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SLOUCHING TOWARDS ATLANTA:
THE INFLUENCE OF CHURCHES ON ATLANTA'S HIPPIE COMMUNITY

by

TIMOTHY COLE HALE

Under the Direction of John McMillian, PhD

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses how local churches and church groups shaped Atlanta's hippie community during the late-1960s through the early-1970s. The Atlanta Friends Meeting participated in protests and draft counseling, which resonated with the city's hippies, who in turn influenced some Quakers to adopt hippie dress and to create communal homes. Meanwhile, Harcourt "Harky" Klinefelter formed the Ministry to the Street People, which provided aid to the city's youth who fell victim to the negative side effects of the Sixties counterculture. In working with the city's youth, Klinefelter bore witness to the unsanitary conditions of the city's jail, causing him to lead efforts to have it cleaned. Lastly, a coffeehouse operated by a Methodist minister is detailed that held weekly church services and organized social projects. These projects included employment services, art scholarships, and a free clinic. Together, these individuals and their institutions distinguished Atlanta's counterculture from those in other cities.

INDEX WORDS: Atlanta, Antiwar Movement, Christianity, Churches, Coffeehouses, Counterculture, Draft Resistance, Hippies, Methodism, Peachtree Street (Atlanta, Ga.), Piedmont Park (Atlanta, Ga.), Quakers, Runaways, United Church of Christ, Vietnam War

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TIMOTHY COLE HALE

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Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2020

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2020

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INTRODUCTION

During the 1967 “Summer of Love,” Atlanta’s hippies would walk out of the south exit of Piedmont Park, the local hippie mecca. This would place them onto 10th Street where walking west—the direction where the movement began in San Francisco—they would cross Piedmont Avenue and Juniper Street, before arriving at Peachtree Street. This intersection, 10th and Peachtree, was the epicenter of Atlanta’s hip community. Overlooking the intersection stood a massive mixed-media mural painted on the side of a building. At the center of the mural was a statue of Jesus Christ, made of plaster, surrounded by a host of multicolored, psychedelic disciples. This countercultural stylization of Christ stood at the very heart of Atlanta’s hip community, known as the Strip.

It is difficult to trace when the hippie community began in Atlanta, in large part because it is difficult to define “hippies.” This community, sometimes considered a movement, was a large, unorganized group of youths across the world who were disillusioned with the materialism of modern life. They sought to bring about a new “Age of Aquarius,” an era more creative, spiritual, and free, than had existed before. Hippies supported a myriad of sociopolitical causes, including civil rights, the anti-war movement, women’s liberation, gay rights, and environmentalism. Instead of rallying and attending marches to persuade society to adopt these causes, the true hippie ethos was to “drop out” of society—meaning, to simply not participate in society at all. The extreme manifestation of this came from those who formed communes, living out their idealized vision of the future outside of mainstreams society.

In 1967, Atlanta gained its first business establishments dedicated to servicing hippies—an indicator that the counterculture was prevalent enough in the city to attract customers. The first of these was a coffeehouse called the Catacombs, which “Mother” David Braden opened in

early 1967 in the basement beneath his art gallery, the Mandorla, located at the corner of 14th and Peachtree Streets. Originally intended to be a gathering place for local artists, bohemians, and poets, the Catacombs quickly changed to a psychedelic rock venue after the influx of hippies to Atlanta during the Summer of Love. By fall 1967, the Twelfth Gate became the city's second hip coffeehouse, this one owned and operated by Reverend Bruce Donnelly, a Methodist minister. Nineteen-sixty-seven also marked the founding of Atlanta's first two headshops—stores so named because they sold cannabis pipes and other psychedelic materials used to assist in “expanding one's mind” or, as San Francisco's pioneering psychedelic rock band Jefferson Airplane called it, “feeding one's head.” These first headshops were Middle Earth and the Morning Glory Seed. In July 1967, the *Atlanta Constitution*, the city's most circulated newspaper, estimated that there were between 100 and 500 hippies living in Atlanta.¹

Most of the city's hippies were confined to a six-block district on Peachtree Street that began at the 8th Street intersection and continued to 14th Street. Historically, this area was known as the “Tight Squeeze,” because the roads were too narrow for two carriages to travel through simultaneously when first constructed. During the Sixties, Atlanta's hippies gave the six blocks a new name: “the Strip.”² The surrounding area came to be known by Atlanta residents and the local media as the “10th Street District” and the “Hippie Ghetto.”

After 1967, Atlanta gained all the indicators of a large hippie presence. This included several “be-ins”—events in which various countercultural “tribes” (hippies, bikers, New Leftists, etc.) congregated to socialize with one another, take drugs, and/or discuss New Age and socially

¹ Ann Carter, “Hippies Flower, but with Roots,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 30, 1967, 16A.

² In this thesis, I differentiate between the terms “the 1960s,” which is the literal decade; and “the Sixties,” which includes the sociocultural upheavals that began during the 1960s but extended beyond 1969.

conscious ideas—held at Piedmont Park. Meanwhile, marches and demonstrations appeared in the streets and inside local businesses. By 1968, Atlanta’s underground newspaper, the *Great Speckled Bird*, was the most circulated underground newspaper outside of California or New York. In 1969—one month before Woodstock—Atlanta was also home to a major rock festival, which featured performances by artists such as Janis Joplin and Led Zeppelin.

Atlanta’s hippies gained national attention when they fell victim to a police riot on September 21, 1969. Known as the Piedmont Park Police Riot, the event began when George Nikas, a member of the counterculture, revealed the identity of a narc—an undercover police officer—roaming the park. The police deployed tear gas and several fights erupted between police and hippies. The riot resulted in the arrests of twenty-three people and was mentioned in *Time* magazine.

In the months leading up to the Piedmont Park Police Riot, tensions had been developing between the city’s “straight” society and the hip community. This is evidenced by a summer when firebombings and police raids on hippie homes and business became frequent, alongside violent clashes of drunken “rednecks” visiting the Strip just to beat up hippies. In 1970, the Outlaws Motorcycle Club—a national biker gang based in Illinois—moved in the Strip and engaged in violence with hippies and rival gangs. Reflecting a national trend, heroin and amphetamines became increasingly prevalent in Atlanta’s hippie circles the same year. Also, the extreme friendliness toward strangers by the hip community sometimes resulted in criminals joining their groups to commit robberies and rapes among their drugged “peers.” The flower

children were, as countercultural musician and activist Ed Sanders famously said of the hippies in California, “plump white rabbits surrounded by wounded coyotes.”³

Despite these impediments, Atlanta’s hip community limped on until 1973 when much of the Strip had been demolished for the creation of Colony Square, a building complex that included a mall, and several large residential and business complexes. Nineteen-seventy-three was also the year that the United States withdrew from Vietnam—once the war ended, so too did the hippies.

While the Civil Rights Movement and the alienation of the Baby Boomer generation have frequently been analyzed to explain the influences on the hippie counterculture, this thesis examines how Atlanta’s churches and church leaders influenced the local hippie community. This molding by local churches began from the inception of the city’s movement, as the majority of anti-war protest and other activities against social injustices were organized by churches, especially the local Quaker Meeting.

As Atlanta’s hippie community continued into a new decade, problems arose around the 10th Street area—addiction, homelessness, and youths prostituting themselves for a place to sleep for the night. More church leaders and groups got involved to rid the hippies of these ills, which many felt were distracting them from noble causes. This included two ministers, Harcourt “Harky” Klinefelter and Bruce Donnelly. Atlanta was truly unique in that, while the Sixties counterculture is typically associated with being against organized religion in other cities, Atlanta’s hippies did not wish to discard Christianity, nor did the local churches hope to discard the city’s hippies. Rather, they found common ground and influenced one another.

³ From Ed Sanders’ *The Family*, as quoted in “*The Girls Misses What’s Truly Scary About the Manson Story*,” taken from <https://www.thecut.com/2016/07/what-the-girls-misses-about-the-manson-story.html>.

This thesis is not the first examination of the recondite relationship between Christianity and the hippies. The earliest source I have found to publish the connection was *Time*, in its July 7, 1967 issue with the cover story, “The Hippies: Philosophy of a Subculture.” *Time* traced the ethos of the national community to a list of contributors including Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, and Henry David Thoreau. At the same moment *Time* printed their article, a popular poster with a cartoon image of Jesus Christ was found in many hippie homes and “crash pads” during the poster collecting craze of the Sixties—including at least one in Atlanta seen during a drug raid.⁴ Above the image on the poster was the boldened word “Wanted!” Beneath were a list of his charges, including “Practicing medicine, winemaking and food distribution without a license. Interfering with businessmen in the temple,” as well as, “Associating with known criminals, radicals, subversives, prostitutes and street people.” The poster listed his appearance as the “Typical hippie type—Long hair, beard, robe, [and] sandals,” and that he was often seen hanging around “slum areas” and “sneaking out into the desert.” Indeed, the similarities between the hippie lifestyle and biblical stories were not lost on people from the counterculture’s beginning.

In 1998, Doug Rossinow published *The Politics of Authenticity*, the first of a wave of books linking predominantly white student movements of the Sixties with Christianity. The books of this wave usually fell under two umbrellas, the first of which examines how the counterculture affected Christianity and forced churches to adapt to the new age and modernize. These books can take shape as local histories—as is the case of Rossinow’s book which uses Austin, Texas, as a case study—though most examine how Christianity changed nationally. This latter set of books include Mark Oppenheimer’s *Knocking on Heaven’s Door*, Preston Shires’

⁴ “Council Called ‘Chicken’,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, August 28, 1968, 3.

Hippies of the Religious Right, and Grace Elizabeth Hale’s *A Nation of Outsiders*.⁵ While these books make excellent arguments for the national impact of the hippies, Atlanta is often missing and is distinct in that we see the opposite happening: churches influencing the hippies.

The second umbrella of books discussing Christianity alongside the Sixties counterculture are ones that study the Jesus Movement. The Jesus Movement, whose followers were known as “Jesus People” or “Jesus Freaks,” was a national, evangelical subgroup of the late-1960s and early-1970s, that blended the culture and aesthetics of hippies with Christianity—Christian rock is the clearest example of this adaptation. Shires’ *Hippies of the Religious Right* falls into this category as well, but Larry Eskridge’s *God’s Forever Family* is the most definitive study of the subgroup. While Atlanta had an active Jesus Movement, I will not discuss the group in this thesis as my focus is on more mainstream denominations.

Rarer than a dual analysis of hippies and Christianity, are local studies on the Sixties counterculture in Atlanta. In “definitive” histories of the hippies, Atlanta’s counterculture is reduced to no more than a paragraph, as is the case in John Moretta’s *The Hippies*, if mentioned at all.⁶ Likewise, in books about the history of the city of Atlanta during the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of conservatism overshadow the hippie community.

It is worth remembering here that Atlanta’s hippie community lasted for perhaps just a few years. Thus, in the few memoirs and histories about political and religious leaders vital to the

⁵ Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven’s Door: American Religion in the Age of Counterculture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Preston Shires, *Hippies of the Religious Right: From the Countercultures of Jerry Garcia to the Subculture of Jerry Falwell*, (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶ John Moretta, *The Hippies: A 1960s History*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2017)

city's counterculture—*Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor*; *The Life of Peace Apostle Harcourt Klinefelter*; and *As Way Opened*—the inclusions of their experience with the hippie community are coincidentally brief with the trajectory of the community itself.⁷

The most valuable resource on the history of Atlanta's counterculture is Christopher Allen Huff's dissertation "A New Way of Living Together: A History of Atlanta's Hip Community, 1965-1973," published in 2012. As of 2020, Huff's dissertation is the only piece of scholarship that focuses entirely on Atlanta's hippies. In his dissertation, Huff mentions the role that local church groups and leaders had in shaping Atlanta's hippie community, including the Quakers, Rev. Klinefelter, and Rev. Donnelley—however, this is not the focus of his analysis. Instead, Huff's attention is given to the reasons the hippies declined in the city: firebombings and other concentrated attacks toward hippies, the establishment of Colony Square, and other efforts by police and political leaders to remove the hippies.

Lastly, precedents to this thesis have come where least expected. Within the past decade there has been a surge of books published about the Sixties countercultures in Latin America. These books include *Contracultura* by Christopher Dunn, *Psychedelic Chile* by Patrick Barr-Melej, and *The Age of Youth in Argentina* by Valeria Manzano.⁸ While these books are far

⁷ Charles McNair, *Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2017); Harcourt Klinefelter, *The Life of Peace Apostle Harcourt Klinefelter: Globalizing the Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019); Janet Adams Rinard and Janet Boyte Ferguson, *As Way Opened: A History of Atlanta Friends, 1943-1997*, (Atlanta: Atlanta Friends Meeting, 1999).

⁸ Christopher Dunn, *Contracultura: Alternative Arts and Social Transformation in Authoritarian Brazil*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), Patrick Barr-Melej, *Psychedelic Chile: Youth, Counterculture, and the Politics on the Road to Socialism and Dictatorship*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Valeria Manzano, *The Age of Youth in Argentina: Culture, Politics, and Sexuality from Peron to Videla*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

geographically from the Bible Belt South, there are cultural similarities in comparing the hippie communities in these countries with devout Catholic majorities to the movement in Atlanta. This is evidenced in that in both regions, Latin America and the South, there is a close connection to societal values influenced by conservative Christian values, as well as an importance placed on family—thus, running away from home had a deeper impact to these regions.

"Pop histories" about the 1960s and 1970s are numerous and often find their way on best-seller lists. These are books typically written either by music journalists or memoirs by people who "lived the Sixties." Only in the past thirty years has academic literature on the Sixties counterculture been published—and this is a rather limited collection of books. Part of the reason for this recent rise is because the Sixties have just gotten far enough in the rearview mirror of time for historians to see the after-effects of this period of hope and rebellion. This surge in hippie literature coincided with the 25th anniversary of important moments from the 1960s, such as Woodstock and the riots at Chicago's 1968 Democratic National Convention.

Even with this recent flow of scholarship, the general public's knowledge of the era has focused on San Francisco and New York. While these counterculture centers are admittedly fascinating and were emulated by other cities, this limited vantagepoint of just two cities has failed to appreciate the international impact of the Sixties counterculture, and downplayed the movement's complexity and diversity. This thesis contributes to a more complete and nuanced history of the hippies and the city of Atlanta. Through this thesis, we see how two groups in a community, assumed to be at odds with each other, helped each other to grow.

“WE CAN NOT LEARN WAR ANYMORE”: THE ATLANTA FRIENDS MEETING

“We joyfully accept the absurd assignment of striving to make Quaker House at once a school of contemplation and a hot bed of nonviolent revolutionaries.” -John Yungblut, 1967

“Keep coming!” A Marine shouted, while waving forward a truck driver who, upon seeing a group of protestors blocking his path, had slowed down, but not stopped. The truck driver continued forward, gradually pushing the back of a protestor until he was forced to move. As the protestor’s other comrades remained blocking the path, the local police were called to the scene and, alongside the Marines, physically pulled the people from the path, inflicting beatings by fists and batons in the midst of their removal.⁹

This incident happened at the Port Chicago Naval Weapons Station in California, where trucks were transporting napalm—an incendiary mixture of gel and gasoline, which sticks to and continues to burn its targets upon detonation—to be used in the Vietnam War. The protestors were against the use of napalm in general, however the fact that these explosives were being transferred across public highways was especially unacceptable to them. There was a clearly marked line of demarcation at Port Chicago—the protestors were free to stand on one side, but if they crossed over it, they would immediately be charged with federal trespassing. The trespassing charge would even be applied if the 25-ton trucks, with the word “EXPLOSIVES” painted on the side, deliberately pushed the protestors across the line.

More beatings and over thirty arrests took place throughout the night. In one situation, a woman was dragged from her wrists by handcuffs across fifty yards of gravel. Each time a protestor was thrown into the police van already crowded with their singing comrades, their peers applauded and cheered them as martyrs.

⁹ “Vigilers Halt Explosives at Port Chicago,” the *Berkeley Barb*, August 12, 1966, 1-3.

In the wake of the anti-napalm protests at Port Chicago, most of the protesters were released on their own recognizance. Only three individuals refused and remained in custody.¹⁰ One of them was Isobel Cerney, a 54-year-old Quaker who was over 2,000 miles away from her home in Atlanta, Georgia. That Cerney traveled so far to face arrest and, furthermore, refused to be released highlights what is at the heart of this chapter and a vital component to the Quaker community of Atlanta—the nurturing for their members to peacefully do what one feels is right, in spite of the repercussions. In this case, Cerney facing jailtime in an unfamiliar place.

Origins of the Atlanta Friends Meeting and Early Activism

The Society of Friends, more commonly known as the Quakers, is a Protestant sect of Christianity with over 210,000 members worldwide today.¹¹ They call their fellow followers of the faith “Friends,” and their churches “Meetings.” The Quakers trace their origins to seventeenth-century England, when George Fox put forth his radical belief that a religion can exist and be practiced without the guidance and supervision of clergy. This was derived from Fox’s belief that God exists within everyone, what the Quakers have since referred to as the “Inner Light.” The Inner Light concept influences their belief that no one is more superior to another, causing them to disavow hierarchies and, more relevant to this thesis, forms the basis for the Peace Testimony.¹² This testimony is the reason Quakers have historically fought for peace

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Quakers,” the British Broadcasting Corporation, https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers_1.shtml, (accessed May 27, 2020).

¹² Chuck Fager, “The Trouble with Ministers,” Quaker Theology, <http://quakertheology.org/ministers-1.htm>, (accessed May 27, 2020).

and against social injustices, such as slavery. If you were to believe God is within everybody, would you go to war with God, or keep another person in bondage?

George Fox and a group of other Friends made a statement to King Charles II in 1660, which became the most well-known assertion of the Peace Testimony in a document titled, “A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God, Called Quakers, Against all Plotters and Fighters in the World.” The most cited line from this declaration that also best summarizes the testimony is as follows:

We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for an end or pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing of evil, and again to move us into it; and we certainly known and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdom of the world...therefore we cannot learn war any more.¹³

Quakers arrived in the United States in 1656, however it would be nearly 100 years before Georgia had its first attempted Quaker Settlement. However, because Quakers were tolerant of Native Americans, opposed to slavery, and ambivalent to the American Revolution, many Georgians did not welcome them. In 1807, the Georgia Quakers moved and merged with Societies in Tennessee, Virginia, the Carolinas, and the newly established state of Ohio (where slavery was banned).¹⁴

Then, one day in February 1943, an Atlanta newspaper carried an advertisement, “the Atlanta Quaker Group (Society of Friends) will meet for supper and a worship program Sunday at 6 P.M. at the Central YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association), 145 Luckie St. The public

¹³ Taken from page 42 of Janet Ferguson and Janet Rinard’s *As Way Opened*, which itself is quoting the Peace Testimony on page 153 in William Comforts’ *The Quaker Way of Life*.

¹⁴ Janet Boyte Ferguson and Janet Adams Rinard, *As Way Opened: A History of Atlanta Friends Meeting 1943-1997* (Atlanta: Atlanta Friends Meeting, 1999), x-xi.

is invited.” About thirty people gathered the following day at the Luckie Street YMCA; the Quakers had returned to Georgia.¹⁵

The Atlanta Friends Meeting was unofficial during their early years, in that they were not yet recognized by the American Friends Fellowship Council in Philadelphia. The social issues at the forefront of their meetings were segregation and World War II, which was reflected in their earliest community outreach programs that included sending clothes and soap to war-torn Europe, a clothing drive for an orphanage for black children, and the construction of a daycare in the basement of a black church in Atlanta.¹⁶

When Atlanta’s Quakers were finally approved by Philadelphia in 1951, it took eight more years before they found a house of worship that some people could live in. In 1959, the group purchased a building at 1384 Fairview Road, which doubled as the headquarters for their local peace organizing and social activism in the city until it was sold in 1989.¹⁷

In October 1960, John Yungblut began serving as Quaker House’s Program Director. Segregation and the Civil Rights Movement were among the most pressing matters in the South at that time, and Atlanta—the home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—was a hotbed of activism. Once a month, Yungblut met at Quaker House with local clergy to discuss ways their churches could be more involved in the fight for civil rights. In March 1961, Dr. King began teaching a 10-week seminar entitled “The Philosophy and Practice of Nonviolence,” selecting Quaker House as the venue.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

Peace Efforts and the Hiroshima Day March

Attaining world peace through nonviolent methods is the ultimate goal for Quaker activists, and in 1960, members of the Atlanta Friends Meeting joined over one thousand additional Friends from across the country to circle the Pentagon in a silent vigil on the 300th anniversary of the Peace Testimony. This preceded the legendary event in counterculture history when Abbie Hoffman and his cohort led fifty thousand people in the March to the Pentagon in 1967, where some participants attempted to “levitate” or “exorcise” the building.

Many who lived during the Cold War era remember the constant state of fear they felt. The possibility of an immediate death caused by a nuclear attack lingered over contemporaries. Consequently, nuclear disarmament became a top priority for peace fighters. On March 7, 1962, peace activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Linus Pauling, gave a speech against nuclear testing at Glenn Memorial Chapel at Emory University in Atlanta. The event was sponsored by the Atlanta Friends Meeting and the Student Christian Association. Pauling told the capacity-filled auditorium, “It is not too much to engage in civil disobedience to save our lives. We must demand and get disarmament through international agreement.”¹⁹ This gathering led to the formation of the Atlanta Peace Council and the Atlanta Peace Fellowship, separate groups that sought to strengthen local efforts in Atlanta for nuclear disarmament and to protest war.²⁰

The following year, Pope John XXIII issued his *Pacem in terris* (*Peace on Earth*) encyclical—a letter written by the Pope to all Catholic bishops. This popular encyclical praised nations for their preference to settle disputes through “negotiation and agreement, and not by recourse to arms,” and delineated that “Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily

¹⁹ Barbara Milz, “Protest A-Bombs, Pauling Asks Here,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, March 8, 1962, 16.

²⁰ Ferguson and Rinard, 43.

integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life.”²¹ The ideas put forth in *Pacem in terris* became the subject of an interfaith and interdisciplinary conference at the United Nations in New York in January 1965. Those attending the conference decided that similar, smaller convocations should be held at the local level throughout the country.²²

John Yungblut, alongside university professors and other religious leaders, organized the Atlanta Peace Convocation in the ballroom of the Atlanta Motor Hotel in December 1965, to discuss “the moral and technological implications of peace on Earth.”²³ About 230 people attended the conference, which led to the formation of Atlantans for Peace, led by Nan Pendergrast. Although Pendergrast was not yet a Quaker, he frequently involved himself with peace activities organized by Quaker House, and later he became a formal member. Membership of the Atlantans for Peace reached up to 500 people in 1967, and the meetings were often held at Quaker House.²⁴

The Gulf of Tonkin Incident and the ensuing placement of nearly half-a-million troops in Vietnam by 1968 had come at the forefront of national attention and divided Americans. As the war became a stalemate and world opinion was against the continued actions of the United States, the increasing number of American casualties made their way onto the daily news. This resulted in more Americans becoming interested in peace issues.

America’s increased involvement in the Vietnam War coincided with members of the Atlanta Friends Meeting feeling less welcomed in the local Civil Rights Movement as

²¹ Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, (April 11, 1963) retrieved from the Holy See, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html (accessed May 28, 2020).

²² Ferguson and Rinard, 70.

²³ “Churchmen Set Up Seminar on Peace,” *the Atlanta Constitution*, December 4, 1965, 6.

²⁴ Ferguson and Rinard, 70.

organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) expelled the involvement of white people. Of the era, John Yungblut said, “As the transition began to come where white volunteers, instead of being warmly received, were increasingly rejected by the Black Power movement, some [white] people would come [to me]...wondering how to adjust to this...whether to try to stay with it or to step aside and let black leaders take over.” One Friend volunteering in Vine City, perhaps Atlanta’s most impoverished black neighborhood at the time, quit his volunteer work after feeling personally attacked when he heard a sound truck in the neighborhood asking, “What has your white Jesus done for you today?”²⁵ As a result of this unwantedness, challenging the Vietnam War took precedence as the main social justice cause by the Atlanta Friends Meeting.

One of the largest projects taken on nationally by the Quakers was Vietnam Summer in 1967. Vietnam Summer began as an idea by Gar Alperovitz, a founding Fellow of the Harvard Institute of Politics, who believed that more people opposed the Vietnam War than those who actually attended marches or participated in demonstrations.²⁶ Alperovitz envisioned a summer of canvassing campaigns held at local levels to inspire those “undecideds and unaffiliated doves” to end their timidity and vocalize their opposition.²⁷ The result was a summer that involved over 26,000 volunteers in over 700 projects across the United States, with actions including “canvassing door-to-door, counseling on draft resistance, holding teach-ins, conducting local demonstrations, and disseminating anti-war literature.”²⁸ For the Atlanta Friends Meeting, the

²⁵ Ferguson and Rinard, 67.

²⁶ Christopher Allen Huff, “A New Way of Living Together: A History of Atlanta’s Hip Community, 1965-1973,” (PhD dissertation, University of Georgia, 2012), 127.

²⁷ “Poll,” the *New Yorker*, August 12, 1967, 21.

²⁸ “Vietnam Summer: Activism during the Vietnam War,” the American Friends Service Committee, <https://www.afsc.org/story/vietnam-summer-activism-during-vietnam-war>, (Accessed May 28, 2020).

pinnacle of Vietnam Summer came on August 6—Hiroshima Day—when Atlanta’s largest antiwar march took place. The march was principally organized by Don Bender, a Mennonite who had just moved to Atlanta from Delaware.

Civil rights activists, including members of the SCLC and the increasingly confrontational SNCC helped plan the event. Organizers initially planned for the march to begin at Piedmont Park and end at Grant Park, where a rally would be held. But, Atlanta’s Parks and Recreation Department sought to nix the plan; they said the park’s pavilion was already reserved for a family reunion and suggested that the march instead end at a parking lot near City Hall. Tom Coffin, editor for Atlanta’s underground newspaper the *Great Speckled Bird*, believed the true motivation for the Parks Department’s suggestion to be racial; Grant Park was the gathering spot for the city’s Ku Klux Klan meetings.²⁹

The Parks Department and the organizers reached a compromise: the rally would still be held in Grant Park, however it would be somewhere away from the pavilion. According to the *Bird*, a lady was present at the negotiation meeting who was “prominent in the liberal wing of Atlanta Society,” which also included Ralph McGill, the editor for the *Atlanta Constitution*. This unnamed lady offered to include in the negotiation that the *Atlanta Constitution* would cover the march on the front page of the paper, along with a photograph. All organizers of the march agreed to the compromise, except the SNCC representatives, who preferred a confrontation at Grant Park. The compromise ultimately caused SNCC to back out of the march.³⁰ After several requests by Harcourt Klinefelter, the “minister to the street people” who acted as a counselor to Atlanta’s hippie community and was a former SCLC staff member, and Tom Houck, a fellow

²⁹ Huff, 130.

³⁰ Tom Coffin, “Few Remember the Day,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, August 17, 1970, 2.

member of the SCLC, Reverend Hosea Williams agreed to participate in the rally two days before it was scheduled to take place. Williams, who was one of the most well-respected leaders of the SCLC, quickly took over the planning for the event from Don Bender and the others. “That was Hosea’s way,” recalls Bender, “once he became involved, he was in the lead.”³¹

Atlanta’s Hiroshima Day March resulted in over five hundred people from various walks of life, including radicals, hippies, civil rights activists, and older Americans. While officially a memorial for the lives lost after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, many attendees supported world peace, and disapproved of all wars—including the one raging in Vietnam.³² The rally in Grant Park featured speeches from leaders of both black and white churches, as well as members of the SCLC (such as Ralph Abernathy), and black comedian and activist Dick Gregory. The march was the last of its kind for the era in Atlanta, as demonstrations afterwards became less biracial and were composed of mostly younger people.³³

Six months after the Hiroshima Day Peace March, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, marking a watershed moment in the world that struck the Atlanta Friends Meeting on a personal level. Many with the Meeting, including John Yungblut and his wife June, were close friends to the King family and even had dinner at his house the week before his death. After his assassination, June went to the King household and began organizing the hundreds of sympathy letters sent to Dr. King’s wife, Coretta, so that she could easily respond to them at a later date. King had been in the process of creating the Poor People’s Campaign at the time of his death, after which the SCLC’s second-in-command, Ralph Abernathy, took control. June Yungblut assisted with organizing thirty-five Atlantans from Vine City and Cabbagetown—

³¹ Don Bender, interviewed by author, November 7, 2019.

³² Ibid.

³³ Huff, 131.

another one of Atlanta's impoverished black neighborhoods—for a bus ride to and from Washington, D.C., to participate in the campaign.³⁴

At the same time of Dr. King's assassination, Quaker House began to fall under financial hardships. These two events taken together motivated the Yungbluts' decision to leave the Atlanta Friends Meeting. In August 1968, they moved to Washington, D.C., where they worked as codirectors of the International Student House (ISH)—a building established by Quakers in 1934 to house international students attending American universities.

Draft Counseling

In June of 1968, Don Bender—one of the principle organizers of the Hiroshima Day Peace March—formally joined the Atlanta Friends Meeting. His decision was largely influenced by the fact that his former congregation, the Mennonite Church, was not as involved with activist efforts.³⁵ Soon after the Yungbluts left in August, Don joined Quaker House's Board of Trustees. The following year he married a fellow Quaker, Judy Harak, in a ceremony led by a Catholic priest and a Mennonite minister under the care of a Quaker service—“we're *really* married,” Judy says.³⁶ They moved into Quaker House together in June 1970.

As the Benders were getting married, conscription for the Vietnam War increased. Participation in the war, of course, went against the Quakers' Peace Testimony. While all of Atlanta's Friends supported those who refused to register for the draft, there was a split in the Meeting. One group felt they should focus less on their Quaker identity, and more on social activism, while the other faction wanted to focus more attention on worship and studying their

³⁴ Ferguson and Rinard, 85-86.

³⁵ Bender interview.

³⁶ Ibid.

Quaker heritage.³⁷ Ultimately, it was decided that the Sixties was an exceptional time and participating in the era's social activism was a way of remaining true to their Quaker identity and heritage.

During the early years of the draft, counseling efforts could be considered treason in the United States—technically in legal opinion and certainly in public opinion. The Society of Friends, however, had special privileges because of its historical recognition as a peace church.³⁸ By the end of 1969, Quaker House's Board of Trustees offered Quaker House as a draft counseling center, coordinated by Don Bender. Quakers hung posters around high schools and college campuses, advertising the draft counseling services offered by Quaker House.

In June 1970, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the *Welsh v. the United States of America* decision, which allowed those who are non-religious to become conscientious objectors (CO). That is, they could refuse to participate in the military based upon their religion or other beliefs. (During the Vietnam War, CO's were typically assigned to an alternative civil service.) CO status was the most common method to avoid the draft, and the *Welsh* Decision allowed more people than ever before to qualify. This caused Quaker House to offer draft counseling services from 6 o'clock at night to 9 o'clock, four-nights-per-week. For his efforts, Bender was paid \$160 a month, plus free rent for him and Judy at Quaker House.³⁹

Soon, Bender took leadership of a new group, the Draft Counselors of Atlanta, formed with the Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence (AWIN). Headquartered at Quaker House, the Draft Counselors of Atlanta trained Georgians, including 40 in Atlanta alone, to provide draft-age students in Georgia high schools and universities with various options, should they attempt to

³⁷ Ferguson and Rinard, 109.

³⁸ Ibid., 95.

³⁹ Bender interview.

evade the draft. The Draft Counselors of Atlanta emerged as the preeminent center for draft counseling in the Southeast with the draft board itself sometimes calling Quaker House for a clearer understanding of the rules.⁴⁰

Quaker House counseled up to one hundred people a month and was, for the most part, successful in their efforts. They were, however, in close contact with Quakers in Toronto in the event that people needed to escape to Canada as a last resort. Success at evading the draft was achieved mostly through CO status, however Quaker House also had the ability to give referrals to local doctors who specialized in the extensive list of medical conditions disqualifying one for the draft.⁴¹

Other methods of draft resistance led by Quaker House included the distribution of a leaflet on draft alternatives to all Atlanta high school seniors, and a more extensive resource book for high school counselors. (Both resources were written under Don Bender's guidance). The United States Selective Service also required all men of draft age to carry a card in their wallet, which listed their draft classification or CO status. A national movement emerged to mail these cards back to the Selective Service, which Quaker House organized locally in Atlanta. Bender participated and turned his card in as well.⁴²

During the Vietnam War, Quaker House, along with other groups, convinced local Atlanta radio stations to carry antiwar spots in a campaign titled "Unsell the War." On July 14, 1971, Quaker House gave a press release formally declaring their stance on the Draft:

We do not believe in the right of government to coerce young men to serve in its armed forces. Therefore, we will continue to assist young men of draft age...Quaker House wishes to make explicit that we will assist and support young men who choose any of the alternatives (legal or illegal) for reasons of conscience.

⁴⁰ Ferguson and Rinard, 101.

⁴¹ Ibid., 95-102.

⁴² Ibid., 99.

Quaker House has counselors trained in Selective Service Law and aims to give the best counsel possible—free of charge. Registrants are welcome to come back as often as necessary to work out the option they have elected.⁴³

The Quakers soon expanded their services to include getting people home who were already in the military and wanted to leave. The first and most well publicized of these cases happened when Atlanta Friend Dwight Ferguson received a letter from a Friend in Chicago, David Finke, in April 1968. The letter concerned Russell Malone, a young man who had gone absent-without-leave (AWOL) and was in hiding. Finke requested a “sympathetic but inconspicuous” home for Malone to stay. The Atlanta Friends Meeting agreed to allow Malone to stay at Quaker House, however they had written to the military beforehand to let them know he would be given sanctuary at Quaker House.

Malone also wrote a letter to the military, explaining his disillusionment with the military and other factors that influenced him to go AWOL—the letter was printed in both the *Bird* and the *Atlanta Journal*, the latter being the second highest circulated mainstream newspaper in Atlanta. He arrived at Quaker House in the trunk of a car on the morning of June 1, 1969 and gave interviews with several television stations throughout the afternoon. Malone and Quaker House knew it was only a matter of time before the military took action to remove him. The FBI arrested him the following day.⁴⁴

As the Vietnam War came to an end, so too did the need for draft counseling. Throughout the 1970s, Quaker House continued to offer legal services to expatriates, deserters, and other

⁴³ Draft press release as quoted on page 98 of *As Way Opened*.

⁴⁴ Ferguson and Rinard, 91.

men whose legal problems extended beyond the end of the war.⁴⁵ At the turn of the decade, new scourges began to take hold of Atlanta's youth within their own community.

Continued Outreach in Atlanta

Many hippie youths in Atlanta fell victim to drug addiction and excessive homelessness in the early 1970s. In extreme circumstances, the Atlanta Friends let troubled youths stay overnight at Quaker House. One example that stands out in Don Bender's memory is a war deserter who arrived in Atlanta and was making his way to Canada. One night, after the man had been wandering the streets, he returned to Quaker House paranoid, and under the influence of a cocktail of drugs. Bender first called someone from the youth group who was familiar with the adverse effects of drugs, but later he called a doctor, who was also a Friend, and who talked the man through the night. Another time, Bender recalls, a young homeless couple with a small child stayed at Quaker House until they could find a more stable situation.⁴⁶

Many in the Atlanta Friends Meeting also volunteered at the Metro Atlanta Mediation Center, colloquially referred to as "the Bridge." The Bridge was established in the spring of 1970 by Bob Griffin, a graduate student at Georgia State University, and Greg Santos, a priest from the Monastery of the Holy Ghost in Conyers, Georgia. Historian Christopher Allen Huff summarizes the role of the Bridge in his doctoral dissertation as, "[providing] counseling to families and temporary shelter for runaways," and that it "aimed to get the parents and kids together at the mediation center to work out their problems but the best solution did not necessarily mean that the runaways would return home. The final decision ultimately rested with

⁴⁵ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁶ Bender interview.

the child.” Before the meetings were held between the runaways and their families, the families had to agree to allow the child to stay if they wished at the end of their meeting. One of the Quakers involved at the Bridge was Harriet Treadwell, who served as their bookkeeper and secretary.

While the Atlanta Friends were very supportive of the hip community’s call for peace and nonviolence, there was a spectrum of acceptance to drugs and open relationships that usually coincided with age—the younger generations sometimes participated or were at least accepting, whereas the older generations struggled to understand the connection between peace and these lifestyle choices. On drugs, Bender says, “Many friends...would smoke grass. Not a lot, but some...I guess there was a little bit of experimenting with hallucinogens.” When it came to harder, more addictive drugs, Bender says, “It’s hard for anybody to see that as anything but negative...I don’t think there was any real sympathy with that.”

Of polyamorous relationships, Bender recalls that some Atlanta Quakers had open-marriages and open-relationships, but the vast majority did not. Although they did not condemn those who chose to experiment with free love, most individuals still did not see the “free-for-all,” as Bender puts it, as positive. Another aspect the Atlanta Friends Meeting viewed as a negative effect of the hippies is that, while they understood their decision to “drop out” of America’s capitalistic society in theory, they disapproved that these youths relied on begging for money or a place to stay.⁴⁷

The influence of the Atlanta Friends Meeting on the city’s hippie community was reciprocal. This could be seen most blatantly in the clothing of the Atlanta Friends Meeting, which entered the 1960s in plain and modest dress, that became more relaxed by the end of the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

decade, with men wearing long hair and beards, and women leaving their hair unkempt. Some Friends even began attending services barefoot. Furthermore, the adult Quakers were conscious of their children's interest in rock n' roll, yet they wanted them to stay away from the live music venues on the Strip. At this time, hard drugs and violence were becoming increasingly common in the neighborhood and many hippies were moving out. Quaker House thus allowed the youth group to organize a coffeehouse in the basement that played live folk music. Continuing in the social responsibility footsteps of the older generations, the youth group charged an entrance fee of 50 cents which was used to fund a school in Bolivia.⁴⁸

The cultural adoptions expanded well-beyond just clothing and music—some Quakers across the United States began living in communes, and a larger number practiced community living. Definitions and distinctions are needed here: communal living is when a group of people with shared values and belief systems live together in the same space, sharing chores and assets. This is often applied to people that live in remote, rural areas such as Twin Oaks, or Wavy Gravy's Hog Farm. Communes may also include people sharing the same building within a large city, such as in the Grateful Dead house in San Francisco.⁴⁹

In 1976, four Atlanta Quakers, Perry and Harriet Treadwell, Nick Butterfield, and Wayne Schucker—moved in with three other individuals into a house at 1434 Miller Avenue in Candler Park. Very limited information is available on Quaker communal homes in Atlanta, other than in the history of the Meeting, *As Way Opened*, where authors Janet Boyte Ferguson and Janet Rinard say the housemates “earned and kept their own money, but divided rent and utilities among themselves. They rotated chores, shared shopping and cooking, ate supper together each

⁴⁸ Ferguson and Rinard, 113.

⁴⁹ For more on communes, see Timothy Miller's *The 60's Communes: Hippies and Beyond*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999).

evening, and held weekly meetings to thresh out problems.” The original group broke up and the house was sold within two years of starting the project.

A second Quaker commune home was organized in Atlanta’s Inman Park neighborhood, where Chris and John Newland; Steve Froemming; and Toby, Pam, and Nathan Ives, moved into also in 1976. The rent for the house cost \$125 and each person tried to eat for one dollar a day. Pam Ives, who would eventually start the Feminist Women’s Health Center in Atlanta, raised goats behind the house. This project too was quickly abandoned.⁵⁰

Community living is different from communal living, in that it is people with a shared vision living in the same neighborhood together, but in separate houses. This method found greater success among the Atlanta Friends Meeting. They implemented community living by purchasing properties in Candler Park, just one block south of Quaker House. Don and Judy Bender were among the first three families to move into the neighborhood and, as of 2020, still live in their home with other Friends as neighbors.

Conclusion

Years before Isobel Cerney got arrested in the Napalm Protests at Port Chicago, she applied to be a member of the Atlanta Friends Meeting in the late 1950s. The Atlanta Friends Meeting was usually very welcoming of everybody, however an emergency meeting was held at Quaker House to discuss Cerney’s application. Cerney was a well-known “pink”—not quite a “red (communist),” but certainly bordered communism—which was a major concern in 1950s America. In the end, Quaker House approved her application in 1960 for one reason: she

⁵⁰ Ferguson and Rinard, 120.

believed in God. All politics and radical beliefs were inconsequential to the Atlanta Friends Meeting.⁵¹

Janet Boyte Ferguson and Janet Rinard say in the preface to their history on the Atlanta Friends Meeting that “Being a Quaker in the South has never been an easy path to follow.”⁵² The same Bible that influenced the anti-war and anti-racist beliefs and rhetoric of the Quakers, was also used by their opponents for justification as well. For Quakers, the belief that God is within everyone influenced their historic and continued nonviolent activist efforts for equality and peace throughout the world. These beliefs found special resonance with civil rights activists, the anti-war movement, and the hippie community in Atlanta. This influence of the Quakers on the local counterculture did not travel one way, as Atlanta Quakers began adopting the clothing, music, and lifestyles of the hippies.

⁵¹ Ibid., 20.

⁵² Ibid., ix.

THE PEACE APOSTLE: HARKY KLINEFELTER AND THE MINISTRY TO THE STREET PEOPLE

“The transient youth of Atlanta represent a direct challenge to the church. They have abandoned the security of middle class Southern culture because they are too sensitive and idealistic to accommodate its racist ideology, its empty ceremonial religiosity, and the vicious class exploitation upon which this culture is based...Harcourt Klinefelter and his young wife have felt this challenge and responded to the call to minister to this creative and confused sector of our society.” -Andrew Young, 1970.

In September 1969, a 31-year-old man named Harky Klinefelter visited a friend living in Atlanta’s hippie district. When Klinefelter arrived at the friend’s house, he noticed the window shades were pulled down—something strange for the individual to do in the middle of the afternoon.⁵³ Klinefelter knocked on the door and a voice told him to come inside.⁵⁴ He had walked into a drug bust carried out by local police and was immediately placed under arrest for occupying a dive—a charge that means a person was inside a place where they knew (or should have known) that a crime was being committed. This included places that offered gambling, drinking unlicensed alcohol, or, as in this case, the selling or possession of illegal drugs.

The arresting officers were unaware that Klinefelter was a reverend of the United Church of Christ, and that he acted as the “Minister to the Street People” in Atlanta. At the time, the United Church of Christ and two other national dominations were already concerned about the conditions of the Atlanta City Jail, with rumors circulating that the jail was unhygienic. However, this was all hearsay for the churches up to this point. When outsiders capable of reprimanding jail officials for the lack of cleanliness were scheduled to visit, rumor had it that the jail would quickly be cleaned for the day. Yet, as fate would have it, Reverend Klinefelter had just walked in on the perfect opportunity to witness Atlanta’s incarcerated experience

⁵³ Author interview with Harcourt Klinefelter, December 22, 2019.

⁵⁴ Bob Malone, “Police Harassment: Bird Suit,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, September 29, 1969, 18.

firsthand. Aware that he would promptly be released if he divulged to the officers he was a minister, he kept the information to himself and was taken to the jail.

Klinefelter was thrown into the “drunk tank,” typically a room where people arrested for public intoxication or driving-under-the-influence are placed until they sober up before facing a judge. In Atlanta during the Sixties, however, the city’s hippies were sometimes thrown in the drunk tank too, even when they were not intoxicated. At the center of the room was a cage where violent offenders waiting to be processed were held. The cage lacked beds, and in place of toilets, it contained buckets filled with urine, feces, and vomit.

The drunk tank did have payphones that charged a dime to operate, and some inmates passed their time by filing down pennies to the weight and size of a dime, hoping to bypass the readers in the phone. Harky went to one of these phones, inserted an actual dime, and called various radio talk shows in Atlanta.

“I’m Reverend Klinefelter and I’m working on trying to clean up the jail,” he told people on the other line, “I am now an inmate.”

He was immediately put live on-air.⁵⁵

This chapter details Harky Klinefelter, a Christian minister who was an active part of Atlanta’s hippie community. In analyzing Reverend Klinefelter’s aid to the city’s youths, it is revealed that not only did Atlanta have a substantial hippie presence—otherwise, of course, he would have had no work to do—but also how Christianity continued to influence the local counterculture.

⁵⁵ Klinefelter Interview.

Early Life and Work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Born Overton Harcourt Klinefelter, Jr., “Harky” grew up in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. A high school dropout, he took the entrance exam to Bloomfield College and was accepted in 1959. During his first year at Bloomfield, he noticed an advertisement looking for help at the Dutch Reformed Church in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. Believing the church was looking for a handyman, Klinefelter interviewed for the job, only to discover that that the church was actually looking for a youth group leader.⁵⁶ He was offered the job, and began working for a church for the first time.

Nineteen-sixty-two was the year of Klinefelter’s third year in college, which was during the Cold War, and the year of the Cuban Missile Crisis. During this time, he studied abroad in London which provided him with two watershed moments that impacted him for the rest of his life. The first of these was when he encountered the Ban the Bomb Movement—an international movement (officially called the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), that began in Britain and advocated for a future without nuclear warfare. One of his classmates took him to a Ban the Bomb rally in London. Klinefelter later quipped that he has “never lost the demonstration virus he caught that day.”⁵⁷

Klinefelter’s second epiphany happened when he visited Coventry Cathedral, about one-hundred miles northwest of London. The original cathedral was bombed years earlier by the Germans during World War II, however a new cathedral was quickly rebuilt next to the ruins. The ruins remain as a reminder of the “the folly and waste of war.”⁵⁸ The church kept some of

⁵⁶ Harcourt Klinefelter, *The Life of Peace Apostle Harcourt Klinefelter: Globalizing the Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 16-17.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁸ “Our History,” Coventry Cathedral, <https://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/wpsite/our-history/>, (accessed July 15, 2020).

the charred wood from the original structure to build a crucifix which has since been replaced by a replica. What was important to Klinefelter about the Coventry story is that after the church was bombed, the residents of Coventry refused to take revenge by going to war. Instead, the provost of the church inscribed the words “Father Forgive” behind the destroyed altar. The church soon created the Coventry Prayer for peace and reconciliation, which is as follows:

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
FATHER FORGIVE.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
FATHER FORGIVE.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
FATHER FORGIVE

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, FATHER FORGIVE.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
FATHER FORGIVE.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children, FATHER
FORGIVE.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God, FATHER
FORGIVE.

*Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ
forgave you.⁵⁹*

Reverend Klinefelter still incorporates this prayer into his services, for it acts as a perfect embodiment of his own lifelong commitment to teach nonviolent conflict resolution.⁶⁰

Upon returning to the United States, Klinefelter received his BA in philosophy from Bloomfield College, graduating cum laude. He began working toward a master’s degree in theology at Yale Divinity School, where he continued working with a Christian youth group at a church in New Haven. While attending Yale, Klinefelter and a friend, Homer McCall, visited a

⁵⁹ “The Coventry Litany of Reconciliation,” The Community of the Cross and Nails at Coventry Cathedral, <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/the-coventry-litany-of-reconciliation/>, (accessed June 11, 2020).

⁶⁰ Klinefelter, 19.

local church with a black congregation. McCall was from Atlanta, and his home church was Ebenezer Baptist. At the time, Ebenezer Baptist was ministered by Martin Luther King, Sr. His son, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the assistant minister and had already founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).⁶¹

In 1965, Klinefelter became an intern for the SCLC and moved to Atlanta. He was important to the organization because he owned a tape recorder, which was uncommon and expensive at the time. Klinefelter would use his tape recorder to record Dr. King's speeches and important interviews, which he would then play over the phone to the news media across the county. Within a year, he became the SCLC's Assistant Director of Public Relations.⁶²

Work with the SCLC took up most of Klinefelter's time, but at the urging of Dr. King, Klinefelter went back to Yale to finish his degree. He began working on his master's thesis, "The Church as a Movement Rather Than an Institution." Klinefelter used the SCLC as an example of how churches and church groups could do more than just recite scripture—churches could also organize their congregations and utilize lessons in the Bible to change society.⁶³

While Klinefelter was nearing the completion of his degree, Dr. King was assassinated. Klinefelter flew back to Atlanta and was responsible for handling media coverage of his funeral. After the funeral, Klinefelter completed his master's degree and became an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. His ordination was held in his hometown of Glen Ridge, and was led by Martin Luther King, Sr.

While the United Church of Christ has a diverse spectrum of followers, the denomination is viewed as one the more liberal Protestant sects of Christianity. The denomination was created

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Ibid., 30.

⁶³ Author email with Harcourt Klinefelter, December 11, 2019.

when the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical Reformed Church united in 1957. The Congregational branch had a history of activism with previous involvement in abolition, women's suffrage, and civil rights. The Evangelical Reformed practiced the "social gospel"—applying Christian ethics to social problems such as poverty, alcoholism, and child labor—thus, they were responsible for the establishment of several schools, hospitals, and orphanages.⁶⁴ Reverend Klinefelter fit right in with the young denomination when they united, as he saw it epitomizing the church as a movement.

The Ministry to the Street People

Klinefelter continued working with the SCLC until the organization faced financial hardships in 1969. At that time, he, as well as most of the SCLC staff, were laid off. Still living in Atlanta, Klinefelter began shifting his attention to a new concern in Atlanta: the hundreds of young runaways who flocked to the city to live the hippie lifestyle in "the Haight-Ashbury of the South."

When hippies first made their appearance in Atlanta during 1967, there were adequate living spaces and "crash pads"—private homes, usually but not exclusively owned by fellow hippies, where transients could stay free of charge for being part of the national community. By 1969, many of these homes were either firebombed or demolished for coding violations. Homelessness became a serious issue in Atlanta and some youths had to resort to nightly prostitution for a place to stay. Even before fully devoting himself to Atlanta's hippie community, Klinefelter recalls one night when he found a young, homeless couple with a baby

⁶⁴ "Who are you Calling Liberal?" by J. Bennett Guess, published on September 30, 2004. Located at the United Church of Christ website, <https://www.ucc.org/who-are-you-calling-liberal>. (Accessed June 10, 2020)

on the streets. He allowed the family to stay in his study, where the baby slept in one of his desk drawers.⁶⁵

At the same time homelessness was becoming prevalent, so too was the use of heroin and amphetamines in Atlanta's hippie circles. In October 1969, the *Atlanta Constitution* published an article titled "Drugs and Youth," which described the popularity and effects of cannabis and LSD to mainstream readers. About a month after Atlanta's "straight" society began learning about these drugs, the *Atlanta Constitution* published an article about a machine confiscated by police that produced half-a-million tabs of amphetamines per day.⁶⁶ By 1970, heroin addiction and heroin-related arrests around Atlanta's 10th Street Area became such a big topic that it was regularly covered in the *Atlanta Constitution*.

Local churches took notice of this and saw the importance of having a counselor available to these troubled youths. Klinefelter was an obvious candidate for such a project, because in addition to having already established friendships in Atlanta's counterculture, he had worked as a youth leader during his undergraduate years at Bloomfield College, and while attending Yale Divinity School. Klinefelter shared with these youths the idea of being part of a worldwide movement to use nonviolence as a means of attaining world peace, which spoke to him personally because of his work with Dr. King, and because of his longstanding interest in peaceful reconciliation.

In 1970, Klinefelter proposed a plan to three national denominations: the United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and the United Presbyterians. The project was titled the "Ministry to the Street People," and Klinefelter proposed that he would serve as the minister,

⁶⁵ Klinefelter interview.

⁶⁶ "State Drug Operation Smashed," the *Atlanta Constitution*, December 16, 1969, 12C.

providing guidance and counseling to the troubled youths, while also receiving an income paid for by the shared mission funds from the headquarters of the denominations.⁶⁷ The Ministry to the Street People was approved and Klinefelter immersed himself even more with the local counterculture, coming to be known by Atlanta's hippies as the more informal "Reverend Harky."

His responsibilities as the Minister to the Street People were to act as an intermediary between runaways and their parents, as well as to find Atlanta contacts who could provide food, a place to sleep, and/or other services to the youths. Klinefelter's mission was especially important during the winter months when the runaways—mostly sixteen or seventeen years old, but some as young as twelve—were outside in the cold.⁶⁸ The ministry was operated from Klinefelter's home on the east side of Piedmont Park at 539 Elmwood Avenue. A small building in his backyard doubled as the headquarters for the Atlanta Workshop in Nonviolence (AWIN) for a period.

Reverend Klinefelter differentiates between the terms "street people" and "hippies" deliberately. "Street people" was the umbrella category that hippies, as well as bikers, drug dealers, and general runaways fell under. Many of the people he worked with were homeless, runaway youths, but this did not necessarily mean they were participant in other countercultural activities. Because he provided support to all these groups, he preferred the wider categorization although the vast majority were indeed hippies.⁶⁹ "Hippies opposed materialism, bourgeois

⁶⁷ Klinefelter interview.

⁶⁸ Gene Guerrero, Jr., "Community," the *Great Speckled Bird* (December 22, 1969), 2.

⁶⁹ Author email with Harcourt Klinefelter, December 11, 2019.

mentality, and the lack of freedom in society,” Klinefelter wrote in his autobiography, “[whereas] street people take this to mean ‘everything is free.’”⁷⁰

It should be noted that Klinefelter was not Atlanta’s only minister in this capacity. For example, another of these ministers was selected by the Atlanta Christian Council of Churches, a group composed of Atlanta’s First Baptist Church, the First Presbyterian Church, the North Baptist Church of Decatur, and the North Avenue Presbyterian Church. This minister’s name was Dr. Malcolm McDowell, who was a retired seminary professor at the time of his selection. An important difference between Klinefelter’s support and that offered by the Atlanta Christian Council of Churches’ “Task Force” was that Klinefelter was an actual part of the city’s hippie community. Tom Allerton of the task force described their work with the counterculture rather belittling as continuing the “Christ-like philosophy” to provide ministry to “socially disoriented people,” and that if they did not save them, then “some other forces might claim their lives.”⁷¹

Reverend Klinefelter and the Police

Klinefelter disapproved of the Atlanta police’s treatment of hippies. It was common for Atlanta police to hide outside of hip business, such as headshops, and search patrons as they left. This sort of harassment caused Bo and Linda Lozoff to shutdown Middle Earth, one of the city’s first headshops. In October 1970, the Georgia Court of Appeals ruled that police did not always have to knock before searching a home. The appeal was in response to an episode in March 1970, when police arrested two men for heroin and amphetamines. Prior to making the arrests, the officers believed that if they announced they were there to serve a search warrant, all

⁷⁰ Klinefelter, 46-47.

⁷¹ Terry Anderson, “Church Group Acts to Help ‘Minister’ to Hippies Here,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, March 24, 1970, 6C.

evidence inside the home would have been destroyed and/or the officers could have been shot by a pistol that an anonymous informant revealed was kept on the premises.⁷² After the “No Knock Ruling” was upheld, raids on homes and businesses owned by hippies became even more common.

Treatment by the police sometimes bordered between corruption and cruelty. In one situation, a local man named Wayne Wilson was hoping to schedule a “Wino March.” The peculiar march was meant to protest common charges brought against heavy drinkers in Atlanta, such as public intoxication. Wilson argued this was unfair, because the taxes that “winos” paid each time they purchased heavily taxed alcohol was more than the taxes paid by other citizens. The march was scheduled for Monday, October 5, 1970, but Wilson got arrested on Saturday night after stopping to distribute sandwiches to friends in Plaza Park. A policeman approached Wilson, asked him to confirm his name, and then arrested him for public intoxication and possession of pills without a prescription. Wilson claimed he had nothing to drink that day and that the pills were prescribed to him for bronchitis, he just did not have them in the bottle. On Sunday, the day before the scheduled march, Klinefelter rushed to collect nickels and dimes from hippies and other residents in the 10th Street Area to bail Wilson out of jail. Klinefelter was able to do so in time and the march continued as planned.⁷³

Yet another example of Klinefelter’s assistance with people who fell victim to unfair police treatment was when a man was arrested for possessing cannabis and occupying a dive. When the man was first arrested, he complained to the officers about a toothache. For a week,

⁷² “Police ‘No Knock’ Ruling Upheld by Georgia Court,” the *Atlanta Daily World*, October 30, 1970, 1.

⁷³ Tom Sherwood and Gene Stephens, “Hippies Bail Wino Unit Organizer,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, October 5, 1970, 1A.

the officers denied his requests to seek medical attention until they finally agreed to take him to Grady Memorial Hospital. When he arrived, the man was handcuffed to a hospital bed for four hours and only had his temperature taken before being released. The police transported him back later that day, but hospital officials refused to admit him because he had already been seen earlier, thus they believed he was looking for an opportunity to escape. The incarcerated man eventually got in touch with Rev. Klinefelter, who was able to take him to a dentist.⁷⁴

Klinefelter was not, however, against Atlanta's police force writ large. In one juxtaposing scene, a judge was beginning a sentencing trial at the Atlanta Municipal Courthouse for members of Atlanta's Revolutionary Youth Movement (ARYM)—in short, a local faction of Students for a Democratic Society, a New Leftist student organization. The sentence was being handed down for a confrontation ARYM had with the leadership of Chase Manhattan, when the bank held a conference at the Atlanta Marriott to discuss establishing banks in developing countries. Just as the trial was beginning, Klinefelter led a group of demonstrators to the nearby police station requesting that officers receive better pay and better working conditions. The picket signs in the demonstration carried such phrases as, "Longhairs and boys in blue unite to fight political injustices!"

The ARYM members angrily screamed down from the third floor of the courthouse at Rev. Klinefelter. A debate ensued with members of ARYM shouting that the police were just the armed guard of America's ruling class, and Klinefelter arguing back in his typical reconciliatory fashion that "if hips can demonstrate to cops that they support their just demands as working

⁷⁴ Bob Malone, "Police Harassment: Bird Suit," the *Great Speckled Bird*, September 29, 1969, 18.

people, then the cops will perhaps come to have some understanding and tolerance of the long hairs and be less apt to harass them.”⁷⁵ The debate continued.

Aside from this confrontation with ARYM, Klinefelter maintained a uniquely positive relationship with both the hip and “straight” communities. Of course, working so closely with hippies and the SCLC in the South during the Sixties always risked potential danger. Klinefelter recalls one night he was walking home after a peace demonstration and realized he was being followed by a car. At some point, a gun was aimed at Klinefelter from the car window, and it became apparent that the man reflected the mentality that it was un-American to be against the Vietnam War. Rather than continuing home, Rev. Klinefelter walked toward the nearby police station and the man drove off into the night. The individual was later arrested and revealed to be a teenager. His mother pleaded for him at the trial, and Klinefelter, who believed the teen was acting tough to impress his friends, requested leniency. The judge granted it.⁷⁶

Beyond Atlanta

Reverend Klinefelter has been an outspoken advocate for drugs such as cannabis. During the Sixties, Klinefelter visited many local churches to explain the difference between “soft” drugs (such as cannabis) and “hard” drugs (like heroin or speed). Today, Klinefelter lives in the Netherlands with his wife, Annelies. Although Annelies is from the Netherlands, Klinefelter often jokes that part of what influenced his decision to move there is that “in Holland guns are illegal and soft drugs are legal. In America it’s the other way around, and I know where I feel safer on the streets.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Bob Malone, “A Day in Court,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, October 13, 1969, 3.

⁷⁶ Klinefelter, 51; and Klinefelter interview.

⁷⁷ Klinefelter interview.

The Ministry to the Street People was to be fully funded for at least three years. During the final year, 1973, Klinefelter noticed an approximately 66 percent decline in funding from what it had been the previous two years. This was in large part due to the onset of the 1973-1975 recession, which affected the amount of donations received by churches, thus requiring them to cut back on social outreach and experimental programs.

Klinefelter had a major role in Washington, D.C., during the 1971 May Day Protests where he organized a human carpet—a demonstration held outside on the lawn of the Draft Bureau where people laid on their stomachs, but propped their heads up on their arms to face people as they walked by. “Eye-to-eye contact is important if one wants people to be seen as humans,” Klinefelter wrote, “An important point of the protests is to demonstrate that pacifists are not cowards.”⁷⁸ Klinefelter was one of the 12,000 people arrested in what became the largest mass arrest in United States history.

After returning to Atlanta, Klinefelter worked briefly with the SCLC again as a soundman. Klinefelter looked for ministerial work, but with many church mergers during the mid-twentieth century, there was an abundance of ministers looking for a job as well. In the summer of 1972, Rev. Klinefelter and his family moved to Europe where he still lives today. Klinefelter continues to provide courses and guest lectures on nonviolent conflict resolution in an effort to “globalize the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.”⁷⁹

With the “street people” of the Sixties still needing the services previously provided by Rev. Klinefelter, other local organizations began to step in, such as the Bridge (described in chapter one). Another one of these projects was a building in downtown Atlanta dedicated by the

⁷⁸ Klinefelter, 57.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

Salvation Army to prevent homeless women from getting involved with prostitution. This Salvation Army shelter still exists in the city and has since expanded its reach to include both men and women.

Conclusion

When officials at the Atlanta City Jail received word that Reverend Klinefelter was live on local radio shows describing the conditions of the jail, he was quickly released. Regardless, Klinefelter had witnessed enough to form what he called the Jail Cleanup Committee. Included in this committee was a minister's exchange. At the time, it was permissible for any minister to visit an inmate if the inmate asked for the minister by name. With the minister's exchange, people would call Klinefelter, who would then connect them with a new minister each time. This allowed multiple ministers an opportunity to see the conditions inside the city jail, while simultaneously allowing the minister to provide the inmate with contacts to lawyers, doctors, bondsmen, and other services.

Klinefelter and others in the Jail Cleanup Committee created a list of demands they hoped to see implemented at the city jail. These were mostly related to hygiene and comfort, although the committee did bring to light that guards sometimes beat inmates on the elevator inside the jail. One day, Klinefelter led a march to the jail with participants carrying buckets, brooms, and mops. The protestors demanded to be allowed inside to clean, but were denied.⁸⁰ This story well demonstrates Rev. Klinefelter's dedication to make his community a better place, not through revenge, but with peace and reconciliation through a lived experience—just as the people of Coventry.

⁸⁰ Charlie Bechtold, "Jailhouse Suds," the *Great Speckled Bird*, September 8, 1969, 16.

Reflecting on the Sixties fifty years later, Rev. Klinefelter says, “The hippies would have been [in Atlanta] without the churches; however, [the hippies] went further because [the churches] were there. It made it a situation that was better, otherwise it could have been much worse.”⁸¹

⁸¹ Klinefelter interview.

THE SAFE HAVEN: BRUCE DONNELLY AND THE TWELFTH GATE

“I’d like to say a word for the Twelfth Gate. Though the road it rides is difficult and stony, there’s some benefits there that ought to be appreciated. It’s very small and very funky...I’d rather listen to music there than in Carnegie Hall.” -The Root (Unknown Great Speckled Bird Contributor)

Located two blocks west of the psychedelic Jesus mural that marked the heart of the Strip, at 10th and Peachtree Streets, stood a two-story house painted green with red, gold, blue, pink and tan trim. It was a coffeehouse called the Twelfth Gate which provided Atlanta’s youth with a “tamed” experience of the city’s vibrant hippie community. “The Gate,” as it was known to locals, may have been frequented by heavily bearded men and longhaired women, but rarely were these people who had “dropped out” of society. In fact, most often they were students at the nearby colleges working toward prestigious degrees.

The second floor of the Gate held what the *Atlanta Constitution* incorrectly described as a “headshop,” in that, though it did cater to local “heads,” there was no drug paraphernalia for sale. Instead, customers could buy pins with phrases such as “God is Alive and Well in Mexico City” or “Keep the X in Xmas!” Also available were books, posters, candles, and incense. Paper flowers were also for sale, created by local nursing students at Georgia Baptist Hospital, with the proceeds given back to the hospital. Upon seeing these flowers, a reporter for the *Atlanta Constitution* asked the 23-year-old data clerk at the shop what the big deal is, among hippies, with flowers. The young lady responded, “They’re a symbol of beauty and peace, you never see one flower fighting another flower.”

The Gate’s main attraction was on the first floor. This was the actual coffeehouse that doubled as a live music venue. When the Gate first opened, it was known for playing folk music, with artists performing songs with such titles as “Isn’t It a Drag That People Take

Tranquilizers?” By the early-1970s, the Gate booked more jazz musicians.⁸² The venue was described as having the look and comfortable feel of a living room, except filled with tables, people, and cigarette smoke.⁸³

Illuminated by candlelight, Atlanta’s youth would pay between 50 cents and one dollar on Saturday nights to watch predominantly local musicians, sometimes intercut between sets with short plays or comedians. One comedian told the capacity audience, “kids [are] on pot today, speed yesterday and acid the day before, but if you mention a cocktail man, they wouldn’t touch the stuff.

And that’s what I call hip-pocrisy!”⁸⁴

For six years, the Gate acted as more than just a music venue to Atlanta’s Sixties counterculture. In addition to hot coffee, the Gate provided service and aid to the city’s troubled youth and sought to teach the importance of responsibility to these soon-to-be adults. The Gate had its roots and maintained a strong connection with the Methodist Church during its lifespan, revealing another way that Christianity helped shaped Atlanta’s hippie community.

The existence of the Gate exemplifies national trends of the counterculture at a local level—Beatnik and hip coffeehouses were popular during the Sixties, as gathering places for hippies and radicals to share ideas while listening to live music. For example, it was at the Xanadu coffeehouse in Los Angeles that the *Los Angeles Free Press* got its start.⁸⁵ That Atlanta

⁸² Olive Ann Burns, “Coffeehouse Preach-In: The Twelfth Gate is a church for turned-on types,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, June 9, 1968.

⁸³ Ann, “Women’s Talent Show,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, October 23, 1972, 16.

⁸⁴ Burns.

⁸⁵ John McMillian, *Smoking Typewriters: The Sixties Underground Press and the Rise of Alternative Media in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 39.

had a hip coffeehouse further demonstrates the city's thriving counterculture that has been overlooked.

The Inner-City Ministry and Grace Methodist Church

When the United States Census was taken in 1950, Atlanta's population was 331,314. By 1970, this number increased to 496,973, an average addition of over 8,000 people per year. Many of these migrants lived below the poverty line and came from rural Georgia, hoping to find jobs in the city's post-war boom. During the 1950s, local churches provided adequate aid to the areas most affected by the potential negative side effects of poverty, such as crime, underprivileged children, and drug and alcohol addiction. With the continued population influx, this task became increasingly difficult for churches to handle.

Among the first denominations that sought to confront this challenge head-on was the United Methodist Church, which formed the Inner-City Ministry in Atlanta. Dr. Charles E. Wilson, one of the first ministers to be part of the Inner-City Ministry, said survey work for the project began in 1960. The first goal the United Methodists achieved was to place one minister in each of Atlanta's four public housing projects: Harris Homes, Techwood Homes, Clark Howell Homes, and Capitol Homes. The job of these ministers was to discover the "needs, problems, and hopes" of the people living in these areas.⁸⁶

The Inner-City Ministry began involvement with the city through the creation of athletics (wrestling and karate) and crafts programs (cooking, sewing, and woodwork) for children to attend, where food was also provided. Soon, Sunday school was introduced to the children. Dr.

⁸⁶Charlotte Hale Smith, "New Life in Our Churches," the *Atlanta Constitution*, June 15, 1969, SM7.

Wilson said that the ministry quickly realized that the parents of these children were going to need a “special church,” as the middle-class church they presently provided would prove inadequate for them. Since many of the rural migrants were illiterate, for example, actions such as reading a church program was impossible.⁸⁷

Soon, several Methodist ministers began leaving the suburbs to work with the Inner-City Ministry, hoping to find more fulfilling service-work. “When we get deeply involved we see our faith can’t just be a Sunday affair, something we can separate from the rest of our life,” said Dr. Wilson, “Our people began to learn how inner-city problems affect every area of life.”⁸⁸ As the 1960s progressed, the United Methodists gained more confidence to get involved with other experimental programs bringing Christianity to areas and people where it was previously lacking—so began the creation of the Twelfth Gate.

Bruce Donnelly was a young, dark-eyed man with short hair—far from the type of person one might expect to run a hip coffeehouse. He had previously worked as the youth leader of the Methodist Youth Fellowship at the Peachtree Road Methodist Church in Buckhead, Atlanta’s wealthiest district. Donnelly was the president of his fraternity at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, from which he graduated in 1966. He soon began working as the youth leader at Grace Methodist Church in Midtown Atlanta, less than a mile south of Piedmont Park. While at Grace Methodist, Donnelly opened a coffeehouse in either late-1966 or early-1967 in a six-room building on the church property that played live folk music.

Diane Smith, a self-described “weirdo” who was one of the original attendees at Grace Methodist’s coffeehouse, reflected on the importance of the venue at a time when she was so

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

impoverished that she often had to either starve or eat cornmeal boiled in water—thus, money for recreational activities was out of the question. One day, she and her friends decided to visit the church coffeehouse, which provided music for free. Smith was pleased that the performers were not hired talent, but instead, were people just like her, and her peers, who could sing. Music ended at midnight, after which Reverend Donnelly and his wife, alongside upwards of forty other people, would then go to Smith's apartment and talk all night.

Eventually, Grace Methodist's coffeehouse began attracting up to three-hundred people a night, causing crowds to spill into the lawn, upsetting neighbors. Grace Methodist noticed many of the attendees of Donnelly's coffeehouse were beginning to also attend church service, and at least a close cohort of thirty of these youths sought jobs together.⁸⁹ This latter part was important to Donnelly, because he never intended to convert people to Christianity, rather, his goal was for the youths to learn responsibility with him as their guide.⁹⁰

At the same time the church coffeehouse was gaining popularity, Grace Methodist started a new building program. It was not financially feasible, however, to keep a full-time youth director simultaneously with the new program. Donnelly believed in the mission of the project, and now had proof that his methods worked. He realized that if he wanted the project to continue, he would have to expand beyond Grace Methodist Church.

The Twelfth Gate

Bruce Donnelly proposed an idea to his district superintendent, the local bishop, and the Methodist North Georgia Conference, for a full-time coffeeshop opened on Atlanta's Strip as

⁸⁹ Burns.

⁹⁰ Richard Hughes, "Some Like Them, Some Don't-- And Then Some, Whichever It Is," the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 31, 1967, 6.

part of a continuation of the Inner-City Ministry. The Conference gave their approval and agreed for the coffeeshop to be listed as a “ministry,” so long as the establishment held regular worship services.⁹¹ The new coffeehouse would be led by Donnelly alone, without any financial backing from the Methodist North Georgia Conference, and would be unaffiliated with Grace Methodist or any other church.

This new coffeeshop opened its doors in mid-1967 and was located at 36 10th Street. It was called the Twelfth Gate, presumably a reference to the Biblical description in Revelation of the gateway to the New Jerusalem (sometimes referred to as the Holy City or Zion). The verse, Revelation 21:12, reads: “[The New Jerusalem] had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.”⁹²

The Twelfth Gate provided live folk music every night except Sunday and Monday. When the Gate first opened, entrance was free on Tuesday and Wednesday, but cost between fifty-cents and one-dollar (depending on the popularity of the acts) on the other nights. “Sometimes it’s good. Sometimes it’s awful, but it’s free, and you get what you pay for,” the *Great Speckled Bird* once wrote of the performances.⁹³ It was at the Gate that the founders of the *Bird* heard Reverend Pearly Brown perform a blues rendition of “The Great Speckled Bird,” that influenced the name of the underground newspaper.⁹⁴ By the early-1970s, the price range for the entrance fee increased to between one and three dollars.

⁹¹ Burns.

⁹² Revelation 21:12, taken from: <https://www.bibleref.com/Revelation/21/Revelation-21-12.html>

⁹³ Joe Roman, “Music,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, December 13, 1971, 8.

⁹⁴ Author email with Tom Coffin, December 22, 2019.

The Gate booked more local acts than national acts, in large part because of availability, but also to provide these smaller musicians with more exposure. The venue served tea, coffee, Coca-Cola, ice cream, and a limited food menu. Of the money collected—roughly \$400 a week—Donnelly received a nominal salary, paid off expenses and staff (though most of their income was received as gratuity), and the rest of the money was used to sponsor three scholarships to send local teens to art school.⁹⁵ The art school scholarship was chosen because Donnelly recognized that many of the youths that attended his coffeeshop wanted to “do the right thing” and attend school, however their parents refused to pay the tuition.

Every Sunday at 12:30 pm, church service was held at the Gate, with Donnelly giving his sermons on the same stage where folk singers performed the night before. These services sometimes lasted up to four hours and were divided into two sessions: “The Word” and “The Word Shared.” The first half, the Word, featured Reverend Donnelly preaching a sermon. The Word Shared would then open the topic of the sermon to the rest of the room for discussion. This was similar to traditional Methodist testimonials, in which individuals share with the rest of the congregation a response to the day’s sermon.

The *Atlanta Constitution* shared a story from the Word Shared where a girl told those in attendance, “I’ve sinned, and I know it, and I’ve asked God’s forgiveness right? But maybe God is like my father. I respect my father and I love him and I’ve hurt him so much. But I just can’t tell him. I just—I mean, he thinks I want something—food or clothes or money. What I want is his love and understanding. But he just says, ‘you’ve done what you please...don’t come asking

⁹⁵ “Minister’s Hot Coffee Helps Keep Atlanta’s Hippies Cool,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, November 26, 1967, 14C.

me for forgiveness now.” So began a discussion amongst the congregation about two of the most common topics at the Gate: forgiveness and the generation gap.⁹⁶

Community Service and Aid

In addition to providing art scholarships each year, Reverend Donnelly offered other services at the Twelfth Gate. This included a job placement service; as well as courses taught by local hippies and college professors alike, with topics including leatherwork, meditation, Bible study, and how to harness extrasensory perception.⁹⁷ On several occasions, Donnelly and volunteers at the Gate tried to bring musicians into local hospitals to perform for children, however the hospitals seemed opposed to the scruffy appearance of the musicians. This same youth group of volunteers also had plans to create an arts festival where they would sell handmade crafts and provide live music, with the profits from the festival going to local charities.⁹⁸ (It is unknown whether this project came to fruition.)

Compared to the more “authentic” Catacombs four blocks away, some considered the Gate a “watered-down” hippie experience. This was because of the Gate’s community service, Donnelly’s ministerial status, their opposition to using drugs and alcohol at the venue, and because most of their attendees were students. As a result, Donnelly became the unofficial liaison between the hippie community and local media. He opined that the reason so many youths began to rebel in the first place was because, “the 6 o’clock news is showing change, revolution, and chaos—meanwhile, they are walled-in in suburbia.”⁹⁹ In another interview, he

⁹⁶ Burns.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ “Minister’s Hot Coffee Helps Keep Atlanta’s Hippies Cool.”

⁹⁹ Carolyn Marvin, “What Direction for Hippie Colony?” *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 8, 1969, 5B.

mused to reporters that, “Some of Atlanta’s over-privileged youths have had too many cars and stereos and not enough love and attention.”¹⁰⁰

In many of Donnelly’s interviews, he dispelled rumors about the youth community. Regarding drugs, he told the *Atlanta Constitution* “To label someone hippie implies they have long hair and take drugs. Very few of the some 350 young people who come [to the Twelfth Gate] take drugs.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, many of those who frequented the Gate had too much to lose if they were to be caught by police for possessing cannabis or had their brain “fried” with the contemporary uncertain effects of LSD . Furthermore, many of the Gate’s attendees were against drugs on principle. Diane Smith, the “weirdo” who invited Donnelly and others to her apartment after shows at Grace Methodist, said, “What’s so great about watching a kid on LSD giggling like a maniac while he crawls around on the floor, talking to dust, and then going wild remembering the awful things people have done to him, and getting crazy for revenge? It’s horrible and repulsive. And what’s so great about seeing a girl who has everything going for her get so messed up on drugs she loses her job and her friends?”¹⁰²

As for the often sexualized portrayal of the Sixties counterculture, Donnelly made it seem that there was little difference between the hippie community and average college culture. “Some [hippies] will sleep in beds with their arms around each other and nothing happens,” he told the *Atlanta Constitution*, “of course, there are some who are very promiscuous and hop into bed with everyone they can find.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Diane Stepp, “Minister at ‘Coffee House’ Helping Mixed-Up Youths,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, August 19, 1967, 6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Burns.

¹⁰³ Sam Hopkins, “Few Hippies Linger on In the City,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, July 11, 1968, 27.

Another assumption about youth culture that Donnelly targeted was that the hippie aesthetic—longhaired, bearded men, and unkempt hair on women—was due to laziness. In one interview, he introduced the reporter to a folk singer at the Gate who sported a large, red beard. When the musician spoke to the reporter, he revealed that he was a former Marine who currently worked as a carpenter's apprentice. "It's easier to get a singing job if you have a good growth," he said.¹⁰⁴

Donnelly was often sought by police and parents across the nation who were looking for runaway kids that may have traveled to Atlanta. When the Gate closed at midnight, Donnelly would sometimes spend a few hours afterward visiting crash pads in an attempt to locate the runaways. One month, Donnelly received ninety phone calls from people looking for runaways, of which he was able to find twenty.¹⁰⁵

Donnelly once joked that one of his unofficial services was being the city's "rent-a-hippie" agent, for nearby schools and churches wanting to book hippies for lectures, Q&A sessions, and live music. If these institutions contacted Donnelly for someone to perform live music or to act as an ambassador of the Gate, he would send a trusted folk singer or an art student. But, if the inquirer wanted a "real hippie," Donnelly would stop by the crash pads and find one. "Hippies like to talk about their thing," he told a reporter. "Besides, they're usually hungry, and churches have good suppers." In one situation, Donnelly hunted for a specific hippie to attend a function, only to discover him with his hair cut short. "They want a hippie in full costume," he told the kid, "What kind of impression you gonna make, man, with that short hair?"

¹⁰⁴ Burns.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

The young man attended the event, but decided to wear a long-haired wig. When the audience asked why he chose to wear his hair long, he removed the wig and said, “What’s that again?”¹⁰⁶

During the late 1960s, police began to regularly harass teenagers—simply standing on the sidewalk and conversing with friends could land one in jail for loitering. In the midst of this, one of Atlanta’s earliest headshops, the Middle Earth, opened a second location above the Catacombs, where “Mother” David Braden’s art gallery had once been. Patrons at both Middle Earth locations were subject to being searched by police upon leaving the stores, and the owner was often threatened to be arrested for selling “obscene” posters and drug paraphernalia. As a result, customers stopped going to both shops and they both went out of business. Donnelly decided to use the vacant space above the Catacombs to open a new coffeehouse—this one called the Fourteenth Gate because it was located on 14th Street. The decision to open the Fourteenth Gate was influenced by the belief that it could provide a safe space for youths to grab a soda and relax without fear of police. This did not prove to be the case, however, as police often made unannounced visits to the Fourteenth Gate, often frisking patrons for drugs.¹⁰⁷

In one situation, a young girl walked into the Fourteenth Gate to take a break from Atlanta’s sweltering August heat. Upon sitting down, she placed her head between her arms on a table. A police officer walked in soon after and arrested the girl for sleeping in a public place, though witnesses claimed she was not sleeping and had only been there for a short moment. She ended up spending the night in jail. Not long after, the *Atlanta Constitution* printed a letter by a lady protesting the incident and expressing how happy she would be if her daughter “decided to go hippie,” and found herself at one of Donnelly’s establishments. She went on to say:

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Christopher Allen Huff, “A New Way of Living Together: A History of Atlanta’s Hip Community, 1965-1973,” (PhD dissertation, University of Georgia, 2012), 225-226.

The young people who are in the area have a choice of two ways to go—a place like the Catacombs or pads where “Pot,” heroin and other forms of dope are available, or [Fourteenth] Gate where only cokes are served, and where someone is genuinely interested in trying to rehabilitate these young people and make them see that home is the best place, or that it is better to work for a living, and where a job will be found for them. If police are going to go into the [Fourteenth] Gate at will and arrest these young people for small so-called infractions of the law, Bruce Donnelly might as well move out. This haven should be as immune to police invasion as any church.¹⁰⁸

Harassment such as this did not end at the Fourteenth Gate, and the location closed soon after its opening.

The Free Clinic

About three miles northeast of the Twelfth Gate, Dr. Joseph Hertel taught Sunday School at Rock Springs Presbyterian Church. Dr. Hertel was a doctor of internal medicine in Buckhead and had previously acted as the National Director of the American Red Cross. Dr. Hertel noticed many of his students were spending time at the Twelfth Gate, which he knew had church ties and even held Sunday services. He and his wife decided to visit the Gate one evening, where he met Reverend Donnelly and offered to help with the project.¹⁰⁹ Many people had offered their services to the Gate in the past—usually by donating food, clothing, or transportation—but Donnelly was hesitant to accept too many free services for fear they would “aid [the youths’] irresponsibility.”¹¹⁰ Considering Hertel’s background in medicine, however, Donnelly told him, “There is no place for kids to get help. When I have a sick youngster on my hands, I can’t get any help—not even from Grady [Memorial Hospital].”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ “Let Police Stay Out of 12th Gate,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, August 30, 1968, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Rick Briant Dandes, “Where Did All the Hippies Go?: Peace and love came to the Strip in the 1960's. Then it vanished,” the *Atlanta Constitution* December 5, 1982, 12.

¹¹⁰ “Minister’s Hot Coffee Helps Keep Atlanta’s Hippies Cool.”

¹¹¹ Dandes.

In the summer of 1967, Dr. Hertel and Rev. Donnelly opened a free clinic in the office at the Twelfth Gate which “felt like a broom closet.” In the beginning, the clinic only treated six people a week on the two nights it was open. Soon, Dr. Hertel began seeing as many as thirty people a week. The local media made it seem that the clinic opened just to combat drug-related problems in Atlanta, although at the time, the city’s drug of choice was cannabis—a substance with few side effects. It was not until the following summer, in 1968, that drugs such as LSD, heroin, and amphetamines were found in Atlanta, and even then, availability was limited at the start.¹¹² There is no illness record from the Gate, but if similar clinics in Haight-Ashbury and Berkeley act as indicators—and we take away the many who were treated for drug abuse at these California clinics—we can assume venereal diseases and general infections from open wounds were the most treated cases.

The clinic closed during the winter of 1967 due to lack of patients—many hippies returned home during the colder months or went back to school during the fall—and because of unspecified legal technicalities.¹¹³ Afterwards, Donnelly and Hertel visited the Fulton County Medical Society to seek help for the program, believing the upcoming summer would bring an influx of hippies to Atlanta—with the scene having declined in Haight-Ashbury, it was believed hippies would spend summer 1968 more transient than before. The Fulton County Medical Society agreed to participate in the reopening of the clinic in May 1968, under the leadership of Dr. George Swerdloff, a retired dentist.

The new clinic opened at a Boy Scout Hut behind Atlanta’s First Presbyterian Church and operated every Tuesday and Thursday night beginning at 8 o’clock. This new incarnation

¹¹² Philip Gailey, “Transient Hippie Clinic,” the *Atlanta Constitution*, June 2, 1968, 10A.

¹¹³ “Free Clinic,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, April 12, 1968, 10.

included multiple doctors, as well as a psychologist, a Planned Parenthood representative, and several volunteer nurses from nearby hospitals. This was a significant upgrade from the year before of what was a cramped room at the Twelfth Gate ran by one doctor. Atlanta's major hospitals—Crawford Long, Grady Memorial, and Piedmont—accepted referrals by the clinic, and drug companies donated medicine.

Another important upgrade at the new clinic was a screening process. Many people who visited the Twelfth Gate clinic the previous summer were young ladies from Atlanta's wealthier neighborhoods who were unable to receive birth control from their private physicians. There was a rumor circulating that birth control was handed out for free at the "hippie clinic." This was, of course, not the case, and the new clinic hired a young woman who lived in the 10th Street Area to filter the legitimate patients from the "teeny-boppers in sports cars."¹¹⁴

Aftermath

By the early-1970s, the Twelfth Gate had fallen under new management and became better known for its jazz music. Bruce Donnelly stepped aside to focus more of his efforts on counseling and ministerial work. Dr. Joseph Hertel continued to practice medicine until at least the 1980s and, having worked so closely with Atlanta's hippie community during the Sixties, became an expert at identifying and reversing heroin overdoses.

Business at the Gate declined significantly in the 1970s. This was in large part because Georgia had decreased the minimum drinking age from twenty-one to eighteen in 1972, thus, Atlanta's youth preferred to visit venues that offered alcohol. Eventually, the Gate decided to get their beer and wine license in order to compete, but this was too little too late. The Gate had

¹¹⁴ Gailey.

fallen into debt, but one man, John L. Pratt, offered to give the club \$2,000 and to pay for their beer and wine license renewal. The club accepted. Pratt told the management he would bring the money as soon as he could, but first had to sell some of his stock.

Pratt first visited the Gate a year earlier while he was the percussionist for a local jazz band, Life Force. He was kicked out of the band when the other members came to be suspicious of him—the high school Pratt claimed to have attended had no record of him, and other bits of information he provided did not add up. The band suspected he was a narc. After being kicked out of the band, Pratt continued to frequent the Gate and even became the volunteer sound engineer. While management at the Gate had long discouraged the use of drugs, it would be naïve to assume that *everyone* at a Sixties live music venue remained unintoxicated. Thus, Pratt volunteered to work for free almost nightly, surrounded by Atlanta’s activists, radicals, and drug users.

With the date of the deadline to reapply for the beer and wine license fast approaching, management at the Gate paid for the renewal with a bad check. The Gate continued trying to get in touch with Pratt, but he was nowhere to be found. When it became apparent that Pratt wasn’t going to arrive with the money, management called the permit office and asked them to destroy the check. The Twelfth Gate closed its doors for good the second week of January 1974.

A few months later the *Great Speckled Bird* discovered that Pratt was hired by the Atlanta Police Department in March 1974.¹¹⁵ It is worth emphasizing here that objectivity is not a hallmark of any underground press, however this was especially true for the *Bird* who believed

¹¹⁵ “Officer Pratt at WRFG? More Spying on the Media,” the *Great Speckled Bird*, June 24, 1974.

“objectivity was a myth perpetuated by the capitalist press.”¹¹⁶ With this in mind, the *Bird* alleged that Pratt was assigned to infiltrate Atlanta’s hippie community before being sent to recruit school and becoming a sworn-in officer. Evidence to support this claim, aside from his accusatory former bandmates, is speculative in that Pratt had worked at an acting agency the year prior to the Gate. The acting agency was investigated by the police, who correctly believed the agency was fraudulent, and that rather than connecting actors with gigs, they used it as a front to sell expensive acting lessons. When the police finally made a move to shut down the operation, the entire staff had fled town—except Pratt, who was not arrested.¹¹⁷

It is unknown whether any of the Gate’s patrons were arrested due to Officer Pratt.

Conclusion

The Gate was opened for nearly seven years and provided Atlanta with more than just hot coffee and live music. It also provided the city’s youth with employment services, educational courses, and college scholarships, all with the intent to dissuade the city’s youth from irresponsibility. Of all the community service-work undertaken by the Gate, the largest and most impactful project was the establishment of a free clinic. First opened in Bruce Donnelly’s office, the free clinic soon expanded to a much larger facility. While Reverend Donnelly asserted he had no intention to convert people to Christianity at the Gate, at the heart of the coffeehouse was always its Methodist roots which affected the surrounding hippie community, showing another way churches influenced the city’s hippies.

¹¹⁶ Justin Heckert, "The *Great Speckled Bird* Flies Again: GSU preserves the legendary underground paper," *Atlanta Magazine*, December 2011.

¹¹⁷ "Officer Pratt at WRFG? More Spying on the Media."

CONCLUSION

There was a noticeable change in atmosphere on the Strip during the early 1970s. Lamenting this, Fred Chappell, the former owner of Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, wrote a play in 1971 titled, *Epitaph for 10th Street*. The play, which was "really a series of vignettes," showed how "the youthful naivety of 'love and peace' and flowers and dancing had moved into something darker...the drugs and dealers were more prominent, [and] the scene was more commercial. It was [an] older, tougher crowd, [and] a more dangerous atmosphere."¹¹⁸

The *New York Times* published an article placing the blame for the demise of Atlanta's hippie scene on the biker gangs that began moving into the area in the summer of 1970. This included the Outlaws Motorcycle Club, rivals of the infamous Hells Angels. The Outlaws were known to commit crimes against the hippies, such as beating them to steal their money and drugs. The police could not arrest bikers solely for being bikers and, because of their harassment from police, hippies seldomly reported crimes.

The *Great Speckled Bird* maintained there was no feud between bikers and hippies; this was just a myth, they said, created by "straight" society. But it is clear that a violent confrontation between the two groups broke out on the night of December 30, 1970. The incident happened at a mansion known as "White Columns," located at 238 14th Street. The former home of the French consul, the residence had since become the home of seventeen hippies. Weeks earlier, members of the Outlaws carried shotguns into White Columns and robbed some of the residents. Three days later, more Outlaws came back and kidnapped one of the hippies who broke away and ran back into the house, grabbing a gun and exchanging fifteen rounds of fire with the bikers before they left.

¹¹⁸ Author email with Fred Chappell, May 20, 2020.

After that night, the hippies of White Columns built an arsenal and established a “no visitors” policy. Then, on December 30, an Outlaw named Barney “Tree” McSherry came to the mansion and was shot in the face with a shotgun. Police arrested all seventeen residents and, upon searching the house, found eighteen firebombs, seven rifles, four pistols, two shotguns, and a stick of dynamite. The residents were released the following day after a judge ruled that there had been too much violence in the 10th Street Area for this to constitute as a murder charge. The judge believed the gunman, 18-year-old John Wesley Roberts, had acted in self-defense.

As a result of this night, tensions between bikers and hippies rose and more police patrolled the area. Hippies began leaving the Strip *en masse*, finding new homes in neighborhoods such as Virginia Highlands and Little Five Points—the latter of which became a major commercial center in the city, largely through the efforts of Don Bender who became the Chair of Membership for the Little Five Points Business Association. Meanwhile, bikers continued moving into the Strip and former hippie businesses and residences were demolished to make way for much taller residential and commercial buildings.¹¹⁹

Within the next couple of years, the Benders moved out of Quaker House, Harky Klinefelter and his family moved to Europe, and the Twelfth Gate closed. The psychedelic Jesus mural at the intersection of 10th and Peachtree Streets was painted black into a void. Since then, there has not been much evidence that a thriving counterculture had once flourished in Atlanta.

As we have seen, however, peace and love indeed came to Atlanta in its own, unique way. Whereas hippies largely opposed organized Christianity in other American cities, churches and church groups in Atlanta supported and shaped the city’s counterculture. This allowed the

¹¹⁹ James T. Wooten, “The Life and Death of Atlanta’s Hippie Strip,” the *New York Times*, March 14, 1971, SM34.

city's hippie community to exist safer and longer than it otherwise would have without the assistance of these institutions and individuals.

The Atlanta Friends Meeting found ways to demonstrate their religious commitments by participating in protests and draft counseling. These efforts resonated with the city's hippies, who in turn influenced some Quakers to adopt hippie dress and to create communal homes. Sponsored by three churches, Harcourt "Harky" Klinefelter formed the Ministry to the Street People, which provided aid to the city's youth who fell victim to the negative side effects of the Sixties counterculture. In working with the city's youth, Klinefelter bore witness to the unsanitary conditions of the city's jail, causing him to lead efforts to have it cleaned. Meanwhile at the Twelfth Gate, a coffeehouse operated by a Methodist minister who held weekly church services, social projects were organized. This included employment services, art scholarships, and a free clinic. Together, these individuals and their institutions distinguished Atlanta's counterculture from those in other cities.

The black void where the psychedelic Jesus mural once stood at the heart of the Strip remained in Atlanta for a short period. On one side of the wall was a sign assuring that another mural would be painted in the future.¹²⁰

The wall has since been demolished.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

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