



# JUBILEE PARTNERS REPORT

## Winter 2019

*This is my Father's world  
O let me ne'er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong  
God is the ruler yet*

In November, Louise “Coffee” Worth celebrated her one hundredth birthday, surrounded by a crowd of friends and family at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens. Whenever we sing the hymn “This is my Father's World”, many of us think of Coffee and a story that she tells about her arrival as a missionary in Korea in 1954, just after the end of the war in that country. Driving in to the city for the first time, Coffee and her husband, George, passed a church that had been bombed. “It was in bad shape,” she says. “But we heard music, and we listened and I said to George ‘We know that hymn!’ And when they got to the third verse, they sang, ‘Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.’ And both of us thought, what a way to enter the mission field, with a hymn like that, in a country that was so beat up and ruined. *Though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.*”

When we are discouraged by the darkness of this world—by the powers of despair, callousness, violence, and injustice—it helps us to look to the example of people who have lived lives that are faithful, hopeful, and loving in spite of the darkness. Coffee lived through the Great Depression and the Second World War. She lived in Korea during the years of poverty following the war there, and was present for all the violence and conflicts of the past forty years in our country. The joyful and compassionate life that she has lived through these eras serves as a witness to the power of God's love.

Whenever Coffee told her life story to new volunteers at Jubilee, she would often observe that it fell neatly into segments of two decades each. “I do things in twenty-year stands, as it turns out,” she says. Twenty years growing up as the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Virginia and North Carolina. Twenty years in which she taught elementary school, worked with college students through the Presbyterian church, met George Worth and started their family together. Twenty years as a missionary in Korea. Twenty



Coffee lived for twenty years as a missionary in Korea.

Left:  
Taegu, 1967

Right: Holt  
Orphanage,  
Ilsan, 1974



years as a community member at Koinonia Partners, during which time George developed Alzheimer's and passed away. And then she would add that maybe, God willing, she would end up living at Jubilee Partners for twenty years. This past spring, Coffee left Jubilee to move in with her daughter Evelyn's family — just over twenty years, as it happens, after she came to Jubilee.

One of the themes of Coffee's life has been friendships that cross racial and cultural divides. Beginning as a college student in the late 1930s and early 40s, Coffee involved herself in interracial conferences, study groups, and other forms of fellowship. In that time of strict segregation, this took considerable courage. Coffee recalls one young white man at an interracial conference who felt so nervous sitting down at a table where black and white students were eating together that he had to leave during the lunch to vomit. Of herself, Coffee recalls "There were times when I rose to the account and I walked the walk, and there were times when I'm ashamed to say I didn't. And I don't like to remember those times, when it was more convenient for me not to take a stand. But I learned that it's more joyful to take a stand."

Coffee first met George through their mutual involvement with interracial groups. Fellowship with black neighbors and friends remained an important part of their life through the 40s and 50s, until they left for Korea, where they were immersed in interracial fellowship of another kind. When they returned to the United States in the 1970s, Coffee and George settled at Koinonia Partners, a community that had been offering a witness against racial segregation for several decades, and chose to live in Koinonia's affordable housing development where most of their neighbors were African-American. When she came to Jubilee, Coffee taught English classes to refugees for 10 years and formed close friendships with some of our older refugee neighbors. She participated in a women's Bible study



**David, George, Evelyn, and Coffee in Taegu, Korea, 1957.**

in Athens involving her church, Covenant Presbyterian, and East Friendship Baptist Church, an African American congregation. The joy that Coffee encountered as a student taking a stand against segregation opened the door for her to eighty years of friendships.

**Grandchildren Russell & Grace, and Jane Stitt gather around Coffee, 1993.**



Another thread that runs through Coffee's life is her work with small children. Coffee was a teacher in the public schools in North Carolina, and while in Korea she developed a training program for teachers of young children using the methods of Montessori education. At Koinonia she helped run the Child Development Center ("KCDC"), a childcare center serving families in the affordable housing developments around the community. When she lived at Jubilee, Coffee regularly received children as visitors in her home, talking patiently and attentively with them. For some children, these conversations have continued into adulthood. Hannah Ortman, who grew up at Jubilee, recalls her visits with Coffee when she would come home from college:



“We’d usually sit inside her house, Coffee in her main chair, and me to her right. On nice days we’d sit outside on her porch and watch the squirrels mischievously try to steal food from the bird feeder. Sometimes we’d have something to eat and drink and sometimes we’d just talk... I’ll always value both what a great storyteller and listener Coffee has been during each of those visits.”

When you talk to Coffee, you are struck by how she retains a sense of curiosity and wonder. Perhaps these qualities help explain why she connected with children so easily throughout her life. Coffee often opened morning prayers at Jubilee by saying “Thank you, God, for this day — a new day that we have not seen before!” When Coffee tells a story from her childhood, you can hear in it the child’s sense of delight, carried down through the decades. One of her wonderful stories is about collecting lightening bugs with her siblings, then slipping into the church next door, where her father was leading a prayer meeting, and releasing the lightening bugs into the sanctuary. As Coffee tells the story:



**Coffee & George lived at Koinonia for twenty years.**

“We assigned my brother Ebby, who was maybe seven years old, the job of turning off the lights when the time came, and I got the job of unscrewing the jars so the lightening bugs could come out. So...ready, set, GO. Ebby turned out the lights. I unscrewed one jar lid, and lightening bugs *flew out!* And they were lighting the room, the pulpit area! And there was silence, complete silence. And then I heard my father’s voice from down in the area where they were praying — I heard him say, “Ebby? Louise?” That did it! We scrambled out the door, down the stairs, and out into the yard ...”



**Coffee teaching at the Koinonia Child Development Center (“KCDC”).**

After telling this story this past spring, Coffee added, “I asked my brother last year—before he died—I asked him, ‘Was that story true?’ And he said, ‘Yeah ... I remember it.’ So praise be for stories that we remember!”

Another of Coffee's stories, drawn from her years of teaching, shows how she connected with children in their sadness and grief. While a teacher in North Carolina, Coffee worked in a school for black students in the segregated school system. She tells a story about earning the trust of one class of boys there. Here is the story, in Coffee’s words:

“I taught all the grades, and I liked the teacher who taught the older boys. They were big, and didn’t like me, and that was

sort of sad because I liked them. But then, their good teacher, whom they liked very much, died. And when we came back to school about three days later, I went into that class of boys and it was the same, sullen ‘What’s she here for?’ kind of idea. (And I didn’t know, myself.) So I thought, ‘Help me, God, to think of something to do with these boys.’ And He told me a hymn.

I said, ‘You guys...you loved your teacher. Let’s sing a hymn that she loved.’ And while we were singing, God caused me to know that I loved that teacher too, and I began to cry while I was singing. Well, that was all it took for those boys to know that I really loved their teacher, and after that they were great, and I loved them.”

Wherever God’s people are gathering, Coffee likes to be there. Those of us who lived with her at Jubilee marveled at how faithfully she attended prayers, devotions, and meetings even as her hearing and eye-sight failed, and walking required more of an effort. Coffee was always happy to engage with visitors to the community, telling us, “Send them over to my house; I’ll talk to them.” We are all very grateful for the joy that Coffee spread around her and for the witness of her loving and faithful life, which has helped us all to remember that—though the wrong seems oft so strong—*God is the ruler yet.*

*Many of the stories and quotes in this newsletter were drawn from a series of oral history recordings that Coffee made with Josina Guess this past spring. You can listen to these stories, and many others, in Coffee’s own voice at Josina’s website: [www.josinaguess.com/audio-recordings](http://www.josinaguess.com/audio-recordings).*

*from the people  
of Jubilee*



**Coffee & former student  
Htun Hla at Jubilee.**



**At her birthday party, the kids were invited to set one hundred candles in place for Coffee ...which she later “blew out” by clapping.**

**Jubilee welcomes invitations to speak about the hope that God gives us in a troubled world. If you are interested in arranging a visit from someone at Jubilee, please feel free to contact us.**

### Who we are

Jubilee Partners is an intentional Christian service community in north Georgia. Our primary ministry is offering hospitality to newly arrived refugees. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; donations are thus tax-deductible. Your donations and support of our work are most appreciated.

Jubilee Partners Box 68 Comer, GA 30629  
706-783-5131 [www.jubileepartners.org](http://www.jubileepartners.org)



**Fall at Jubilee...**

**To the right: Jubilee hosted this year's Shalom Mission Communities gathering in celebration of Jubilee's joining the SMC family (made up of Reba Place Fellowship, Hope Fellowship, Church of the Sojourners, and Valle Nuevo in El Salvador).**

**Below: Kids lend a hand in this year's sweet potato harvest.**



**View Jubilee's newsletter in color online at [www.jubileepartners.org](http://www.jubileepartners.org)!**



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**Winter 2019**



**Happy Hundred Years Coffee Worth!!**