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The Open Door Community – Hospitality & Resistance in the Catholic Worker Movement

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April/May 2011

## Living the Incarnation of the Word

*Editor's note: Ed Loring and Murphy Davis recently visited the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, where Ed spoke at the community's weekly Bible study. Following is a transcript of that talk, which was first published in the LACW's newspaper, The Catholic Agitator.*

**By Eduard Loring**

*Ed, in your newest book, "The Cry of the Poor: Cracking White Male Supremacy," you write, "Our hope is that we will learn from our work in light of the Word and that we will learn from the Word in light of our work." Would you care to comment on that?*

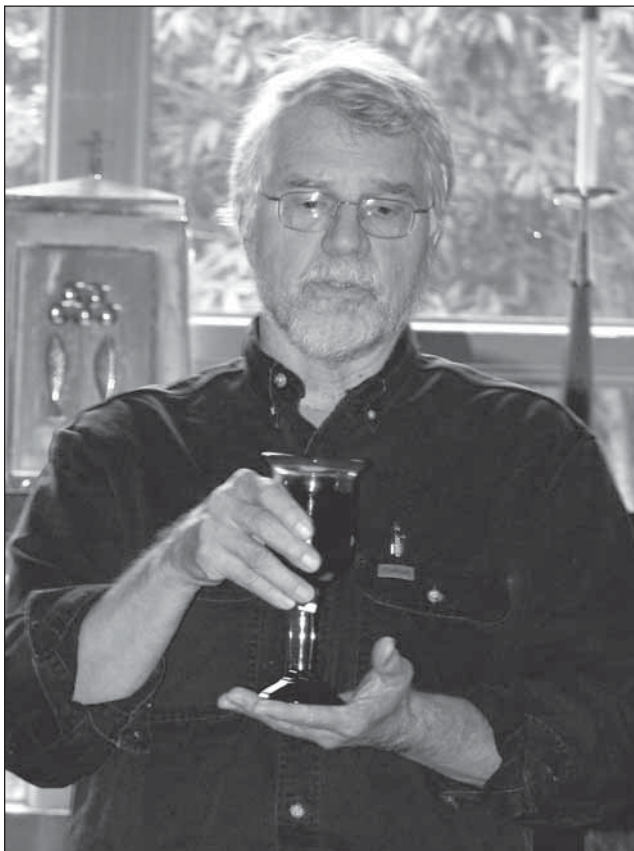
Murphy and I started off on the academic track, but we ultimately came to realize that the convergence of Word and work is one of the most liberating gifts of the Scripture for the two of us. It transformed our values and transformed our hearts and was absolutely amazing.

Some of that understanding comes from Karl Marx and through Liberation Theology, and is learned through the Catholic Worker by living the life we live in houses of hospitality. One reason we live our lives with so much struggle and so much conflict is that we are *concrete*. We believe in the incarnation of the Word, not simply at Christmas with the baby in the feeding trough, but in historical events and particularly in the poor.

Let me hold the Bible.  
This is hot and it is a living Word.  
There is in it the possibility,  
even the likelihood,  
of your heart vibrating,  
your bones on fire.

That brings us to what is called pedagogy, in other words, a theory of how we teach and learn. Long before Karl Marx, you had Benedict and the Benedictine movement, which prescribes manual labor and worship and study, the life of the mind, and hospitality. There is a knock on the door, you welcome the stranger, and there you will find Jesus Christ. And it is out of this hospitality and work and the study of the Word coming to us as revelation, as clarification, as those values toward which we pray and share and struggle in relationship to have our hearts and minds transformed, that we learn from the Word. But we understand that the Word always needs clarification of thought. Never read the Bible without a good commentary within reach. The Bible alone, Martin Luther notwithstanding, does not do it. We have to have that kind of help.

Invite someone to come down to your Hippy Kitchen and volunteer — that is good evangelism, a spreading or



Mike Wisniewski

*Eduard Loring celebrates the Eucharist at a Los Angeles Catholic Worker retreat.*

proclaiming of the Word. Put before someone a revolution of values by putting before them the sight of feeding the hungry, the sight of pouring milk.

Yesterday, the job I had at the Hippy Kitchen was so wonderful for me, pouring and serving milk. We don't do that at the Open Door. We have coffee, all the coffee you would want. It really was wonderful yesterday, for example, to be with one person so mentally ill they cannot respond and then with the next person so warm and friendly. And in that we get the gift of the Otherness and the gift of the Holy.

However, we are not sure what to do with these gifts, and so we have our Bible studies. We do as much with Mark as Mark is willing to do with us. We do not control the behavior of the people we serve at our kitchens, and we do not control what is going to happen in this room, because the Holy Ghost is really the one leading Bible study. And it is by not being in control that revelation comes to us — the revelation that we need each other, the revelation that we need humility.

We must study the Word and know the Word as it is written, but this is not a dead Word. At Emory University in Atlanta, you can get a Ph.D. in "The Bible as Literature." It has nothing to do with faith; it has only to do with the text. Where is the poetry? Is it good poetry? Where is the narrative and where is the counter-narrative? That is a dead Word and not a Word that makes us alternative, that transforms values.

Let me hold the Bible. This is hot and it is a living

Word. There is in it the possibility, even the likelihood, of your heart vibrating, your bones on fire. I mean the very marrow of your bones can get hot, and this is the living Word. It is about the transformation of values and the alternative way.

It is also about the fact that you are a damn sinner and you have hardness of heart and you can't get anywhere on the journey without Jesus continuing to say that. So don't get too relaxed!

### John's Call to Repentance

You can go to school and get a graduate degree in swimming; you can read every book written about swimming and write articles about swimming and get published. But until you get into the pool, you don't know how to swim. And this Bible is about swimming — well, maybe not about swimming but walking on water.

The living Word that leads us  
to the practice and the practice  
that leads us to the Word — then  
the Word becomes practice and  
the practice becomes Word.  
Ain't that cool?

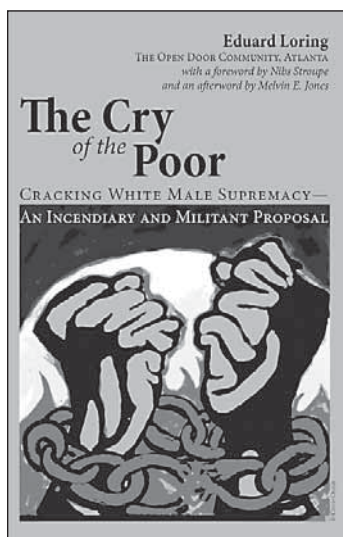
What is so critical about the kitchen, what is so critical about cooking supper here and cleaning up, what is so critical about scrubbing the bathrooms, what is so critical about our relationships with each other, is that it is in these things, along with study, that the knowledge of the Word comes. It is a circle. I do my morning prayer, I read my Scripture, I go to Bible study, but I also have to act out this transformation of values, which can be taken from me at any moment. They are fragile. The world does not want us to have them; the devil wants to devour them, which is to devour us.

That is one thing I think Paul means when he says, "Pray at all times." We must keep that consciousness at all times because we are about to step off into the power of love and liberation that comes, sometimes for a season, sometimes for a day, sometimes for a moment, that tells us we are ALIVE, that the living Word is our LIFE, the living practice is our LIFE, the living practice is our WORD, and the Word is GOOD. The living Word that leads us to the practice and the practice that leads us to the Word — then the Word becomes practice and the practice becomes Word. Ain't that cool?

I want to say one other thing about Mark. I want to talk about John the Baptist, one of my favorite characters in all of history, who we find in the beginning of the Gospel. Murphy and I led a retreat here several years ago, and in my presentation I began by talking about how Jesus did not go public until John was in prison. Our proclamation, our discipleship,

**Living the Incarnation** *continued on page 6*

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## The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy —  
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

By **Eduard Loring**

*This is a very potent and angry book. I think you can put "Eduard-the-Agitator" on your name again. It did agitate me, in a good way. I became aware of how much racism persists, and it was helpful to see how you describe it. I feel it persists in me in such a way that I am either unaware of my white privilege and thus can't deal with it, or am aware of it and know not what to do except to work for justice.*

— **Don Beisswenger**, Theologian, Activist and Author

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# Compassion as a Covenant Between Equals

Reviewed by Anne Sayre

It may seem strange to say that "Tattoos on the Heart" is one of the best books I have read when the subject is Latino gangs in Los Angeles. Father Gregory Boyle, the author, has worked for over 20 years at the Dolores Mission and has buried 168 gang members during that time.

How can this be a good book when it brings us tears and heartache for these youths who are thrown aside by society? It is because, as Boyle says, "It would not be possible for me to present these stories apart from God, Jesus, compassion, kinship, redemption, mercy and our common call to delight in one another."

Boyle says that success has become the new "purity code," while Jesus shows us that the desire for purity is usually, in fact, the enemy of the Gospel.

Boyle started an organization called Homeboy Industries, which includes a bakery, a silk-screen business, a "Home-Girl Cafe," merchandising and home maintenance. Through training and employment, young gang members for the first time in their lives find self-esteem and a sense of worthiness.

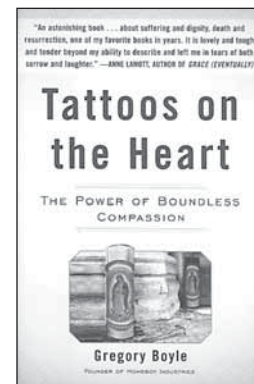
This is not a success story about a dedicated priest. He still buried some of the most successful members of his organization, often caught in random gunfire after they had left a gang. It is a story of changing lives through God's compassion and of dealing with the failures, and the overwhelming numbers of young people who haven't been reached, without becoming depressed and burned out. It is a message for all of us who work in trying to bring the lost and abandoned into the "abundant life."

Boyle says that success has become the new "purity code," while Jesus shows us that the desire for purity is usually, in fact, the enemy of the Gospel. He quotes from Mary Oliver: "There are things you can't reach. But you can reach out to them, and all day long."

**Tattoos on the Heart**  
The Power of Boundless Compassion

By **Gregory Boyle**

Free Press  
Hardcover  
240 pages



It is impossible to do justice to this rich book in a short review. Suffice it to say that it is a book about everyday theology, psychology and pure compassion. Boyle declares that compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded, but a covenant between equals. "Tattoos on the Heart" is worth reading just for its quotations from theologians, poets and gang members, but also for the memorable musings of the author's own heart.

He describes how the book got its title:

Once after dealing with a particularly exasperating homie named Sharkey, I switched my strategy and decided to catch him in the act of doing the right thing. I can see I have been too harsh and exacting with him, and he is, after all, trying the best he can. I tell him how heroic he is and how the courage he now exhibits in transforming his life far surpasses the hollow "bravery" of his barrio past... I mean it. Sharkey seems to be thrown off balance by all of this and silently stares at me. Then he says, "Dam G ... I'm gonna tattoo that on my heart."

I think this book will tattoo your heart also, as it did mine. ✦

*Anne Sayre, retired from her work as a Presbyterian pastor in Guatemala, is a longtime friend and volunteer with the Open Door Community. Father Gregory Boyle is a close friend and co-conspirator with our friends at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.*

## HOSPITALITY

**Hospitality** is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community, Inc., an Atlanta Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with and advocacy for the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

A \$10 donation to the Open Door Community would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality** for one year. A \$40 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

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Calvin Kimbrough

**Ira Terrell, Jonathan Schriener, Jay Ashmear, Jessica Sulley** (left to right) and the Open Door Community invite you to sign the petition to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles to save Troy Davis' life: [www.act.colorofchange.org/sign/troy](http://www.act.colorofchange.org/sign/troy).

## Newspaper

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**Subscriptions or change of address:** Anne Wheeler

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For more information about the life and work of the community, please contact any of the following persons.

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**John McRae:** Food Coordinator

**Lorna Mauney-Brodek:** Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic Coordinator

**Eduard Loring:** Street Theologian

**Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough:** Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators

**Sarah Humphrey:** Coordinator for Administration, Volunteers, Hardwick Prison Trip and Resident Volunteer Applications

**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry

# The Day I Climbed a Fence and Went to Jail

By Steve Clemens

*In October 1980, Ed Loring and I, along with our infant daughter Hannah, visited Maryhouse Catholic Worker in the Bowery of New York City. While there, we — along with Dorothy Day, who died six weeks later — received Mass with Father Daniel Berrigan and heard him speak of the first “Plowshares” action at the King of Prussia nuclear plant in Pennsylvania the previous September.*

*Our friend Steve Clemens of the Koinonia Community had spoken to us about his discernment concerning a similar witness, planned at the Pantex nuclear plant in Amarillo, Texas. The witness that Steve describes here remains important to us, because it was the first time we were “conspirators” with a friend before, during and after a witness that resulted in a federal prison term. (Father Dan and the others from the King of Prussia action also served lengthy terms in Danbury and Alderson Federal Prisons.) Our congregation at Clifton Presbyterian Church prayed steadily for Steve and his companions, his wife Christine and the other members of Koinonia, Dan and Phil Berrigan, and all the others. We are grateful to remember and share this story in these pages, and we are grateful for Steve and Christine’s ongoing witness and the steadfast witness of all the Plowshares activists.*

*The Clemens now live in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where they are active members of the Community of St. Martin. Steve’s blog is at [www.mennonista.blogspot.com](http://www.mennonista.blogspot.com).*

— Murphy Davis, Editor

At the dawn of the Reagan presidency, I was sentenced to six months in federal prison because I had climbed a fence. Five months earlier, eight peacemakers had committed what was to become the first of many “Plowshares” actions, in a nonviolent attempt to “beat [nuclear] swords into plowshares.” The where and why of the story explains the consequence.

After American involvement in Vietnam ended with the fall of Saigon (later renamed Ho Chi Minh City) in 1975, Phil Berrigan and Liz McAlister turned their peacemaking focus toward nuclear weapons. As part of the Bible study group they facilitated at the Community for Creative Nonviolence in Washington in 1974-75, I was inspired and challenged to consider nonviolent direct action in my own peacemaking efforts. In 1975, we carried full-scale models of “Little Boy” and “Fat Man,” the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the steps of the U.S. Capitol to mark the week of the 30th anniversary of those war crimes. Shortly after that, I moved to southwest Georgia to join Koinonia Partners, an intentional Christian community outside Americus.

## Facing one’s own death and still choosing to act is the most liberating feeling in the world!

For me, the genesis of the prayer witness that sent me to prison was a conversation with Ladon Sheats in Washington in 1980. I had just participated in a week of peace actions at the Pentagon, as part of Jonah House’s call for “the Year of the Election.” Peacemakers were urged to “take their vote to the Pentagon” for a week of actions, because neither President Jimmy Carter nor Republican nominee Ronald Reagan were advocating movement toward disarmament or peaceful solutions to the world problems confronting us. Ladon Sheats was a former resident partner and director of Koinonia, living there from 1968 to 1975. From there, he joined the Jonah House Community in Baltimore and remained active in resistance to the war machine until his death in 2002.

Ladon discussed with several friends and me the possibility of conducting a prayer vigil at the heart of the nuclear weapons empire: the Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, which is the final assembly point for all nuclear weapons produced by the U.S. government. He envisioned a small group of committed Christians who would travel to Texas, meet to pray and reflect for several days, and then attempt to enter the plant to pray in or around the buildings where the bombs are assembled. Participants would covenant together to be committed to nonviolence, and the group would agree not to notify the press ahead of time nor to cooperate with providing any defense of our action other than to state clearly why we were there. We would not defend ourselves with legal arguments, but only with statements about our faith and convictions.

When I returned to Koinonia, I first discussed the proposed witness with my wife, Christine, and then with a small group of partners who were committed to nonviolent direct action. During this time, in September 1980, we received word of the first Plowshares witness at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, where Phil Berrigan, his brother Daniel and six others (the “Plowshares Eight”) entered the General Electric nuclear missile facility there, damaged nuclear warhead nose cones with hammers, poured blood onto documents and files and then offered prayers for peace. While we supported that creative witness, it was clear that our planned action would not involve any attempts to disarm or damage any weapons that we might encounter but would rely solely on the power of prayer.

As I continued in the process of discernment about whether to participate, I had conversations with my parents and my wife’s parents. It was a very difficult time, as my father-in-law, Benton Haas, was dying of leukemia and Christine spent most of her fall helping to care for him at his home in western Pennsylvania. While neither set of parents were enthusiastic about this proposed witness of mine, I tried to communicate to them my sense of “call” to take this action of faith and witness.

### Prayer and Automatic Rifles

In early February 1981, during our weekly meeting, the Koinonia resident partners had a time of prayer as a blessing and a send-off. Christine and I and Gail and Edwin Steiner drove the 20-plus hours to Amarillo, where we gathered with about a dozen others for a time of reflection, prayer and sharing before the witness at the plant. The times of Bible study and prayer were very uplifting, helping to calm some of my fears and anxieties. Especially difficult was taking the time to write letters to my parents and to our community in the event we did not return. We tried to face the fact that this facility was one of the most heavily guarded in the nation and that the guards confronting us would be armed with deadly weapons. Facing one’s own death and still choosing to act is the most liberating feeling in the world!

Yet not all the preparations were so serious. We staged a “trial run” of the two ladders we had built to scale the 12-foot chain-link fence topped with barbed wire that we would encounter. When we set up a ladder to scale the backstop of a local baseball field, the ladder collapsed under our weight and had to be rebuilt with heavier wood. We ended up in a heap, laughing at ourselves and the “folly” of our witness.

On the snowy morning of February 10, 1981, the six



Los Alamos Study Group | [www.lasg.org](http://www.lasg.org)

*The Pantex nuclear plant in Amarillo, Texas.*

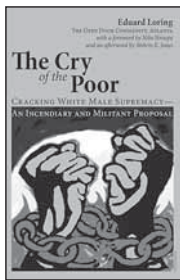
of us who had covenanted together for this witness drove to the Pantex plant to arrive in conjunction with the morning employee traffic, hopefully to allow us to get close to the area protected by two rows of chain-link fence, separated by a 50-foot “no man’s land” between them. The radio station announced that visibility was “almost zero,” and blowing snow made it almost impossible for us to be seen as we briskly walked toward the fences with our ladders.

But after the first three had scaled the fence and I threw their ladder over so we could climb the second fence, all types of bells and lights and whistles went off, activated by sensory devices in the area between the fences. After all of us were inside the first fence, we saw that the second fence was electrified and that guards had their automatic rifles pointed at us. We decided that this was as far as we were meant to go, so we gathered in a circle, read the passage from Ephesians about bringing light into darkness, and prayed for forgiveness for our complicity and trust in these weapons which threatened all of creation.

It took about 45 minutes for the guards to bring a van to arrest us. Then they took us to the heart of that area of the plant where we had hoped to go anyway to pray, in order to question and process us. The manager of the plant asked to meet with a couple of us to inquire why we were there. In the ensuing conversation we discovered that he was Jewish, and one of us asked him how he would have felt if a group of people had sat on the railroad tracks leading into Auschwitz, challenging the Nazi plans for extermination. While the manager didn’t agree with our actions, he said he could somewhat understand our motivations.

We were taken to the local county jail. At our booking, Vince and I refused to give our Social Security numbers or other irrelevant information. Federal agents then took us to the FBI building in Amarillo. After being questioned, and threatened, by the FBI, we were sent to the Potter County Jail, our home for the next three months. The two women in our group, Kathy Jennings and Mary Sprunger-Froese, were sent to the women’s facility. Ladon, Father Larry Rosebaugh, Vince Scotti Eirene and I were put into maximum security in the men’s jail. After a week, Ladon and Larry were transferred to minimum security, while Vince and I remained in the maximum lockup. The two of us were not permitted any visits during the three months, and we saw the other four

# The Open Door Community Press Books



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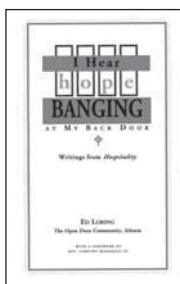
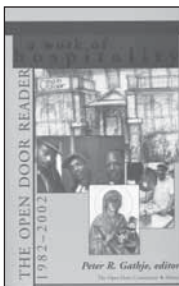
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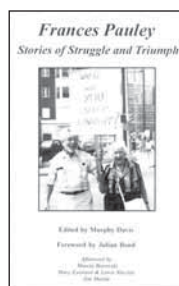
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## The Day I Climbed a Fence and Went to Jail *continued from page 3*

again only when we went to court for arraignment, then our one-day trial, and then our sentencing.

### Motivation? Irrelevant!

Just before our trial began, the two court-appointed lawyers assigned to our case notified us that the U.S. attorney had filed several motions *in limine*, aimed at preventing us from testifying about certain “irrelevant” issues. A motion *in limine* — Latin for “at the threshold” — is a motion made before the start of a trial requesting that the judge rule that certain evidence may, or may not, be introduced to the jury. The motions asked the court to disallow any testimony about “nuclear weapons or nuclear energy, U.S. foreign policy, or our religious convictions,” because they allegedly were not relevant to the simple criminal trespassing charge we faced.

What I took from it was the conviction that, when we choose to act on our faith rather than our fears, our faith increases.

As Ladon and Larry testified, federal Judge Mary Lou Robinson stopped both in the middle of their testimony, stating that they could not talk about growing up in West Texas (Ladon) or working on the streets of Recife, Brazil (Larry). So, this being only my second trial, I was nervous, wondering if the judge would charge me with contempt if I attempted to talk about my motivation for our act of witness. While Ladon and Larry were not charged with contempt, it was clear that the judge had little patience with any “irrelevant” testimony.

Thirty years later, I don’t remember what I said on the witness stand that day. I do remember talking about my faith and belief that Jesus had called me to a life of nonviolence and that I had gone over that fence “to pray for peace.” I expected to be cut off by the judge at any minute, but my testimony was short and to the point.

Judge Robinson’s instructions to the jury left no doubt in my mind that our conviction was a foregone conclusion. She instructed the jury to disregard everything the defendants had said, because our “motivation” was not important, only our intention: did we intend to enter the property, and did we have permission to do so? It was all so neat and antiseptic. No need to “confuse” the jurors with complicated notions such as international law and indiscriminate weapons. Did they trespass? If so, find them guilty.

The jurors did their duty and in 45 minutes returned to the courtroom with their six guilty verdicts. The judge thanked them and announced that she would sentence us in several weeks, after court officers researched our prior records and made their recommendations.

Because they didn’t have our Social Security numbers, and because of their incompetence, federal bureaucrats failed to find prior arrest records for Vince and me, even though they had our names, addresses, fingerprints and photographs. As a result, we were sentenced as “first-time offenders” and got only six-month sentences, half the maximum allowed. Kathy and Mary, who had previously been arrested at Rocky Flats, Colorado, a Department of Energy facility that made the triggers for nuclear weapons, got nine months. Ladon and Father Larry both got the maximum year in prison, because of their previous convictions for acts of conscience.

Before being sent to prison, we heard a rumor that a Pantex worker had quit his job for reasons of conscience. We also learned that the local Roman Catholic bishop, Leroy Matthiesen, had visited Larry in his Amarillo cell and later called for all persons of conscience working at Pantex to quit their jobs and started a transition fund for those who did so for reasons of conscience. This sent a shock wave through the Amarillo community.

Several weeks after sentencing, we were sent to the federal prison in El Reno, Oklahoma. Federal guidelines called for us to go to low-security prisons near our homes, because we had been convicted of nonviolent offenses with relatively short sentences. However, because the prisons at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, both shared the bases with nuclear weapons, the prison authorities sent me to Texarkana, Texas. I finally was able to get a visit from Christine over the Memorial Day weekend, after she made a grueling 20-plus-hour bus ride to see me.

In early August, nearly six months later, I was given new clothes, about \$25 and a bus ticket to Americus, and released, two months shy of my 31st birthday.

### Looking Back After 30 Years

In retrospect, if we had strategized about how to get religious leaders to denounce nuclear weapons or to get the local Catholic bishop to make a public statement about the morality of Pantex, we wouldn’t have come up with what we did. In retrospect, I feel that God used the faithfulness of our witness to help move the conscience and courage of the bishop.

In the long run, I believe that the prayer witness at Pantex had more effect on me than on others. What I took from it was the conviction that, when we choose to act on our faith rather than our fears, our faith increases. Clarence Jordan, co-founder of the Koinonia Community, used to say, “Faith is acting not in spite of the evidence but in scorn of the consequences,” and “Faith is betting your life on the unseen realities.” When we chose to place our lives into the hands of God’s grace over against the fear of the weapons of the Pantex security guards, it was a statement of faith and hope, rather than a resignation to despair in the presence of “the Bomb.”

The time in jail and prison was grace-filled. There were moments when I was scared, times when I was “concerned,” and a lot of the time was filled with boredom, loud noises and way too much cigarette smoke from fellow inmates. I learned to sleep with a towel over my eyes, because the 100-watt light bulb in our six-man, 8-by-14-foot cell was on 24/7. I read through my Bible twice. I wrote scores of letters, one every day to my wife while in the county jail, less frequently when I hit the federal prison. I listened to the stories of my cellmates and grew to understand the powerlessness that a prisoner experiences. Having survived it, I feel that I am stronger for it. I had a vibrant, loving community praying for and supporting me, which goes a long way when one is locked up!

It gave me a new appreciation for what it can mean to be on the “receiving end” of the American Empire. Those nuclear weapons, protected by guards and barbed-wire-topped fences, are metaphors for the lengths to which our nation is willing to go to “protect our way of life.” As such, they are idols to our god of National Security, Mars, the god of war, and Mammon, the god of greed.

February 10, 1981, was a day to reject those idols, those false gods. The rest of my life is one of nonviolent resistance to them, while at the same time embracing the alternative reality that my faith calls me to: what Jesus referred to as the Kingdom or Reign of God. I am thankful to have friends who continue on this journey with me. ✠



Brian Kavanagh

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

# Klickety-Klack

By Melvin E. Jones

*Editor's note: Melvin Jones has been incarcerated in the Georgia prison system since 1994 and is now in a "fast track" program that prepares prisoners for re-entry into society. He wrote this poem after he read Eduard Loring's recently published book "The Cry of the Poor" and, as he puts it, "served many copies on the powers that be, much like many poor folks were served copies of indictments by the powers that be."*

Klickety-Klack  
 (two K's, not three),  
 Brother Melvin is back,  
 Still focused on the equality track.  
 I might be bound,  
 But my soul and mind are free,  
 As free as a bird  
 Atop an old oak tree.

I exposed the book  
 For the prison folks to look.  
 Some smiles insincere,  
 But I don't care.  
 The truth is free  
 For those who will see.  
 They can set their standards,  
 But they can't control me.

A maverick I am — not Bart or Bret.  
 They held the book, read the front  
 And began to sweat.  
 I'm not through — no, not yet.  
 Judging a book by its cover  
 Is prejudice with a pre--.  
 Open it up and journey with me.  
 Get ready for the *truth*.  
 The words are real.  
 Now, whatcha gonna do?  
 Where ya gonna run to?

Now they look at me strange,  
 Though I haven't changed.  
 They glimpsed my heart, head and soul.  
 Now they know that I know —  
 Who I am and who they are.  
 Klickety-Klack,  
 Some of them will crack —  
 And meet us at the margin  
 As brothers and friends.

Peace, truth and liberty,  
 Brother Melvin

*Hospitality* welcomes poems from people in Georgia prisons or living on the streets in Georgia.  
 Send submissions to Eduard Loring, Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30306  
 or by email to [hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com](mailto:hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com).

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

*Come live as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community and join Gladys Rustay as we work to end the death penalty.*

**Live in a residential Christian community.**

**Serve Jesus Christ  
in the hungry, homeless, and imprisoned.**

**Join street actions and loud and loving  
nonviolent demonstrations.**

**Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time  
at Dayspring Farm.**

**Join Bible study and theological reflections  
from the Base.**

**You might come to the margins  
and find your center.**

**Contact: Sarah Humphrey**  
at [opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)  
or 770.246.7625

For information and application forms visit  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)

## Please Help!

The Open Door  
needs **2,000**  
**sandwiches** to  
serve each week!

We need  
**meat with cheese**  
sandwiches  
**(no bologna, pb&j or  
white bread, please)**  
individually wrapped  
on **whole wheat** bread.

## Thank You!



this year give  
**HOSPITALITY**

A \$10 donation covers a one-year subscription to *Hospitality* for a prisoner, a friend, or yourself. To give the gift of *Hospitality*, please fill out, clip, and send this form to:

**Open Door Community**  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

\_\_\_\_ Please add me (or my friend) to the *Hospitality* mailing list.

\_\_\_\_ Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

\_\_\_\_ I would like to explore a six- to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please contact me. (Also see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_



volunteer  
needs  
at the  
**Open Door Community**

**Volunteers for Tuesday (9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) and Wednesday Soup Kitchen (9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.).**

**Volunteers to help staff our Foot Clinic on Wednesday evenings (6:00 p.m. for supper, 6:45-9:15 p.m. for the clinic).**

Individuals to accompany community members to doctors' appointments.

Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat with cheese sandwiches on whole wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends (**no bologna, pb&j or white bread, please**).

People to cook or bring supper for our household on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

**For more information, contact Sarah Humphrey at [odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net](mailto:odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net) or 770.246.7618**

**Living the Incarnation of the Word** *continued from page 1*

requires other people to go to prison or to be beheaded. And so, John is a radical prophet. John comes to preach repentance. "Repent ye, ye vipers." I just love it. The fire is a-coming and the ax is gonna chop down the tree, every root of the tree that does not bear good fruit. How is your fruit today?

Yes, John the Baptist is preaching a sermon of repentance. He is calling people and people are coming, and he is baptizing.

What is it that John is calling people to repent from? Because this is the key to Mark. This is the key to the New Testament; this is the key to the way, the truth and the light. What is it that John is pouring out his heart to get people to repent from, to move toward, to cross over, to go down into the waters, long before Paul gave us a great theology of repentance?

Billy Graham, for a long time a shaper of life in the United States, would repeatedly call for repentance, yet never name what to repent from. Earlier I said that we are a concrete people. An action-reflection, Word-practice method makes us very concrete. Where are you? What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Why are you here? What are you eating? Who are you eating with? Why are you eating? These are very concrete questions. What does John have in mind?



Rini Templeton

So when John comes preaching repentance, what do you repent from? Complicity with and valuing of the Roman Empire. John keeps going until he gets imprisoned and then he gets his head cut off. And Jesus emerges in his public ministry. You have, then, the birth of what we call biblical anarchism — and that was to take us back to tribal values, the tribal confederacy. Yes, John preaches biblical anarchism, which is the critique of empire, the critique of centralization of power and of the state and bureaucracy that forms, informs, reforms and manages your life. John and Jesus came offering a whole other way of life.

**Starting With the Works of Mercy**

The question facing the church today is, are we like Israel in 1020 BCE? In 1020 BCE they go to the prophet Samuel demanding a king. Are we in 1020 BCE or are we with Jesus Christ? Are we with John and Jesus and Miriam and Mary and the women who are healed and the women who believe?

Luke has a very powerful story where Jesus, who uses patriarchal language, calls a woman who has been bent over for some 20 years "daughter of Abraham." Such a thing had never happened before in the Bible. He deconstructed patriarchy. This is biblical anarchism.

John says repent, and I think Jesus picks that up from him. I think Jesus was a disciple of John. John warns people, "If you do not repent, you are going to go to hell." Then he manifests that in action in his works of mercy. "If you have two coats, give one of them away."

The works of mercy are the fundamental response to complicity with

empire, the desire to have a king, and to be like other nations. How then do we build an alternative community, returning to tribal confederations, except to start with the works of mercy? And that is all found in John the Baptist, and that is why I am sure that John was Jesus' mentor.

**It is frightening to take on a nuclear-powered empire, isn't it? But we will find people, especially bleeding women, bent-over women, daughters of Abraham and Sarah, who will kick us along.**

Moreover, it is so important for us to understand what the call of repentance is about. Fundamentally, it is about the engagement with domination through biblical anarchism rooted in our community — a deconstruction of power as we understand it. Naturally enough, this is frightening. It is frightening to take on a nuclear-powered empire, isn't it? But we will find people, especially bleeding women, bent-over women, daughters of Abraham and Sarah, who will kick us along, so that as disciples we can engage our hardness of heart, and in that engagement, with the promised power of the Holy Spirit and the examples that John and Jesus give us on how to live, we can become transformed in a revolution of values or a revolution of the heart. ✠

*Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

**Iconocast**



**Episode 24: Murphy Davis**

<http://www.jesusradicals.com/iconocast-episode-24-murphy-davis/>

**Episode 25: Eduard Loring**

<http://www.jesusradicals.com/iconocast-episode-25-ed-loring/>

The **Iconocast** is a twice-monthly podcast exploring the anti-imperial implications of Jesus' teachings within our modern imperial context. It is the work of a number of collaborators, each engaged in thoughtful praxis.

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

## The Fourth War

Steve Baggarly of the Norfolk, Virginia Catholic Worker, an old friend of the Open Door, wrote the following letter to The Virginian-Pilot newspaper in Norfolk, which was published on March 21. Steve and his wife Kim Williams can be contacted at willbags2002@yahoo.com.

To the editor,

A rationale often used to justify our going to war with Libyan Col. Muammar Gaddafi is that he must be stopped from killing civilians. Would that we were that concerned. For almost 10 years in Afghanistan, eight in Iraq and several in Pakistan, U.S. forces have been ceaselessly killing civilians.

The very decision to engage in modern warfare means we've made our peace with the large-scale killing of civilians. Invading and occupying countries with unseen and unknown enemies means our troops are permanently in atrocity-producing situations, with every civilian a target. War from the air or via cruise missile means adopting "acceptable" civilian death rates in pursuit of high-value targets. Not only have we killed tens or hundreds of thousands of civilians (we purposely don't keep count), but we have maimed, tortured, driven mad, made into refugees or traumatized with midnight home invasions millions more.

As we are now at war in a fourth Middle Eastern country, and with Special Operations troops in secret wars around the globe, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. are still true, that "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world is my own government." The alternative to the massacre of innocents that is modern war is to study and practice the relentless nonviolent resistance that King, Jesus and Gandhi gave their lives for; to disarm and organize ourselves instead to lead the world in overcoming evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love; refusing to kill, no matter the cost.

Steve Baggarly  
Norfolk, Virginia

Dear Editor Murphy Davis,

Aelred Dean's piece, " 'Pie in the Sky,' or 'Pie' Here and Now?" (February), raises an important issue about the misunderstanding of those whose actions are based on achieving heaven rather than on building a just world for everyone.

No less a conservative than Pope Benedict has stated that heaven is not a place. There are many ways in which heaven is accessible right here and now. Examples of liminal spaces are found in well conducted ritual, in love relationships, in well written poetry and beautiful art, in music and in nature. We are just not accustomed to naming these moving experiences as heaven.

Dean says that he has never met a person who came back from "the other side" of death to report back to humanity. The nearest example is Jesus, and he did not have an address after he died. Nevertheless he had a real presence, which would suggest that our way of being will not be as we were. I have had experiences with persons close to me who have died and still do communicate in unexpected ways.

Physical notions of heaven "up there" do cause distortions in how we see life and death.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Keefe, OSF  
Stanchfield, Minnesota

Thank you for the meaningful card and useful calendar. I have been ill and miss seeing the family groups who come to Milledgeville First Presbyterian Church for lunch and to visit their family members. Tell Murphy I miss her and pray she is doing well.

Love,  
Laurette Smith  
Milledgeville, Georgia

Here is a check from "Stamp Out Hunger" Project proceeds. Blessings and best wishes to you and your work.

Bob Winkler  
Pleasant Hill, Tennessee

Dear Open Door Community,

I pray that this letter finds you all well. I encourage everyone at the Open Door to stay steadfast in your dedication to serve Jesus Christ in the hungry, homeless and imprisoned.

Here at Williamsburg Federal Correctional Institution, I am blessed to have all my needs met. I try to use my time productively and am grateful for all the opportunities afforded me. Thanks be to God, I am able to offer a small donation to help you meet the needs of the community.

I respect the work done at the Open Door Community and wish to join in your efforts to support the most needy of our neighbors. Please accept these items (toiletries, razors and toothpaste) with the hope they may bring some relief to those enduring a dark hour in their lives.

Be well, my friends. May the Peace that surpasses all understanding fill your hearts and lives. God Bless You.

Sincerely,  
Robert Lezczano  
Salters, South Carolina

We liked your article about "The New Jim Crow" (January).

Thanks,  
Thomas and Marcia Ballard  
Newburgh, Indiana

Dear good folks,

Thanks for letting us know that you're short on cash. How else would we have known? Here's hoping it pours in.

Laurie Findlay  
Decatur, Georgia

Dear Open Door Community,

Enclosed is my small contribution. Your work is an inspiration to me. I look forward to receiving *Hospitality* in the mail. Keep up the good work!

Mark Danielson  
Richardson, Texas

## "Nonviolence Is Our Strength"

Dear Family and Friends,

Some of you might've received this copy of Archbishop Gomez's reflection on César Chávez from me yesterday (<http://the-tidings.com/2011/040111/gomez.htm>). Then I remembered that today is the Reverend Martin Luther King's death anniversary, which prompted another reflection.

César Chávez was born on March 31, 1927. He would have turned 84 this year. The 19th anniversary of his death is April 23.

In 1968, César undertook a "Fast for Nonviolence." In his statement at the conclusion of his fast, on March 10, 1968, he said:

"Our struggle is not easy. Those who oppose our cause are rich and powerful and they have many allies in high places.

"We are poor. Our allies are few, but we have something the rich do not own. We have our own bodies and spirits and the justice of our cause as our weapons.

"When we are really honest with ourselves, we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So it is how we use our lives that determines what kind [men and women] we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of [humanity], is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice."

Forty-three years ago today, on April 4, 1968, a short 27 days after the conclusion of César's "Fast for Nonviolence,"

Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was rifled down. Two months later, in June of 1968, Robert Kennedy, a great supporter of César, was assassinated. Twenty years prior to that, on January 30, 1948, Mohandas Gandhi, the great nonviolent Indian leader and mentor of both César and Dr. King, was gunned down.

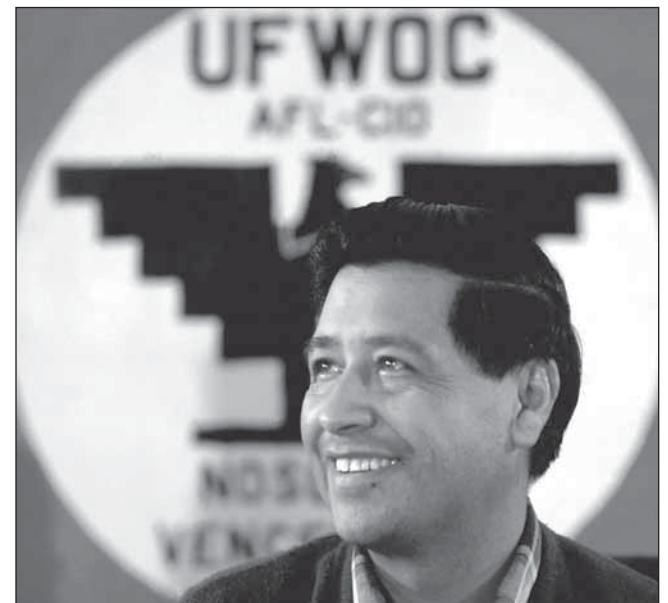
César learned from Gandhi and Dr. King and taught us that "nonviolence is our strength." Since Lent of 1998, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, other churches and community groups have co-sponsored a volunteer "Gun Turn-In" campaign four times a year: during the 40 days of Lent, during César Chávez Nonviolence Week, during [Mexican] Independence Week in September and during Advent (four weeks before Christmas).

There has not been much publicity on this ongoing effort. Word spreads mostly by mouth. The guns do not come in by the dozens. They trickle in one or two at a time. Each is checked by law enforcement to make sure it wasn't stolen or used in a crime. If cleared, the guns are disabled and turned over to welders in the community to be transformed into garden tools, candle holders or other "instruments of peace."

Each item is symbolic of individuals who make a conscious, deliberate choice to say "no" to violence, who want to eradicate violence from their lives, whether that violence is *personal* (alcohol, drugs, tobacco, self-injury, compulsive or overeating, gambling, sex, any addiction), *domestic* (child abuse, adolescent abuse or exploitation, spousal abuse, elder abuse, etc.), or *community* violence (gangs, graffiti, theft, etc.).

They, too, allow themselves to be "transformed" into "instruments and advocates for peace." Our "transformed guns" are spreading the message of peace as far away as Africa, New York, Idaho, California, etc.

PAZ,  
Socorro Hernández Bernasconi  
Guadalupe, Arizona



© Bob Fitch

César Chávez on January 1, 1968, in Delano, California.

# Open Door Community Ministries

**Soup Kitchen:** Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon  
**Men's Showers:** Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.  
**Women's Showers:** by appointment  
**Harriet Tubman Free Women's Clinic:**  
 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.  
**Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinics:**  
 Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
**Mail Check:** Tuesday – Wednesday, during Soup Kitchen  
 Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 1 p.m.  
**Use of Phone:** Tuesday – Wednesday, during Soup Kitchen  
**Retreats:** Five times each year for our household, volunteers and supporters.  
**Prison Ministry:** Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, Georgia, in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville; monthly Jackson (Death Row) Trip; pastoral visits in various jails and prisons.

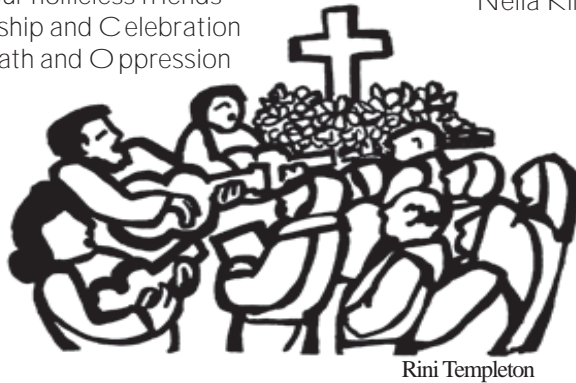
**Sunday:** We invite you to join us for **Worship at 4 p.m.** and for supper following worship.  
**We gratefully accept donations at these times.**  
**Sunday:** 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.  
**Monday:** 8:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.  
**Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday:** 8:30 until 9:30 a.m. and 2 until 8:30 p.m.  
**Friday and Saturday:** We are closed. We are not able to offer hospitality or accept donations on these days.

Our **Hospitality Ministries** also include visitation and letter writing to prisoners in Georgia, anti-death penalty advocacy, advocacy for the homeless, daily worship, weekly Eucharist, and Foot Washing.

## Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 4 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together. If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 770.246.7628. Please visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

April 3 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Lent 4 Nelia Kimbrough preaching	May 1 No Worship at 910 Spring Retreat at Dayspring Farm
April 10 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Lent 5 Calvin Kimbrough On a Friday Noon: a meditation in song	May 8 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eduard Loring preaching
April 17 4 p.m. Palm Sunday Worship at 910 Call to the Streets Rev. Chauncey Newsom preaching	May 15 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Connie Bonner preaching
April 24 8 a.m. Easter Breakfast with our homeless friends followed by Worship and Celebration of Life Over Death and Oppression	May 22 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Murphy Davis preaching
	May 29 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Nelia Kimbrough preaching



Rini Templeton

## Needs of the Community



Chad Hyatt

### Living Needs

- jeans
- work shirts
- short sleeve shirts with collars
- belts (34" & up)
- men's underwear
- socks
- reading glasses
- walking shoes (especially sizes 11-15)
- T-shirts (L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
- baseball caps
- trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

### Personal Needs

- shampoo (all sizes)
- lotion (all sizes)
- toothpaste (all sizes)
- lip balm
- soap (small sizes)
- disposable razors

### Food Needs

- fresh fruits & vegetables
- turkeys/chickens
- hams
- sandwiches: meat with cheese on whole wheat bread

### Special Needs

- backpacks
- MARTA cards
- postage stamps
- Futon sofa
- single bed - box springs & mattress
- goose-neck floor lamp for our clinic exam room
- scale for our medical clinic
- Cross Trainer exercise machine
- a functional wheelchair

## Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification on selected Tuesday evenings from 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 770.246.7620 or visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

## Medical Needs List

### Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

- ibuprofen
- acetamenophen
- lubriderm lotion
- cough drops
- non-drowsy allergy tablets
- cough medicine (alcohol free)

### Foot Care Clinic

- epsom salt
- anti-bacterial soap
- shoe inserts
- corn removal pads
- exfoliation cream (e.g., apricot scrub)
- pumice stones
- foot spa
- cuticle clippers
- latex gloves
- nail files (large)
- toenail clippers (large)
- medicated foot powder
- antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

**We also need volunteers to help staff our Foot Care Clinic on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 - 9:15 p.m.!**