that's one of the emphasis…the foundations of what you're talking about—

Bruce H: And that's that moral courage. I mean you're not facing tear gas necessarily or a rifle, although it might be I suppose, but most times it's just the courage to stand against and to say NO. I mean the single most important word in nonviolent resistance is NO. No, I will not do that. No, I will not support your war. No, we will not do this—so, which then brings me to the next thing, which is humor and audacity. Humor is a major, major, nontactic of nonviolent resistance. See, anger, you do anger at someone or at some institution or at some group of people, what you will get back is counteranger, or fear, or hate, or all of that, and that is both from your adversary and all the other people around you. Now one of the differences between philosophic nonviolence and tactical nonviolence is philosophic nonviolence really focuses on trying to win over the adversary, win over the heart of your opponent. Tactical nonviolence much more concerned with—yeah, if you can win over the adversary, great, wonderful—but, most times you can't do that. What you want to win over is the people who are observing, the people who are neither with you nor against you. And these may be the people who are physically present, or they may be the people who are present through whatever gets filtered through the media. Well, anger, rage creates counteranger and fear, which then leads to hate among the observers as well as the adversaries. Today, you go on a demonstration and most of the people are chanting, "Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, Goddamn war has got to go!" And they're

projecting anger, anger, rage, we're furious. Well bystanders mostly get scared by this. You know it's hard—if somebody focuses anger at you, you get a little scared. If a hundred people are focusing anger on you, "You Goddamn whatever you are!!"…then there's even more fear. So fear is not what you want to generate in the people you're trying to win over because that's violence power and we don't got that. They got it plenty. We can't go our little teeny violence power against their huge violence power. We've got to win over the people, and you can not do that by projecting rage and anger at them. And this comes back to that whole bullshit fronting thing where people get up and make these speeches, "I'm so angry! I'm so enraged! Everything is so enraging! I'm furious!" Yeah, well, that's venting. I suppose that's psychologically good for the person who gets to make that speech but it doesn't lead anywhere. Or leads very little; on the other hand, what really undermines authority is humor, particularly ridicule. See, we do not obey those whom we laugh at. We obey those we fear, but we do not obey those whom we laugh at. You hurl anger and rage at someone in authority, they know how to handle that. They're trained. They got into authority because they're skilled at dealing with that. You laugh at them. They don't know what to do. And humor is a way to really appeal and win over all the neutral people who are watching either physically or through the media. Humor—rage, hate, anger, is very tiring—I know most of you've probably been really angry at somebody in a big fight…you're tired, you get tired quick. Humor, humor is fun. Humor doesn't tire you out. You can use humor you know in a demonstration hour after hour. And you'll see that if you look at some of these demonstrations. Some of the caricatures, some of the slogans, some of the songs poking fun at authority, and people like that. And you can do it, and it's not exhausting. And it's fun and people will come back, "Oh, well, that was fun. We laughed at that administration! Let's do it again!" Whereas doing rage, people get scared. Now, directly connected to humor, one of the ways you do humor is through audacity, through breaking the

taboos, generating the reactions “They did WHAT? WHAT!” If you do that with humor, you really have a great effectiveness. The Boston Tea Party—we all know what the Boston Tea Party…they dumped the tea in the harbor. That was audacious. It was humorous. And it was nonviolent. They didn’t shoot anybody, but it sparked the American Revolution. One of the problems of civil rights workers—one of the things we all hate, is that today the civil rights movement is portrayed as something that only happened in Alabama and Mississippi, and only happened for a couple years, and only Dr. King and a few other people was involved in it. In fact, the civil rights movement happened all over the country and it involved hundreds of thousands of people, and the San Francisco Bay area was one of the major centers of the civil rights movement. And most people do not know that, and it’s certainly not taught as far as I know in schools. Well, one of the things that—one of the main targets of the civil rights movement in California, particularly in the Bay Area, is that Lucky Markets which is now, I think, Albertson’s, Lucky Markets and Safeway had a racial policy of only hiring white people except for janitorial. Only white people could work the checkout counter. Only white people could be managers, etc… So C.O.R.E., which is one of the groups I worked with, launched a nonviolent resistance campaign against Lucky Markets and Safeway. We did the normal thing—picketing, asking people to boycott, etc. etc…it was fairly effective, but we wanted to go further, and we knew that humor and audacity were key techniques so we developed the “Shop-In”. Now, what the shop-in was is that we would put up a picket line, and those of us willing to then get arrested—we left the picket line up for long enough so that everybody who was in the store shopping had crossed through the picket line, so they knew about the picket, so then a few of us would filter into the store, get our shopping carts, and we would wonder around, you know, putting things in the shopping cart, getting our food, piling the shopping cart high, filling up the shopping cart, come to the check out counter, wait in line, blah, blah…they used to have baggers

in those days—so you don't see much of that anymore, but they used to have people putting it into the bag for you—and they'd all bag it up, you know, 10 bags all over the place. And they say, "Okay, $22.98." Food was way cheaper back then. You know, you got a whole shopping cart--$22.98." And we'd say, "Oh, okay—Oh! Hey! Is that a picket line outside? Are you guys being picketed for being racists? Well, I don't want to shop here! I change my mind!" And we'd walk out, and leaving the groceries. And the next person would do it—and the next person. And pretty soon huge mounds of bagged groceries were surrounding the checkout counters and the shelves were empty! Later on we started leaving leaflets in the empty shelves just as a matter of consideration for people who might have come in and hadn't understood the picket line they were crossing, and so now the shelf is empty but there's a leaflet explaining why. We did those shop-ins for about two weeks, and Safeway and Lucky signed a consent agreements for equal hiring—humor and audacity. Another target we did—uh, Bank of America and Wells Fargo, but we'll focus on Bank of America. In those days, only white people could work in a bank, no Latinos, no Blacks, no Asians, no American Indians, no nothing, only white people. And back then, a bank clerk job was a fairly good—you know, for somebody who didn't go to college, it was fairly good pay, I mean they're now kind of low paid jobs, but back then, they were good jobs. So, the C.O.R.E. took up the Bank of America hiring issues, and all over the state there were demonstrations against Bank of America. So we did that for awhile, and then we came up with the idea of the "coin-in". See, once you started with the sit-in everything became an "-in"…swim-in, coin-in, pray-in, this-in, that-in…So we had a "coin-in"…So this was before there were ATMS. I know some of you can't conceive of a world in which you actually had to stand in line at a bank to cash a check or get money out. It was primitive, what can I say. So Friday was the day people would get paid. Friday the lines at the bank were always long because people needed to cash their paychecks. So

again, we put up a picket line, made sure that everyone who was in the bank had crossed through the picket line so they know what they were doing, and we would go into the bank and we would stand in line, and finally we'd get up to the front of the line, by this time there's five or ten people in back of you, these lines were really long. And we'd get up to the window and we'd say—and we'd give them a dollar and says, "I'd like change, please." And so he or she would give us—"Oh no, I'm sorry. I meant pennies. I need pennies." So he'd give us a roll of pennies. Break open a roll and start counting them, 1…2…3…4…Oh! There's only 99 here! You count them! And the line would get longer and longer and longer. And the […] was to see how long we could keep that window blocked by doing bank business. And they just drove them crazy—cause what? You're going to arrest me for asking to count the change? What would the charge be? By this time, we were getting, well, it went to our heads, what can I say? Okay, the coin-in is fun, but it's not enough fun. So we opened a little account in the Bank of America, a checking account. And we took some of our picket signs on big long sticks, "Bank of America racist discrimination, Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah…" And on the back, we drew a check form with all the numbers and little shit and made it out as a check to Bruce Hartford, $1, on that account because we had researched that—one of the things you saw in the movie is that you need to do your research—and what we had researched that contrary to popular expectation you can write a check on anything as long as it has the right information. It doesn't have to be one of the little forms they charge you for. So we marched into the bank—they, "Oh you can't picket in here! You can't picket!" We're not picketing. I'm here to cash my check. So, we finally get up to the line, big signs, clack it down. Cash this check. And we had a magic marker and we signed the check. Gave us a dollar and then we'd go into the coin-in. So we did that the first time. And we thought this was really great. Hey, this is fun. Everybody wanted to do this. We said well wait a minute, if they have to take a check written on anything like a

picket sign, then they have to take a check written on anything! So the next week Friday we came in, and we had checks written on a white wall tire, on an old washtub, a wooden crate with a dead chicken inside, I mean any kind of garbage we could think of…And you know, we had this long meeting about what is the moral justification of cashing a dead chicken. And people said well, it symbolizes poverty and discrimination. The truth was we just thought it was funny. I mean, come on, I'll be honest. So we get in there, and we cash our dead chicken. Actually, I'll have to give B of A a little bit of credit. They called us later on, the person who was the accountant, says "Well, we have your canceled picket sign and dead chicken here. You wanna come down and pick it up or should we just send you a receipt? We can't send this through the mail with our normal […] policy?" Oh, we'll come down and pick it up! Somebody still has those and it's got canceled on it…I mean they got rid of the chicken obviously…but anyway, the following week, they arrested us. They came up with some way to arrest us. But through that kind of humor and audacity, we eventually won a consent agreement from Bank of America that said they would stop discriminating in hiring. And we didn't exhaust ourselves. And people came because it was fun, some of them. I mean I was only there for the noble cause, of course. But you know other people came for the fun. That's one of the great advantages. If you do something that's humorous and audacious, you have a better chance of breaking through the media blockade. Although, back then, the media was much more competitive and much less consolidated into a couple—so, it's much harder now to get media, so it's much more important that you come up with audacious and humorous tactics that will attract media attention. And you know they say a lot of times "Oh those people, they're just doing it to get media attention!" Yep…Yep…you get media attention by buying commercials. We don't have your money. We're gonna get media attention anyway we can! What do you expect? So, you know, we just say yeah, of course we're gonna try and get media attention. You think we're

dumb? So, let's see…anything more about humor and audacity. The sit-ins—the original sit-ins. Going in and sitting at the lunch counter breaking a taboo that had generations controlled people's lives. It was audacious. It wasn't necessarily humorous, but it was audacious. It broke the taboo, and this is what's so hard for most people is there's this concept of a paradigm…a paradigm meaning this is the way everything is viewed and it's so deep in you that you don't even realize it's there until somebody sees things in a new way and breaks the paradigm. No, we don't have to obey segregation laws. That broke the paradigm. No, going to jail is not something to be ashamed of if you're going to jail for the freedom movement. That was a tough one. That was a tough one because of all of what going to jail had symbolized and because of the risks, you know…This is—maybe I'll just finish off with this and then take whatever discussion people want.

Kathy: But before you finish up, you'll have to talk about the secret weapon of nonviolence.

Bruce H: Oh, I didn't think we would have time for that so I left it off. Alright, yes, the secret weapon of nonviolence. What was the other one I left off? Discipline and training. Alright, we mentioned that. The secret weapon of nonviolence is singing, songs. First of all, singing is to chanting as an elephant is to a mouse. Singing, you can put enormously more content into singing than into a chant. With a chant you're basically down to about 10 words, 12 whatever…" Ho, Ho! Gotta go!" Whatever…Songs, songs can have lyrics and verses and choruses that can go on endlessly, and you can adapt them, you know. You can make them topical to the moment. In Selma, there was a time when we marched out of Brown Chapel, and they had drawn a rope across the street saying you cannot march pass this rope, and immediately somebody adopted a popular rock'n'roll tune to a song we called the "Berlin Wall", "We got a rope in Selma called the Berlin Wall." Just immediately. Second thing about singing is—chanting, most people unless they're trained vocalists can chant for maybe 5 minutes, at

which point their voice is shot. Singing, you can sing for hours. Singing, you can carry on for hours. One of the problems with the social movements that came after the civil rights movement is that ideology was communicated within the movement with position papers and seminars and manifestos and shit like that…long stuff to read, which nobody read. And if they did read it, they didn't understand it. Even the person who wrote it probably didn't understand it. In the civil rights movement, the ideology, the content of the movement was communicated through the lyrics of the song: "Black and white together", "We are not afraid", "We shall overcome", "We shall not be moved", "Ain't a'scared of your jail". The solidarity of those songs built a community that lasts to this day. Chanting does not do that. Here's something most people who are on demonstrations don't understand. If you are across the street—if you are a bystander, demonstration is hopefully we are trying to appeal to you. You can not understand the words in a chant, even across the street most of the time. You cannot make out the words. All you can make out is…here's a bunch of people who are really angry and that scares me. Songs, you can understand for two or three times the distance of a chant. And songs don't make the people who are watching afraid. Causing fear in the bystanders is the worst thing you can do in the movement because it alienates them from you, and this is where this macho bullshit comes in: "I'm going to act out my rage. I'm going to break a window. I'm going to prove how manly and courageous and violent and macho I am!" Yeah, well, you just lost everybody who—who—was watching. You know, they are now afraid of you. And if they are afraid of you, they are going to oppose you and hate you and do everything they can to protect themselves against your…Songs completely avoid that whole issue. Singing people—there is something about mass singing that people really like. There are people I know who go to church, not because they want to hear the sermon or the minister but because they love the singing. They love participating in it. They love hearing it. And because we were a faith-based movement, we

had that wealth of church songs, of spirituals and gospels to draw on. And they were the basis of most of the freedom songs. Now the problem with singing is that you cannot do effective singing on a protest without having practiced first. Now, in the civil rights movement we had all those people who had practiced singing all their lives in the church. We don't have that for the movements today because nowadays religion is—"Oh God, they're a bunch of rightwingers! We don't want to have anything to do with religion!!" In fact, we need to get back to a faith-based movement, but that's a whole different discussion. So one of the ways we addressed that problem was that in every meeting we would open the meeting with a song or two songs, sometimes lots of songs, and we would always close the meeting. First of all because that expressed our ideology but more important is it gave people practice so that when they were out in the streets you had a core of people who were used to singing together and could lead those songs. Now, the big problem, a big problem we ran into once we left the South and the Southern Freedom Movement, the faith-based movement, is that outside of the churches…all of people's experience of singing is performance singing, either being the performer or listening to the performer. So singing is something you either perform or you listen to, but participatory singing—alright—performance singing does not work in nonviolent resistance. Maybe if there's a rally you'll ask Joan Baez to sing or somebody more current, whatever—that's okay. But for real nonviolent resistance, for using singing as your secret weapon, people have to sing. And the kind of—and a performance song is something that only a trained performer or a practiced performer can do. So the kind of song leading you have to do is the song leading that people can participate. And that is a different kind of singing. And even the freedom singers, the SNCC freedom singers who kept constantly—which I was not part of of course because I was voted twice the worst singer on the Southern Christian Leadership staff, but that didn't bother me cause I just sang loud—but you have to phrase the songs not as performances but in

the way in which people—invites their participation. And every time we would try and say well, let's set up a singing chorus for the San Francisco State student strike or whatever it was, we would get people who would naturally fall into…"Well, all right, now we're performers—" and they would start adding, doing that performance style which nobody could follow. So if you do singing in your meetings, it's got to be the kind of singing that people can do who are not performers and since the examples we have outside the church are performances, that's a problem that has to be overcome. Questions, comments, disagreements?

Audience: I have a question. When I was a kid, I grew up here. When I was a kid I guess it was '63, '64. I've asked somebody before and they didn't know what I was talking about. But the women, whenever they would go out shopping, they all had these bags that they would carry, and the bag had some kind of slogan on it. I cannot for the life of me remember what it was but I remember all of these black women carrying these bags.

Bruce H.: They were freedom slogans. Movement [slogan]?

Audience: Okay?

Bruce H.: Uh—I'm asking…

Audience: I can't remember but I just remember my mother, my grandmother and all of the women in their circle had these bags. They made sure they carried these particular bags. And I kind of think it was in support of what was going on in the South.

Bruce H: I think the NAACP did that. I don't remember the slogan but they did distribute those bags. Sometimes they were cloth. Sometimes they were paper. But, I do remember that.

Audience: So it's not one of those bad flashbacks.

Bruce H.: It may have also been, "I'm a registered voter, are you?" That was a famous slogan.

Sherri: Do you—is there within the veterans, I know with the web site is definitely one good way for those of us who are connected with education knowing about that web site—but is there any other efforts to get, you

know, San Francisco's history of the civil rights movement into the schools?

Bruce H: Actually, our web site is restricted only to the Southern Movement, cause that's what mostly—what most of our people participated in. So we don't really even have anything about the Bay Area. We are available to speak to classes, but most times we almost are never asked. And sometimes when a teacher asks, she or he gets into trouble, so…but we are available to do that. Yeah, it's really unfortunate that the whole history of the Bay Area Civil rights movement is just being suppressed. You know on Van Ness, they used to have all these auto, auto shows, car dealerships—it was called auto row—huge sit-ins blocking the whole street. They now have a big movie theater in the old Cadillac showroom…Five hundred people were arrested there. The Sheraton Palace Hotel, hundreds were arrested there. Uh—Mel's Diner, you all know Mel's Diner. Mel's Diner was a major target of the Civil Right's movement. So was Jack London's Square. Huge marches…Well, you know, maybe some of you who are students who have to do papers or something might want to research that, or even if you're a teacher, assign it to your students as a class. I would try the library. The longshoremen's union has a very good library that covers social movements in general and it's open to the public.

Audience: I was wondering—one of the things that occurred to me as I'm looking and listening while hearing you talk is that almost before resistance is able to happen there has to be a purpose obviously, for resistance—the exposure of oppression, and I'm a community organizer and I often run up against this struggle of complacency, and it's in religious organizing, faith-based organizing, we talk a lot about righteous indignation, and I'm just wondering where you see righteous indignation happening in today's society, I know with the Iraq War, but in our local communities, there's not a lot of righteous indignation about what's—not to the point of being willing to move and resist—

Bruce H.: I think before you can have righteous indignation, obviously there has to be an issue. There's no shortage of issues. But there also has to be the concept that you have the ability to do something about it. Because if you have righteous indignation and you are hopeless about there's no chance of changing this, then the righteous indignation just turns to pain, and so you know, dirty old men like me, occasionally, I get sores in my mouth so I just train my tongue not to get near where the sore is. Well, emotionally, if you feel oppressed, and there's nothing you can do about it, you train yourself not to think about it. You train yourself to avoid tough—because otherwise you feel helpless and miserable, which are two feelings nobody likes. So, it's not just that you need the issue, you also need to have people get a concept that they can do something about it, which is the whole reason I am talking about nonviolent resistance because that is a way. It's also why these symbolic protests like a color day or banging pots were so effective because it was something people could do. I don't know if that answers your question. I'm glad we're about to end. I've totally lost my voice now.

Audience: But I think that's a very important reason also why we want to look at the Southern Civil rights movement because it is just an example of that when people get together and do something it can actually change society. And we don't look at that normally anymore because the powers that be, do—are the powers that form our lives and just the concept again that—NO, we can take action and we can take responsibility and we can change things. I think that's—that's really something that's in a way new at times for us younger people.

Kathy: There's a reason why when you get invited into classrooms, the teacher gets in trouble. There's a reason when I would teach The People's History of the United States, I got fired, several times and finally blacklisted. There's a reason—because if people learned that history, if they learned that it happened, it has happened, and it can happen, then they can go back

and revive their righteous indignation, and I think that that's a really important part of awakening people is education.

Bruce H.: Let me just add one point. I've recently seen in the Mission posters saying about they're gonna raise the […] fares, and they're telling people don't pay, refuse to pay. The problem I think I suspect with that strategy is that it's asking people to do too much from zero to suddenly defy—boarding the bus and refusing to pay. I would say that first you need to start with something that everybody would be willing to do, and then when they see everyone else do it; then they realize they are not alone. So like, wear a certain color. Or wear a pin. Or pay in pennies. Something that is visible to everyone saying we're protesting this before you try and get people—"Gee, if I get on the bus and don't pay, they're gonna arrest me!" Or, you know.

Audience: So I had a question about—you said showing people what's possible, what about getting them to realize their oppressed in the first place?...They seem content with their lot whether it's the media or the rest of society telling them they're doing fine or…

Bruce H.: Breaking the paradigm.

Audience: Just looking back at that video and the little bit I know about the civil rights movement, they had a really nice line, an "us and them", an issue that was huge and it was—emerged, and everyone could see it. Whether they agreed with it or not…everyone could see it. Nowadays there's all these issues—they're important but it's difficult to define, to draw a line…who's on which side. And you can take a moral stand but if you're actually suffering from something, in a position, where do you draw the line? Is it just above you? Is it underneath you? Do you take part in the movement or not?...Does that happen before this list or is it part of the same thing?

Bruce H: Well one of the major tactics of nonviolent resistance is education, is speaking truth to power, and articulating that which people have felt but not verbalized in their head—not articulated consciously. It's not that

people don't feel oppressed. It's that they avoid feeling oppressed because they don't want to feel oppressed.

Audience: It seems to me that the media in this country's…Keeping people happy…almost drugged up…

Kathy: They know so much about Michael Jackson. They're very knowledgeable about Michael Jackson. The San Francisco Giants.

Audience: They feel empowered as a result. They don't feel—maybe that's the difference between now and 40 years ago which makes the task more difficult. I don't know…

Bruce H.: No, I don't think so. That's something that you have to find your nonviolent tactic that breaks through that. In the 50s, you know, hey, the fabulous 50s, the golden era of America, everybody was happy. Everybody was well-paid—

Kathy: Jean Wiley called it the most ridiculous decade in American history.

Bruce H: She's right, but if you want to talk about a media propaganda that said this is—we won World War II, you know, everybody is buying cars, people are moving to the suburbs—

Kathy: Leave it Beaver.

Bruce H: Everything is great. It was an enormous media propaganda…Uh, you know…Eisenhower's slogan in the presidential election was "I Like Ike". I like Ike. I'm just happy. It's morning in America… Yet the Civil Rights movement grew up within that happy babble propaganda. It's true that the issues are more complex. That is true. On the other hand, I think, I feel that there is an enormous, latent frustration in most people as more and more, the power is taken—the power over their own life is removed and removed from them. And you hear that in their frustration even about—here's an example. The other day, I needed to call Macy's…I bought a furniture there and it broke. You cannot find Macy's in the phone book. There's no number for Macy's. If you finally find a number on their web site it's one of those phone hell where you never get to a person. You say

that to anybody and they will resonate with that frustration. Not because in and of itself it's the equivalent of being denied service in a restaurant but because it's representational of the broader frustration of every power we have is being taken away from us. So we need to find creative ways to spark into that.

Kathy: And we will.

Bruce: And we will. And we will—Oh, you will. I'm going to go home to sleep.

Audience: Thank you.

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