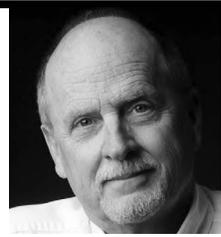

February 20, 2006



A Personal Note
from Mel White,
President, Soulforce, Inc.

Dear friends of Soulforce,

I am delighted that **Jeff Lutes has taken on the day by day tasks of Soulforce** as our Executive Director. Soulforce has grown so rapidly that we must expand staff, programs and budget just to keep up with it. Now, **as President, I will be free to do what I do best, write and speak for Soulforce and travel across the US recruiting, training and mobilizing Soulforce volunteers.** In fact, thanks to Jeff and our amazing Soulforce team, I can finish at last *Religion Gone Bad: A Call to Resist* (the sequel to *Stranger at the Gate*) to be released by Penguin Books Sept. 1, 2006, and made available to you first.

Whether you're 65 like me or just starting out in activism, remember the words of Harriet Tubman when she said, "If you're tired, keep going; if you're scared, keep going; if you're hungry, keep going; if you want the taste of freedom, keep going." With your help, Soulforce can give legs and voice to this critical work.

I've spent my first dozen years as an out gay clergy **bandaging and burying the victims of the false teachings and destructive actions of Protestant and Catholic Church leaders against my gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender sisters and brothers.**

Unfortunately, most of these same religious leaders believe their antigay rhetoric. These people are not evil, but we must resist the evil that they do. **Relentless nonviolent resistance is the primary reason Soulforce exists.**

That is why our Soulforce Organizer, Jake Reitan, with the help of Bill Carpenter, Logistics Coordinator, and Haven Herrin, (Jake's co-chair) has recruited and trained 35 young activists for the first **Soulforce Equality Ride, March 5-April 30, 2006.** Like the Freedom Rides of the 50's and 60's, the Soulforce Equality Ride will take 35 young adults, age 18-27, on an eight week bus tour to confront 19 religious colleges and military academies that ban the enrollment of GLBT students.

That is why our new Executive Director, Jeff Lutes, and an amazing team of volunteers is organizing our second **Soulforce Visit to James Dobson's Focus on the Family World Headquarters in Colorado Springs. The 1000 Watt March, Vigil and Concert July 16-22, 2006,** will bring light and truth to the man who has become the nation's primary source of misinformation about sexual and gender minorities. In 2005 more than 1,000 folks joined Soulforce in a public action condemning James Dobson for his war against GLBT Americans. **On Saturday, July 22, 2006, we hope you, your friends and families will help swell this year's crowd to 5,000 concerned Americans** for the final walk to Dobson's campus to arrive just before sunset **and surround Focus in a "circle of light" vigil and a concert under the**

stars featuring **Broadway Star Billy Porter**.

That's why Jamie McDaniel, our Soulforce web master has given our Soulforce.org **web page a whole new look adding resources that inspire and inform** victims of the anti-gay rhetoric and recruit and train volunteers in relentless nonviolent resistance. That's why Bill Carpenter, Kara Speltz, and I are working on **Soulforce Direct Actions against Benedict XVI and the Roman Catholic Church** for spreading their toxic antigay rhetoric across the US. That's why Soulforce is **producing and distributing powerful video/DVD and print resources** to confront religion-based bigotry. That's why Soulforce is **confronting similar LDS (Mormon) rhetoric** (for the first time) in Salt Lake City with our Soulforce Equality Ride to Brigham Young University.

And now we have a rare opportunity: Philanthropist Bruce Bastian, founder of WordPerfect, has offered the Soulforce Equality Ride a MATCHING GRANT of \$25,000! Every dollar you donate will be MATCHED by Bruce (up to \$25,000). With your help, we can turn Bruce's \$25,000 into \$50,000! Bruce, an alumni of Brigham Young University, is enthusiastic about Soulforce's activism. Bruce dedicates enormous resources to what he considers a battle over fundamental human rights.

And that's **why we need your help—we must take advantage of Bruce's generosity! As we grow into the future we must expand our programs, our personnel and our budget— and here is a chance to double our money! If we don't work to cut off the suffering at its source, who will?**

Here's one more example of the tragic consequences of the war fundamentalist Christians, Mormons and Catholics are waging against us.

On July 1, 1999, Matthew and Tyler Williams broke into the country home of Gary Matson and Winfield Scott Mowder, a well known and much loved northern California couple. **The Williams brothers tortured and killed these two innocent men for one reason and one reason alone: they were gay.** When Sally Williams asked her son, Matthew, why he had killed "the two homos" his answer was recorded by prison officials.

"I had to obey God's law rather than man's law," he said. "I didn't want to do this. I felt I was supposed to... I have followed a higher law... I see a lot of parallels between this and a lot of other incidents in the Old Testament... They threw our Savior in jail... Our forefathers have been in prison a lot. Prophets... Christ... My brother and I are incarcerated for our work in cleansing a sick society... I just plan to defend myself from the Scriptures."

On Sunday morning, **November 17, 2002, while still awaiting trial, Matthew Williams**, who once vowed to become "a Christian martyr," wedged himself between the toilet and the far wall of his cell, slashed open his femoral arteries, his arms and his neck with a razor and bled to death. **On March 3, 2003, Tyler Williams** pleaded guilty to two counts of first degree murder. Facing a life in prison, Tyler apologized to the families and friends of the gay couple he had murdered. "I have repented to the Lamb of God for attempting to take His place of leadership in dealing with the world's evils and in not patiently waiting for His timing."

Compared to the horror of Matthew Sheperd's execution felt by millions around the world, **few people even noticed the life and death of Gary Matson and Winfield Mowder let alone the suicide of Matthew Williams or Tyler William's sentence to life in prison.** And yet

this untold story of four wasted lives is just one more smoking gun found at the scene **of another crime caused indirectly by fundamentalist Christian leaders** whose obsessive anti-homosexual campaign leads to tragic consequences they will not admit.

Go back a few paragraphs and re-read the words Matthew Williams used to defend his heinous crime. This **Bible-based fear and loathing of homosexuals** was shaped in William's mind by the anti-homosexual teachings of **the radio and television fundavangelists, the Southern Baptists, Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), fundamentalist leaders in every Protestant denomination and priests, bishops, and cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church, especially Benedict XVI**, whose antigay obsession has led to the current inquisition against innocent gay priests and seminarians. To young Williams, if homosexuals are such a "threat to the family, to the church and to the nation," it only seemed natural to eliminate that threat.

At his trial Williams made the connection between the fundamentalist teachers and preachers in his life to the murders he committed: "*You obey a government of man until there is a conflict,*" he explained. "*Then you obey a higher law. So many people claim to be Christians,*" Williams added, "*They complain about all these things their religion says are a sin, but they're not willing to do anything about it. They don't have the guts.*"

How long will it take for gay-bashing fundamentalists, Protestant and Catholic alike, to realize **that their anti-homosexual campaign leads directly to suffering and death?** At the trial of the men who killed his brother, Mark Matson, who holds a doctorate in New Testament studies and teaches at a Christian college, admitted to a reporter that "Gary saw the danger of the religious right."

The suffering has gone on far too long. And though my old body is ready to retire, my heart says with Dylan Thomas, "**Do not go gentle into that good night...Rage, rage against the dying of the light.**" In 1999, Gary Nixon, my partner of almost 25 years, and I founded Soulforce, Inc. and with a handful of generous friends set out to recruit, train and equip volunteers that would join us in confronting the evil antigay words and actions by the fundamentalist Christians, Protestant and Catholic alike. **During the past six years, we have trained an estimated 10,000 people in the "soul force" principles of truth, love, and voluntary redemptive suffering. Thousands of volunteers have joined us in elegant silent vigils and quiet, nonviolent protests at national conventions of the United Methodist, Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches in the U.S. and at the Vatican. Over 1,000 of us —gay and straight alike—have been arrested in nonviolent direct actions.** And even while the general public is making huge strides towards understanding and fully accepting gay Americans, Protestant and Catholic Churches continue their spiral downward into intolerance and discrimination.

By working with Soulforce to achieve liberty and justice for gay and lesbian Americans, you are actually working to achieve liberty and justice for all Americans. When you support Soulforce you are not simply supporting our struggle to end the war against us and win civil rights for gay Americans. **You are supporting the struggle against fundamentalist Christianity (to use their words) "for the heart and soul of the nation."** It is a struggle we dare not loose.

Please, take this opportunity to double your support— whatever you can send today will be MATCHED by philanthropist Bruce Bastian. With your help, we can turn Bruce's generous gift of \$25,000 into \$50,000!

Here's what your donation can do—

A \$5,000 donation to Soulforce will cover the costs of the 5-day march beginning at the Denver State Capitol Building and ending at the entrance to Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, symbolizing the link between unjust antigay legislation and antigay propaganda.

A \$3,000 donation to Soulforce will allow you to “adopt” a Rider on the Equality Ride and receive periodic updates from the road, a DVD copy of the documentary, and a personalized scrapbook of the ride.

A \$1,000 donation to Soulforce will provide 2500 copies of our booklet, *What the Bible Says—and Doesn't Say—About Homosexuality* to those who ask.

A \$500 donation to Soulforce will keep the Soulforce website running for a month.

A \$250 donation to Soulforce will buy lunch for the Equality Riders.

A \$100 donation to Soulforce will get ten copies of the Soulforce video, *The Verdict is In: Not a Sickness, Not a Sin!* into the hands of those who desperately need to hear that message.

A \$50 donation to Soulforce will buy glowsticks for the “circle of light” vigil surrounding Focus on the Family when thousands of supporters gather in July to present the full diversity and vibrant spirit of *real* American families.

Because Soulforce is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, your donations are tax deductible and every dollar you donate will be used on behalf of the liberation of GLBT people.

I sincerely **THANK YOU** for your support and for helping us make the most out of the MATCHING GRANT offered to Soulforce by Bruce Bastian. It's not every day we get the chance to double our money!



Mel White

President and co-founder, Soulforce, Inc.

P.S. Below is the Soulforce Equality Ride itinerary. To see how you can help the Equality Riders and even to learn how you can join those students on a portion of the ride, call Jake Reitan, 952-212-8311 or email jake@soulforce.org.

Equality Ride Itinerary

March 5: Arrive in Washington D.C.
for training and preparation

March 10: Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

March 14: Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA

March 16 and 17: Lee University, Cleveland, TN

March 20 and 21: Oral Robert University, Tulsa, OK

March 23 and 24: Oklahoma Baptist U., Shawnee, OK

March 27: Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX

March 29: Texas A&M, College Station TX

March 30 and 31: Council for Christian Colleges and
Universities

April 4: Biola University & California Baptist, Los Angeles

April 5: Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

April 10 and 11: Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

April 13: Colorado Christian University, Denver, CO

April 14: Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

April 17: North Central University, Minneapolis, MN

April 18: Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

April 20 and 21: Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

April 24: Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

April 26 and 27: United States Military Academy,
West Point, NY

April 29: Debrief in Washington, D.C.

April 30: Depart for home

YES! I want to support SOULFORCE— and have my donation MATCHED by Bruce!*

Enclosed is: A one-time donation of \$_____.

A monthly donation of \$_____.

(Check this box and we will make an automatic charge to your credit card by the 10th of each month for the amount you specify. Monthly contributions enable Soulforce to plan for future work.)

Check enclosed (or) Please use my credit card: Visa MasterCard

Card Number _____ Expiration: _____

Name on card: _____

Please provide your e-mail address:

**Philanthropist Bruce Bastian will match your gifts up to \$25,000.*

RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO: Soulforce, P. O. Box 3195, Lynchburg, VA 24503

www.soulforce.org

Specific ways you can help . . .

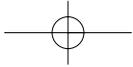
- Adopt a rider for \$3000
(Get postcards from the road and a copy of the documentary DVD!)
- Fill up the gas tank, \$350
- Buy lunch for the Riders, \$250
- Provide four riders with housing for one night, \$75



DML0206



The Soulforce Equality Ride
March–April 2006



Place
Stamp
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Soulforce



P. O. Box 3195
Lynchburg, VA 24503-0195

