

David and Goliath...

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I praise God for the gift of David and Cassandra. I praise God they have decided to walk seriously with the Lord, as it was not always that way for them.

What keeps many of us from reaching out to others in more than a superficial way like we do with the checkout person at the grocery store? Two reasons stick out and they are like Goliath because they are BIG. We are getting more into stuff with each passing day. Like an alcoholic who hasn't realized the problem

yet, we are stuffaholics. What was a normal satisfactory stuff life style 50-75 years ago wouldn't cut it these days. Many of us are working very hard to have more, bigger, and better of many things. Many of us don't give this a first thought let alone a second. Maybe if we were given much all of a sudden we'd see. And maybe we wouldn't. With change happening only one day at a time we don't realize we are a nation of stuffaholics with a growing habit.

This leads to the other reason. The more we acquire, the

more we have to protect, and the less time we have for others. Bigger fences, more security, less trust, more fear, it goes on and on.

The way I read the words of Jesus Christ in The Bible about reaching out to the least, giving away our stuff, loving those that aren't our friends, and putting our faith in God's kingdom instead of the material world, we are doing most everything backwards these days.

I believe Goliath resides in us and out side of us. I believe when push comes to shove we will

side with Goliath until we face the problem head on and say no to more stuff, greed, selfishness, and uneverlasting security. When that happens. Goliath gets small. Just ask David.

Till the next time. . .

In Christ's love,

Don

P.S. Miles walked: 5,834

Money from the pavement: \$454.05

Unsolicited money from motorists:

\$444.21

Meeting Ground's Annual Report...

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After a lull in admissions during the construction, WH remains full. The Health Dept. has done bi-weekly classes. Raven Keene is leading a Parenting Group, and Carol, from the Baptist Church, leads a bible study once a week. Over the year there have been various groups and activities the women have participated in; paraffin hand dips, facials by Raven, Tai Chi with Mae, Nutrition classes, and many other things that help bring a community together.

Mid-May, Waleska Vazquez began working as the Assistant Program Coordinator at WH. Her focus is the 3-11 shift, and she is learning the

many aspects of the job, but is off to a great start. Many thanks to Eric Schaumann who repaired and rebuilt portions of Wayfarer's House every Tuesday for many years; to Mary Jo Williams for teaching Parenting Classes and spearheading the "Kitchen Committee;" for Lynn Rodden who headed up the Herbs of Clairvaux Farm Project; for Renee Steele who shops at the grocery store and food bank and does all sorts of other things; for Raven Keene who teaches parenting, chairs a class for "Motherless Daughters," and facial massages; for Pete Quayle who spends Thursdays with us sharing our experiences and doing the books; and many others who make Wayfarer's House and Meeting Ground a true place of "meeting."

The Weight of our Work...

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about him. They were bunk mates in a shelter and sitting in conversation on the edge of their beds one summer evening. A wasp was in the room and taking center attention as it flew back and forth between them. The man watched in amazement as Stan slowly folded a piece of paper, and using that and a cup he carefully trapped the menacing creature and released it outside. He commented after telling the story, "Stan is such a gentle man that he even took care for an insect."

Stan now lives in his own apartment, modest but adequate – on a small fixed income. After almost two decades of despairing homelessness, he has been living independently, doing very well, for over two years. His hair and beard are white, and he walks slowly with a slight limp. He keeps an easy smile on his face, and greets the people he passes on the street. We see each other almost every week at Community Kitchen. He always has the same pattern of conversation. After brief greet-

ings, he begins to ask about the folks living at Clairvaux Farm – how they are, what everyone is doing, and what he can do to help. His talk always reflects the feelings of kinship he carries in his soul.

One day at Kitchen a man who was struggling to maintain his sobriety asked Stan how he had been able to stay sober for so long. Stan replied with gentle firmness, "I had a lot of friends who helped me." He said this as he glanced in my direction – we had just finished talking about his "friends" – the many other homeless women and men, all part of the community for which he has come to know and care. Stan found strength for his own commitment in leaning on the everlasting arms of those who serve without giving up or giving in.

Justice work requires time. It also calls for open-ended responsibility and endless patience. The violence of social inequity and poverty have roots that are deep and long. That which has been denied

or taken away may be difficult to restore. Righteous lessons are slow to be learned, and the trends of the world will oppose what we seek so earnestly.

Yet, our reward is in the value of service in itself, and the high importance of the task. The matters which lead to despair are always in front of us: Discrimination of race, sex, and class, the violence of impoverishment, indifference to all the above, coarse materialism, and the selfishness which focuses our attention always on what we perceive is *ours*. On the eve of India's independence, and in the face of nearly insurmountable challenges, when Gandhi was asked what he feared most, he replied, "Hardness of heart in the educated." He was most discouraged by that.

Our work in ending homelessness is often basic, mundane, and harshly physical. Yet, the effort necessary to provide the basics of housing, shelter, food, and support service is only prerequisite. It is merely a prelude, the provision of

a setting to allow for the possibility of human transformation. The deep and real changes in our lives are made through friendship, knowledge, insight, desire, and grace. The latter is the element of sacred mystery, alive in the confines of the human heart and nurtured through loving contact.

The hope which Stan extends to all through his life is the sanctity of the *one*. Though we yearn for justice and salvation for the whole of humanity, yet it is the single human being, the treasure of a person's being, which is our careful intention. Our aspiration is for each individual soul, even as in the Talmud, "whoever saves one life, saves the world entire."

May all take courage who yearn for a new world, a better life and the ineffable promises. May they find in our discipline, and the cause we serve, a lamp for their journey and, if God be pleased, a light for the world.