

FAITH IN ACTION

Building homes with people in need is our response to God’s love. When we are filled with the power of God’s love and mercy, our hearts seek ways in which we can share that love with others. We become willing servants, attempting to model the life and teachings of Jesus by helping our neighbors in need. As the writer of 1 John tells us, “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another, How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” (1 John 3:16-18)

We find the same message in another passage from the New Testament of the Bible. James 2:14-26 mandates that we live out our faith. Our works are our response to God’s love for us. This call to action—to care for each person created in the image of God—cannot be ignored. We are to become partners with one another, treating each other with dignity and empowering one another. Clarence Jordan, founder of the Christian community of Koinonia Farm, where the housing ministry of what would later become Habitat for Humanity had its beginnings, was adamant about this fact. Jordan believed that we cannot have any dealings with God unless we care for one another.

Robert G. Bratcher, former HFHI board member, suggests that offering a helping hand to our brothers and sisters in need is a worship experience. “To build a temple for the worship of God is no more holy than to build a home for a needy person. A house is no less sacred than a sanctuary—perhaps it is even more sacred. To serve others is to worship God; to share a glass of cold water with a thirsty person is as much a sacrament as to share the eucharistic cup of wine.”

PARTICIPANTS IN ‘THE GOD MOVEMENT’

Habitat for Humanity provides a unique and blessed opportunity for thousands of people to tangibly live out their faith. As Millard Fuller founder and president of HFHI states, “If Habitat were primarily a movement of individuals, there would be nothing lasting to it. But this is God’s movement, and there’s nothing that can stop it.

Habitat is a part of God’s movement in our time. We are part of the kingdom of God, or what Jordan called “‘the God Movement,’ a revolutionary new order that Jesus was initiating and inviting people to join now.” Habitat for Humanity alone is not “the God Movement” or the kingdom of God, but we further the Kingdom and are enriched by it. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit and by scripture as we follow Christ in his revolutionary practices of love.