

Bob Aldridge's "The Goodness Field"

"Rocket Scientist Turned Satyagrahi" Publishes New Book

By Jim Douglass

Bob Aldridge, whose courageous witness alerted many to the first-strike capabilities of Trident, recently completed his book "The Goodness Field." Below is an excerpt from a letter from Bob to Glen Milner, followed by the forward to The Goodness Field written by Jim Douglass.

Our daughter, Mary, is sheltering-in-place with us during this crisis. At our age it is a comfort to have a well-experienced nurse to help us.

Mary and I are working together to take advantage of these horrible times as a trigger event for greater global consciousness leading to Global Satyagraha. Hidden in the quiet of the COVID-19 pandemic is a current of the collective consciousness that crosses political boundaries, and widens the focus of human connection. Ironically, within social distancing comes the benefit of reconnecting with ourselves and each other simply by slowing down. As the world comes to a halt in normal activity and isolation abounds, the US government seizes the opportunity (trigger event) to enact policies that are likely to be the new status quo. However, the same trigger event allows for a response of *contagious nonviolence* (K. Butigen) to reshape the priorities of our planet. Given the current social isolation, the technological talents of the younger generations can redirect the protectory of government policy through innovative social connectivity and action. *The Goodness Field – A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence* engages nonviolent warriors in a global constructive program through the lens of historic pitfalls and successes and the required measured actions moving forward.

Consequently, I have halted physical distribution of *The Goodness Field* and am making it available digitally. It is available to be circulated widely and posted on websites. Let us all make the most of this opportunity.

Bob Aldridge has the knack of paying attention to an urge to do the right thing whenever he feels it. Then he does it -- to the discomfort of those who know how the force of his example can change lives. In the almost half-century I've known Bob, the trails this nuclear weapons engineer turned peacemaker has blazed, following the whispers of his still small voice, have kept on redirecting my life. Be wary of reading *The Goodness Field*, if you

are not open to meeting a man who could inspire you to climb mountains.

Feeling such an urge when he began the tenth decade of his life, Bob Aldridge researched thoroughly and wrote what he first described as "A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence." What he saw brilliantly through that process, he identified in his final title as "The Goodness Field."

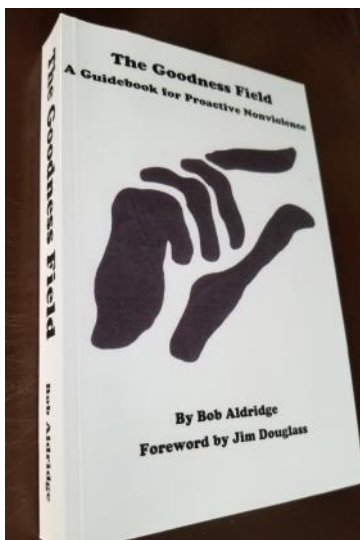
In August 1972, my wife Shelley and I met Bob and Janet Aldridge when they came from their home in Santa Clara, California, to Honolulu, Hawaii, to support our catholic Action of Hawaii community in a trial. Three of us were liable to ten years each in prison for doing an act of moral and legal necessity by obeying a greater law. We had poured our blood on top-secret electronic warfare files at Hickam Air Base, Pacific Air Force Headquarters -- exposing Hickam, as Bob writes in this book's last chapter, "as the intelligence and targeting center for the Vietnam air war."

In a scene Shelley and I have recalled often from that intense week, we watched Bob sitting at a microphone on a stage in a theater at the University of Hawaii. He was flanked by two Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal attorneys, who were assisting us in the trial. They had explained to the audience why our disruption of the

electronic warfare office was a legal resistance, if not obligation, to a crime against peace.

When it came time for Bob to speak, as peace representative of the National Catholic Lay Association, he pushed the mic away and remained silent. He was responding to an urge. Shelley and I were unaware of Bob's occupation as a nuclear missile designer, which he had begun to question. The Nuremberg lawyers' presentations intensified the questioning. It provoked in Bob a pregnant silence. Taken up by the trial, we simply thought Bob a very shy man.

Two years later, following my resignation from the University of Hawaii faculty, Bob visited us at our house in the little town of Hedley, British Columbia, Canada. He told us of his resignation from his Lockheed job designing a nuclear first-strike weapon, the Trident missile system. Spreading out a map on our kitchen table, he pointed out the chosen site for the first Trident submarine base, on a peninsula across from Seattle, not so far from Hedley.



The Goodness Field is available online and through Ground Zero.
Photo courtesy of Bob Aldridge.

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Bob's visit became our invitation to co-found Pacific Life Community, which initiated a Gandhian campaign in resistance to Trident, prompting our move into the last house beside the railroad tracks going into the base. Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, whose site bordered another part of the Trident base fence a mile away, was founded in 1977. The Trident campaign led in 1981 to the tracks campaign to stop Trident weapons shipments to its bases on both the Pacific and the Atlantic. That resulted in our further move in 1989 to another tracks house, along the trains' southeastern route, in Birmingham, Alabama.

If ever a satyagrahi, a Gandhian practitioner of truth-force, has redirected Shelley's and my lives, it has been Bob Aldridge through the quiet talk he walks, along with Janet, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, who are a nonviolent wave all their own. We have learned with many others how to walk from the example of Bob, Janet, and their family — all the way from their decision that Bob resign at age 49 from Lockheed (now merged with Marietta as the #1 military industrial contractor), sparking the Trident campaign; through Bob's groundbreaking books on our near extinction from the Pentagon's nuclear first strike strategy spearheaded by Trident; to this pioneering work on

For single paper copies of *The Goodness Field*, please check on availability at info@gzcenter.org. Books, offered by Bob and Janet Aldridge as their personal contribution to Ground Zero, are provided for a suggested \$15.00 donation, which includes postage.

our nonviolent transformation, *The Goodness Field*. I've had the gift, with others he asked to critique his manuscript, of seeing his nonviolence guidebook evolve into its present form. Bob has been mining everyone and everything he could for this work, re-climbing the mountain of his life, seeking a way to enlighten the night. He succeeds. Bob Aldridge's relentless persistence has broken through finally, at the peak of his life and work, into the fundamental forcefield in the

universe, the source of our necessary enlightenment through proactive nonviolence — goodness.

The goodness field, as Bob explains in an intriguing introduction and astounding appendix, is the pervasive force field of not only Earth but the entire universe. Goodness is the singular force needed to modulate the four fundamental forces of nature to support life. As

our own creations of nuclear war and climate change remain on track to end our species after destroying countless others, goodness is coming right back at us, through billions of years in the evolution of the universe. The power of goodness is arising from the subconscious of humanity, as Bob suggests from C. G. Jung. We have been propagandized into fatal sleepwalking by our entertainment culture and the invisible government of



Bob Aldridge. Photo courtesy of [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

egothink, a term Bob coined via Sigmund Freud and George Orwell. Yet we can still awaken to a volcanic energy in our collective unconscious, formed from the beginning of time. We can discern at the current crux of history a power erupting from the depths of our origin, if we only remove its obstacles through proactive nonviolence. Goodness is the transformative force of human existence. Goodness can be our cosmic companion, as we walk the Earth and talk the truth. Goodness is in the stardust empowering our every action concentrated nonviolently on the dark matter of this world, down to the jail cell of my own ego.

Goodness is here, as we awaken, walk the Earth, and speak the truth of a universal force that has brought us this far so far. Goodness is the truth in proactive nonviolence that will set us free. Seed a Gandhian constructive program in the goodness field of this Earth, and it will grow.

Our crucial task in letting goodness work, Bob suggests with Gandhi, is taking on experiments with truth as near as our fingertips, pushing away obstacles to goodness. Washing our dishes to wash the dishes, in Nhat Hanh's image of mindful practice, will free us to be where we need to be, catching a wave of proactive nonviolence just in time. Converging drops of goodness and courage, becoming an ocean of waves of nonviolent movements, will prevail. Ours is the goodness story told all the way from its origin in the creative urge behind the Big Bang of the universe.

Maybe it does take a rocket scientist turned satyagrahi to see humanity's redemptive truth of goodness. Is that Gandhi grinning through his microscope?

"Truth," as Mohandas Gandhi said from his experiments with truth, "is God." Or as Bob Aldridge has put it in a further step through his experiments, "Truth is goodness." The ultimate truth of goodness, it turns out, is confirmed by the story of the universe. Our humanity's radical goodness is seen, step by step, through our experience, in the discoveries of proactive nonviolence. We learn to walk truly in the dust of a million galaxies of goodness. Test and see.

An empire began to give way when a little man, with 78 committed friends from his ashram, marched to

the sea to pick up a grain of salt. Our way into non-violent transformation may be no more than our willingness to say yes to an urge of goodness at inconvenient moments in our lives, leading us to ashram disciplines and nonviolence training in the fire of goodness that can nurture a new way of life. Turn, turn, turn. Faith in goodness, acting through newly forged lives in a nonviolent community, is hope for our world.

Bob Aldridge is a nonviolent warrior for our time. *The Goodness Field: A Guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence* is the testament of his life. Its practical, nonviolent truths are carved out, hammer to chisel, with the help of Gandhi, King, and their disciplined disciples; the Standing Rock Sioux and the new paradigm of Sarvodaya via Wopida; a host of young people standing on their own feet, encircling the globe in resistance to gun violence and climate change; Bob and Janet Aldridge with their children, grandchildren, and great-great grands walking the way of proactive nonviolence before us.

We know we dwell in a time of deepening darkness. We are at two minutes to midnight—the nearest the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* Doomsday Clock has ever been. The question before us, as Dr. King put it, is: Nonviolence or nonexistence? Transformation or annihilation? Stated starkly, how can we transform a cultural dogma of inevitable evil, implanted by the invisible government of one's ego, into the prophetic truth of proactive nonviolence? How can we turn our lives around in time toward the hope of the universe?

However, if we pay attention to the lessons from proactive nonviolent movements more powerful than war, we know we can live out the truth that we are on a planet in a universe grounded in goodness. Cosmic experiments with truth, turning our own lives around first, are one step away from us. They are no big deal. Yet through them we can know, as real as the Earth on which we stand, the power of goodness at our fingertips at two minutes to midnight. Goodness has our back from way back. Goodness is our given. We can allow its power from the collective unconscious to emerge in a globally transforming proactive nonviolence.

It can be done here and now by living out our first truth of goodness, older than the hills, written with the ink of love in the words on these pages.

Read them, rejoice, and be good.

Jim Douglass founded Ground Zero with his wife Shelley in 1977. Today the Douglasses live in Birmingham, Alabama where they extend hospitality at the Mary's House. Digital copies of *The Goodness Field: A guidebook for Proactive Nonviolence* are available on the Pacific Life Research website, at www.plrc.org. For single paper copies of the book, please check on availability at info@gzcenter.org.

days in jail. During Bill's testimony at the trial in June 1985, Bill broke down and wept while speaking of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons. It was eye-opening to me — to see such a strong man reveal his inner self. The next day, all demonstrators were acquitted by a Kitsap County jury.

Years later, Bill and Kim would still have Ground Zero meetings at their home. The last meeting—and they insisted that Ground Zero members come—was in September 2019. Bill was in his hospital bed, stretched out in the middle of the meeting with people sitting around him. It seemed right. It was always an honor and a joy to be at the Wahls'.

When Kim asked me to speak about Bill, I wanted to make sure that whatever I said was correct—so naturally I went to the Internet for help. And there is a YouTube video from June 2012 in which Bill and Kim are interviewed on KEXP radio—early in the morning and on a live radio broadcast. (Google search Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and Bill Wahl.) The interview was 29 minutes. Bill was very engaged but as you might guess—Bill spoke for about seven minutes of the 29 minutes and Kim spoke the rest of the time. During the interview, Bill ended up asking most of the questions, but it never seemed like he was in control. This video verified my thoughts of Bill. Of course, Bill knew the answers to most of the questions he was asking.

Bill was interested in nearly everything, and he appreciated small things. A few years ago, I fixed the light on his front porch. It needed a new light and a new photocell. Bill held the extension ladder while I climbed it—never letting go until I was done and off the ladder. And every time I saw Bill after that, he would tell me something like, “Last night it got dark, and the light came on.” “And when I awoke in the morning the light was off.” Sometimes he would tell me how it would come on earlier on dark days. “It works!” he would say. Bill wanted to pay me, of course, but after some time, I felt like I owed Bill. He was delighted.

At peace actions—one would seldom see Kim or Bill without the other. Bill always knew where Kim was at any event. For as long as I can remember, and for no better words, I always thought they were the cutest couple. Soulmates. I had the feeling that Kim would sometimes gently lead Bill on peace issues. And that sometimes Bill might play the devil's advocate. They obviously learned well from each other.

I never asked Bill what his greatest achievement in life was, but I am pretty certain it was his marriage to Kim. They were married for 60 years.

And I know what Bill would say to us now, “Come and check on Kim once in a while, Call her, See how Kim is doing. Please.” And so that is what we should do. Help check on Kim, and each other. Care for each other. In that way, Bill lives with us.

Thank you, Bill. Peace be with you.

Glen Milner leads legal struggles on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.