

FREE

HOSPITALITY

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Atlanta, Georgia
Permit No. 1264

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

Vol. 29, No. 7

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 404.874.9652 www.opendoorcommunity.org

August 2010

Turning Tables

By Murphy Davis

Editor's note: Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community. She preached this sermon at community worship on July 11.

Scriptures:

Luke 10:25-37, the Good Samaritan

II Kings 6:8-23, Supper with the Syrians

The gospel lesson for today is one of the most familiar stories in all of Scripture and one that is central to the “Open Door Canon.” We read and study it often.

The teacher of the law framed a question to Jesus. “What must I do to receive eternal life?” As usual, the educated elite were trying to trap Jesus; but as usual, he was not about to get caught up in their trap. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Yes, this is the law. “But who is my neighbor?” the teacher persists.

It was not a question asked with good intent. He wanted Jesus to answer it in a way that would make him — the teacher — look good: he wanted to make it clear to everybody that *he* was the model of righteousness. *He* followed all the rules.

But of course Jesus took the question where the questioner did not want to go. Switching tracks, he told the story of how a neighbor acts: how we are to intervene; how we are to go into places where we are not expected and do things that are not only unanticipated but sometimes unwelcomed.

In Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite were following the rules. There was nothing really wrong with what they did. In fact, they did what most of us would have done, and what most of us do most of the time. They looked over at the wounded man and passed by.

Now the Samaritan came from people who were considered by the chosen ones to be half-breeds, at best, and even unclean. So this guy at least started out without having much of a reputation to protect. Even when Samaritans followed all the rules, they were still looked down upon by the Judean elite. The Samaritan didn’t have to be so bothered by the ins and outs of the purity code, and his compassion perhaps more easily overrode any other considerations.

This story was one of many times when Jesus irritated the educated elite by telling them that they should be like or should have the faith of foreigners (the widow of Zaraheth, Namaan the Syrian), the bleeding unclean woman, lepers, or others who would hardly be on anyone’s list of the righteous and the holy.

Actually, while the Good Samaritan story is the reading for this Sunday, I am using it only to introduce a reading that is not in the lectionary’s three-year cycle. We interpret Scripture with other Scripture — an illuminating and fruitful



Louise Foott

practice. We also have some basic Scriptures that help us understand the basics of the call of discipleship, and the Good Samaritan story is one of those basics. (Others are Matthew 25:31 ff, Luke 4:16 ff, Psalm 146, Isaiah 58:1-12.)

So we turn to II Kings 6:8-23. This story makes its crucial turn when Elisha the prophet, like Jesus, gives a surprising answer to a question from a powerful ruler.

It’s also important to remember that this story took place hundreds of years before Jesus. At that time, the capital city of the Northern Kingdom was in Samaria. This was before the Assyrians conquered Israel and deported the upper crust. The Judean elites’ hatred of the Samaritans in the time of Jesus had its roots in the fact that the Assyrians had left only the lower class behind in Samaria, and the Samaritans had intermarried and wandered away from the purity codes, which now were more carefully preserved in Judah. But this was before all that.

A Most Surprising Meal

The passage begins, “The King of Syria was at war with the King of Israel.” The Syrian soldiers were out on a mission of terror and mayhem. They were sent to murder the prophet Elisha for the sake of the Syrians’ military strategy. Elisha was in the way. The Syrians kept setting up ambushes, but Elisha somehow knew their plans (he *was* a prophet, after all!) and kept warning the people so they could avoid the violence. So the Syrian army and its plans were thwarted — not just once or twice, but repeatedly. The Syrian king assumed he had a snitch in the ranks. No, the military brass assured their commander in chief. It was that pesky prophet, Elisha of Dothan.

When Iraqis Wear the Face of Jesus

By Weldon Nisly

Editor's note: Weldon Nisly is pastor of Seattle Mennonite Church and a faithful peacemaker and justice seeker.

Every day for nearly seven years, I remembered Iraq and envisioned returning to that war-torn, occupied land. I longed to go back there with Christian Peacemaker Teams and dreamed of returning to Rutba, a small desert city in the western part of the country. The city holds a special place in my heart. I will always remember it as the place where Iraqis bandaged our wounds in a time of war.

In March 2003, as the George W. Bush administration led our country toward war on Iraq, 32 people from Christian Peacemaker Teams and Voices in the Wilderness were in Baghdad, as the Iraq Peace Team. I was there with CPT. Through intense spiritual discernment with my family and congregation, I felt called by God to go to Iraq to “get in the way of war” by standing with the victims of war. I knew that the American people would see the war primarily through the eyes of the U.S. military machine, and I wanted to help reveal the war that the Iraqi people would experience. So I joined others compelled by Christ to stand with the Iraqi people living under the “shock and awe” of our country’s merciless bombs.



On March 29, 2003, several of us were traveling in three cars from Baghdad across the Iraqi desert to Jordan. Along the way, our car blew a tire, careened into a ditch and turned over, injuring five of us. Some Iraqi men in a car going in the other direction stopped to help us, even though U.S. bombers were flying overhead. They quickly put us into their car and took us to Rutba.

We were taken to a clinic where a doctor and his medical assistants saved our lives, even though their hospital had been bombed by U.S. forces three nights earlier, killing a little boy and his father. When we tried to pay them, they refused

Turning Tables continued on page 8

When Iraqis Wear continued on page 9

Embracing God's Reign

By Lindsay Butler

Editor's note: Lindsay Butler visited the Open Door Community in May, as part of Pete Gathje's Memphis Theological Seminary class, and made the sculpture "Embracing God's Reign" for her final project. She wrote this artist's statement about the piece.

I chose the title "Embracing God's Reign" because for my whole life, salvation has been only an "individual salvation." I always thought salvation meant just to "believe," because that is what will get me to Heaven. Step Two has always been to convince others to "believe" as well, so I could get *them* to Heaven. I have learned that there is so much more to salvation.

There are several practices that I have learned in "Embracing God's Reign," but I chose to focus on three: resisting individual salvation and embracing God's Beloved Community; diversity; and the text found in Matthew 25.

My first night at the Open Door, I engaged in a conversation with Ed Loring and Ron Lister about this concept of individual salvation that I have experienced for most of my life. At one point, Ron Lister said, "In all of my thinking and study on such an individual salvation that you are speaking of... I have come to a conclusion theologically... that this kind of *individual salvation* is blasphemous."

This insight really grabbed my heart in a way that was disturbing, frustrating and exciting all at the same time. I still value all that I learned through this "blasphemous salvation," and it has opened my eyes and heart to be more understanding of those still consumed by such a salvation. Although it is heartbreaking to have this kind of spiritual awakening in my faith, I am more at peace now knowing that salvation is more about



Embracing God's Reign

found objects, photographs, text, spackling compound, paint

communal salvation and embracing God's reign in a way that is sustaining.

The second theme I chose was that of diversity. I was really just blown away by the diversity I saw being lived out at the Open Door. This diversity will forever remind me of how God has called us to diverse community and not to a community that consists only of those we want to love, those who are easy to love, and those who look like us.

The third theme is the text found in Matthew 25. The way Murphy Davis put Matthew 25 shook my world. Murphy said, "The heart of the gospel is not only clear, but harsh. If you do this: feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, you're welcome to Heaven.

If you do not, you go to Hell." She is right.

The way she phrased it made it way harsher in my walk of faith. I realize even more how Matthew 25 is a mandate for all Christians to live out, and not just a passion one has.

At the center of my art piece is the cross, which represents ministry and how I plan to adapt the three things to my ministry. The cross is also there to remind me not to focus on Christ's death alone, but on his birth, life, death and resurrection, for they are all necessities in living out the life of faith that God has called us to live. I want to embrace the reign of God every minute of every day, and most importantly *now*. I am done with *waiting* on Heaven. ✠

1 Family
5 People
17 Degrees

17 Degrees Ain't Nothing

A film by
Carlton Mackey
and Dane Jefferson

On a winter afternoon in 2009, local artists Dane Jefferson and Carlton Mackey were headed to a small farm seeking something outside the city to photograph or draw.

Only a couple of miles into their journey, they saw a group of what appeared to be all men standing outside of an abandoned building. With no certainty about the outcome, they stopped the car and began a conversation. The result was about 50 photographs, an hour of video footage and a new perspective.

17 Degrees Ain't Nothing brings to the forefront issues surrounding homelessness in Atlanta. It places the story of five local individuals in the context of a global conversation about the economy and the real-life impact of the recession.

This project challenges our assumptions about homeless people.

It is a glimpse into their lives and a peering into our own.

50% of the proceeds from the sale of the soundtrack album 17 Degrees Ain't Nothing will go to the Open Door Community.

www.17degreesaintnothing.com

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.

Open Door Community

910 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
www.opendoorcommunity.org
404.874.9652; 404.874.7964 fax



Winston Robarts

Newspaper

Editor: Murphy Davis
Photography and Layout Editor: Calvin Kimbrough
Poetry Corner Editor: Eduard Loring
Associate Editors: Eduard Loring, Gladys Rustay, Anne Wheeler, and Brother Aelred Dean
Copy Editing: David Mann and Julie Martin
Circulation: A multitude of earthly hosts
Subscriptions or change of address: Anne Wheeler

Open Door Community

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

Anne Wheeler: Administration and Finance
Alice Tudor, RN: Harriet Tubman Clinic Coordinator
Gladys Rustay: Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator
Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator
Eduard Loring: Founder and Elder Works
Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough: Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators
Sarah Humphrey: Administrative Manager, Hardwick Prison Trip Coordinator and Resident Volunteer Applications
Chuck Harris: Volunteer Coordinator
Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry

Not Peace, but a Sword

By Brian Terrell

Editor's note: Brian Terrell went to the New York Catholic Worker when he was 19 years old. He lived there from 1975 to 1979, when he and his wife, Betsy Keenan, moved to the Davenport, Iowa, Catholic Worker. In 1986, they settled with their two children at the Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm in Maloy, Iowa. From their life's work on the farm, they teach organic and sustainable farming, weaving, and the Benedictine roots of the Catholic Worker movement. Brian spends much of his time witnessing against armaments and warmaking and often finds himself in courtrooms and jails. We are grateful for his ongoing witness.

"You must not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have come not to bring peace, but a sword."

This verse from the Gospels, Matthew 10:34 and Luke 12:51, is a text often offered as a clincher argument against any who would witness for the nonviolent Jesus, against Christians who publicly denounce any war. It is apparent that in the minds of many Christians, this verse alone trumps Jesus' many admonitions to love our enemies, to "turn the other cheek," to do only good to those who would harm us.

As this thinking goes, this verse definitively negates all of Jesus' pleas for peace, including his warning to his disciples on the night of his arrest, "Put away your sword. All who take the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) "I have come not to bring peace, but a sword," it would seem, is held to justify just about any act of violence or vengeance by the state. Capital punishment, torture of prisoners, saturation bombing, even nuclear annihilation supposedly is OK by this warrior-savior who came to bring us peace not on this earth but in heaven only, after we are dead.

The verse is used not only to tell Christians who protest wars and state-sponsored violence that we are wrong; it is also used to tell us to shut up. Wartime patriotism requires good citizens and good Christians to put up a united front, to put a lid on our fears and doubts and grief. Words as well as bombs might be employed to kill the other, the "enemy," but among "us," no criticism of our leaders and their wars can be tolerated.

Our struggle, then, as Christians is not with those who are far away and different, no matter how much these might hate or threaten us, as much as with our own home-grown power structures.

Jesus' words taken in context, however, do not support this concept of violent struggle with outsiders and uncritical obedience and docile compliance within. In both Luke and Matthew, Jesus is quite deliberate in saying where the sword shall fall: It is not between "us" and the "enemy," but rather it falls right into the midst of our most intimate circles. One's foes will be found, Jesus says, within one's "own household" (Matthew 10:36), "for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three" (Luke 12:52).

There is a paradox here, if not an outright scandal. Could Jesus really have taught this impossible ethic? Only gentleness, love and forbearance for our enemies, but a sword, however metaphorical, deliberately drawn to cause division at home?

Many commentators have tried to explain this "sword" as one dividing those members of a family who become Christians and those who don't. But John Dominic Crossan (in "Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography") points out just where

and how emphatically the axis of separation lies.

"They will be divided," Jesus taught, "father against his son and son against his father, mother against her daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Luke 12:53) "But why should faith split along that axis?" Crossan asks. "Why might faith not separate, say, the women from the men or even operate in ways far more random? *The attack has nothing to do with faith but with power: The attack is on the Mediterranean family's axis of power, which sets father and mother over son, daughter and daughter-in-law.*

"The family is society in miniature," Crossan continues, "the place where we first and most deeply learn how to love and be loved, help and be helped, abuse and be abused. . . . Since it involves power, it invites the abuse of power, and it is at that precise point that Jesus attacks it."

The Christian churches traditionally have also recognized the family as society in miniature, but they have not usually perceived any attack on the "traditional family" and its power structures in Jesus' teaching. On the contrary, most often they have construed Jesus as unconditionally commending the family and the power structures that grow from it as ideal.



Brian Kavanagh

"The Catechism of the Catholic Church," for example, bases the "duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer and govern it" on the Fourth Commandment, to honor and obey one's parents (2199). In apparent disagreement with the catechism, Crossan says, Jesus' "ideal group" is "contrary to Mediterranean and indeed most human familial reality, an open one equally accessible to all under God. It is the Kingdom of God, and it negates that terrible abuse of power that is power's dark specter and lethal shadow."

The "sword" that Jesus recommends, then, is not a literal one (always forbidden), but a symbolic one that attacks fearlessly close to home and hacks away at our finely tuned and deeply ingrained constructions of hierarchy and dominance. Rather than defending and preserving our way of life, this sword cuts it to pieces. This sword flays and destroys the false "peace" upon which violence and abuse depends, the "peace" of good people not raising a fuss, just trying to get along, trying to stay out of trouble, trying not to rock the boat. Our struggle, then, as Christians is not with those who are far away and different, no matter how much these might hate or threaten us, as much as with our own home-grown power structures.

These structures are not only those of the state, but those

of the church. "It is my intention to make my entire life a rejection of, a protest against the crimes and injustices of war and political tyranny which threaten to destroy the whole race of man and the world with him," wrote the Trappist monk Thomas Merton in 1966. "And when I speak it is to deny that my faith and my church can ever be aligned with these forces of injustice and destruction. But it is true, nevertheless, that the faith in which I believe, is also invoked by many who believe in war, believe in racial injustices, believe in self-righteous and lying forms of tyranny. My life must, then, be a protest against these also and perhaps against these most of all."

Anywhere power is abused is the strong man's house, and there will be no peace in that house until the strong man is bound.

"No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless one first binds up the strong man," says Jesus. (Mark 3:27) It is too easy, perhaps, to perceive the strong man that Jesus bids us to bind and plunder in the empires, the huge and oppressive military, the ecclesial and financial institutions of the world or in these institutions' big shots, generals, presidents, bishops and CEOs. While such perceptions would not be inaccurate, we should resist the temptation to wash our hands of our own collusion with the strong man's house.

The "terrible abuse of power that is power's dark specter and lethal shadow" manifests itself also in "society in miniature," namely in the family, in our friendships and partnerships, in our most intimate relationships. The "strong man's house" is certainly the White House, the Pentagon, the Vatican and the New York Stock Exchange, but it is not only these. The strong man's house might also be our own home, where we live with those whom we love. It might be our parish, religious community, neighborhood association or peace group. Anywhere power is abused is the strong man's house, and there will be no peace in that house until the strong man is bound.

Communities of good people who gather to resist abusive power structures and witness to the Kin-dom of God too often adopt the deadly patterns of the institutions they oppose. Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, was keenly aware of her own authoritarian streak and felt "bitterly oppressed," too, by Catholic Workers who looked to her for leadership, "all looking for organization instead of self-organization, all of them weary of the idea of freedom and personal responsibility. . . . They all complain at the idea of there being this freedom, that there is no boss" ("House of Hospitality," 1939).

Dorothy's life and writings are testimony to her arduous struggle not only to bind the strong men of church and state but also to her deliberate attack on the axis of power within her own Catholic Worker community, the power over others that her own ego and others in their weakness urged her to take onto herself. She saw her own position as that of "a dictator trying to legislate herself out of existence," and this "certainly at the price of bitter suffering" for herself.

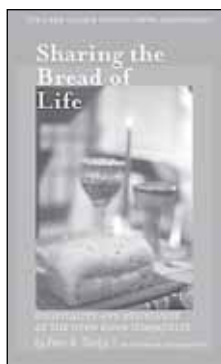
Dorothy's extraordinary courage might be noted especially in her struggle over her own domineering nature, even as she recognized that she sometimes failed. For most of us, though, the struggle to "bind the strong man" within our own small circles of those we love or, indeed, within our own hearts is so difficult that we do not even try. The courage that comes to hand as we face down and "speak truth to power" in society at large fails us when we contemplate addressing power at home, and we retreat to the safety of old hierarchal patterns of relationship. Contending with the most heavily

The Open Door Community Press Books

The Festival of Shelters
A Celebration
for Love and Justice

By **Eduard Loring**
with Heather Barger
preface by Dick Rustay

66 pages
19 color photographs
Paperback
Free for the asking



Sharing the Bread of Life
Hospitality and Resistance
at the Open Door Community

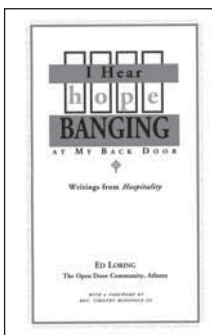
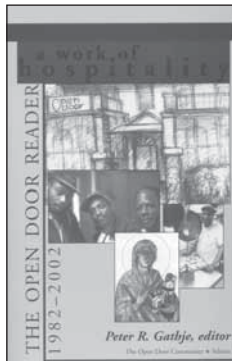
By **Peter R. Gathje**

272 pages
45 photographs
Paperback
\$10.00 suggested donation

A Work of Hospitality
The Open Door Reader
1982 - 2002

Peter R. Gathje, editor

384 pages
Bibliography and Index
Paperback
\$15.00 suggested donation



**I Hear Hope Banging
at My Back Door**
Writings from *Hospitality*

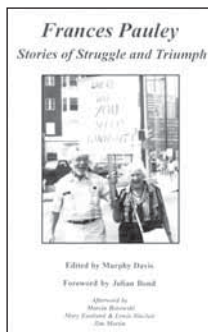
By **Eduard Loring**
Foreword by Rev. Timothy McDonald III

82 pages
21 photographs
available only online at
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Frances Pauley
Stories of Struggle and Triumph

Edited by **Murphy Davis**
Foreword by Julian Bond

89 pages
28 photographs
Paperback
\$3.00 suggested donation



to order:
The Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
404.874.4906

www.opendoorcommunity.org

*If funds are not available,
copies will be sent at no expense.*

poetry corner



HAIKU FROM THE STREETS

BY MICHELINE THOMAS

TURTLE MAN

HOME UPON MY BACK
POLICE DON'T KNOW WHERE I STAY
EASY TO MOVE ON

NIGHT SKY

BLANKET AND COMPASS
NIGHT SKY GUIDES ME ON MY WAY
IT LULLS ME TO SLEEP

DEGREES OF SADNESS

SEVEN YEARS COLLEGE
I HAVE NOW MASTERED THE STREETS
HERE'S THE REAL CLASSROOM

ONCE WE WERE KINGS

NO CROWN ON MY HEAD,
NO STEED, I ROLL WITH MY CART
ROYALLY I STRIDE

WEATHERMAN

GENTLE BREEZE BLOWING
BIG TOE PREDICTING A STORM
SHELTER LIES AHEAD

I DON'T DO GARBAGE

I DON'T DO GARBAGE
FOOD POISONING IS FOR REAL MAN
AND . . . I WASH MY GRAPES

LADY MADONNA

CHILDREN IN HER ARMS
THE ANGELS WILL PROTECT YOU
HOMELESS MADONNA

MICHELINE THOMAS IS A NURSE AT THE EMORY HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY CLINIC AND A VOLUNTEER WITH THE OPEN DOOR'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT FOOT CLINIC. SHE HAS BEEN GENTLY STICKING MURPHY DAVIS WITH NEEDLES FOR ABOUT THREE YEARS.

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 30306-4212
or by email to hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com.

Finding the Heart of Matthew 22

By Aelred Dean

Editor's note: Brother Aelred Dean is a member of the Episcopal Brotherhood of St. Gregory and is on the staff of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Atlanta. He is a weekly volunteer at the Open Door Community and cooks for our holiday meals.

Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away. (Matthew 22:15-22, New Revised Standard Version)

For many years, I read in such a straightforward manner that I didn't allow creative imagination nor the Holy Spirit to help me understand the message of Scripture. Because of a previous hermeneutic, or biased understanding of Scripture, I silenced its ongoing revelation, because my comfort level needed a tame and controllable God and my theological understanding allowed me to live within my comfort level.

Because Jesus was tearing down that dividing wall that the religious leaders built up and continue to build up, their life was and is threatened.

I can't remember when or why a friend handed me the book "Joshua: A Parable for Today" by Joseph F. Girzone, but I am forever grateful for her gift, because reading it gave me the creative freedom to use my holy imagination to begin to look at Scripture in ever-revealing relevance. When I came across the above passage during Evening Prayer, Girzone's work and his thinking outside traditional interpretation came to mind, and I reread this Gospel narrative to say:

Then the "Christianist" Leaders went and plotted to entrap Jesus in what he said. So they sent their pastors to him, along with their scholars, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the United States, or

not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me your money used for the tax." And they brought him a dollar bill. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "George Washington's and the United States of America." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the United States the things that are the United States', and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

At first it may not seem that there's a big difference, as I only replaced certain words to make the meaning contemporary and against "Christianists." And that would be correct. But it helped me understand some subtle meanings that I had glossed over in the traditional reading.

The first insight was that it wasn't politicians who approached Jesus with this challenge. It wasn't the poor or marginalized. It was the elite of the institutionalized religion of the time (as are the "Christianists" of our time). Why did these religious leaders do this?

This is where creative and holy imagination helps in opening up Scripture. Religion through the ages has been used to control people while upholding social norms as being the path to freedom and new life. That understanding enslaves people to blind obedience to the state and acceptance of the status quo. The Pharisees challenged Jesus because he threatened their privileged position in the pecking order and their way of life. They needed to entrap him so they could bring charges against him, to make the state their partner in killing him. It's just like today, when certain sects within Christianity preach against the basic teachings of Jesus in order to make sure the state and personal prosperity are served.

There's a second reality in this passage that I at first missed, as it is psychological in nature and gives insight into our behaviors, and maybe, just maybe, I didn't want to admit that it could be part of my nature as well. This second reality is how the Pharisees bore false witness, using flattery. They used this deceptive practice to try to catch the one who embodies truth. But their flattery is a condemnation against them, because they embody the complete opposite of what they say about Jesus. They say that he is sincere, teaches the way of God in accordance with truth, shows no deference and shows no partiality. These things are true, for Jesus taught with sincerity, with truth and without partiality. But many religious leaders, then and now, are sincere in their subjective teachings against the truth of God while showing partiality to the powers in order to keep their way of privilege, power and control over people.

The Pharisees made true statements about Jesus while revealing their true nature, for if they were followers of the truth of God, they would have become followers



Ade Bethune

of Jesus. But because they weren't following God's truth, they wanted to entrap and silence him instead.

Mainstream Christianity today in many ways silences the teachings of Jesus by actions that support ways of death: engaging in wars, supporting subjugation of the poor to the wealthy, and assuming that it's our divine right to rape the resources of the earth for selfish greed. I know that there are Christians who stand up against these things, but their witness tends to be silenced by political and religious leaders, because the light of truth reveals the insidious nature of their way of life.

A third insight in this passage, which I think goes to the heart of the attacks against Jesus, is the statement that he shows no preference. I have noticed everywhere, from Scripture to casual observation, that many, though not all, religious leaders really enjoy their status and regard any threat to their leadership or authority as an attack against them and the institution they represent. How could this "man of God" attack those who claim to speak for God? My response would be "easily," because all too often institutional representatives are more interested in upholding the authority of the institution than in the incarnational reality that God is not found in the institution but within people. Because Jesus was tearing down that dividing wall that the religious leaders built up and continue to build up, their life was and is threatened. After all, it is very heady stuff to think that one is God's spokesperson, and that designation was being taken away.

The fourth insight that I gained from rereading this Gospel narrative is that the question about paying taxes was really a ruse. The Pharisees' real complaint was that Jesus wasn't showing partiality and due respect for

their status as religious leaders, for they were doing the very thing already that they wanted to use to entrap Jesus, and that was paying what was "due" to the state.

Finally, I think Jesus' response to the religious leaders is absolutely brilliant. Its message is clear and precise, but we cloud and muddy it. To live out a life of the simple message of Jesus is extremely difficult, because of its countercultural message.

Jesus asks whose image is stamped on the dollar bill, or coin in the traditional translation, and the religious leaders answer correctly. I think Jesus was using words wisely in trying to help them and us really to understand where people should have their loyalty. He uses the word *image*, or in the Greek *eikōn*, from which we get the word *icon*. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the first meaning is "a usually pictorial representation . . . or image." By using the word *image*, Jesus was harking back to the creation narrative in Genesis 1:26: "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image (צֶלֶם tselem), in our likeness (דְמוּת דְמוּת dēmuwth) . . .'. For humanity is made in the image and likeness of God, and that humanity is stamped forever with an image, and that cannot be changed. So our work as people created in the image and likeness of God is to restore that image, that eternal icon written into our being, back to God and away from the world.

Jesus is saying that our entire life is to be service back to God, for we are stamped with God's image and not any image of the United States or any other nation.

I wonder whether, when we render to the state, we somehow are denying or destroying that eternal image written in our hearts. Jesus is saying that our entire life is to be service back to God, for we are stamped with God's image and not any image of the United States or any other nation. Jesus is reminding me that we can have only one loyalty, and that is to God and God alone. To have double loyalty is impossible, and Jesus is revealing that the religious leaders whose loyalty is to their privilege and honor can never represent the One whose image is stamped on the heart of every living person, regardless of religious affiliation.

Isn't this good news liberating and freeing? Jesus teaches us how to have a single heart devoted to serve God and God's people. It frees us to do the work we are called to do, and that is to love God and love our neighbor. It frees us to break down any dividing wall that separates people. It frees us to be the living icons of Jesus in a broken world that needs God's healing love and restoration. ✠



Betty Jane Crandall

In, Out & Around 910

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough



Betty Jane Crandall



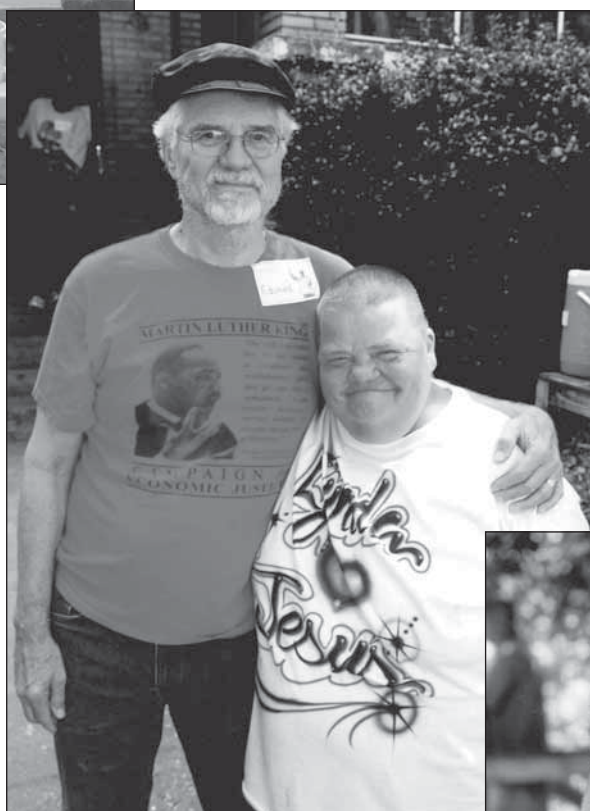
Betty Jane Crandall



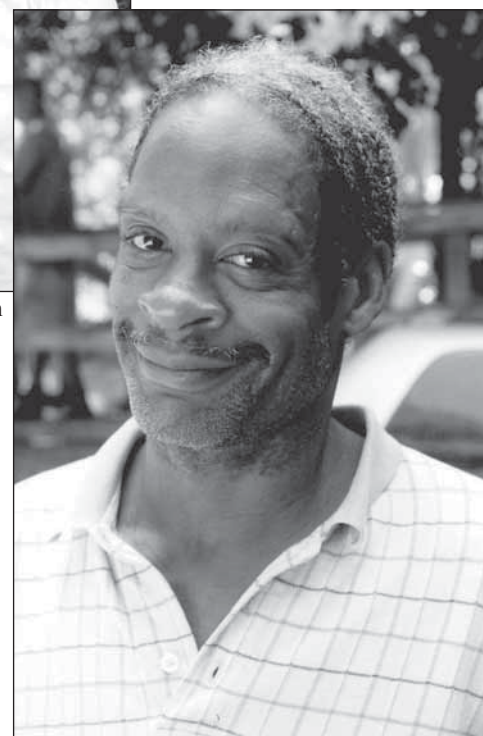
Betty Jane Crandall

The Fourth on the Fifth

July 4 fell on Sunday this year, so we held our annual picnic on Monday. **Brando Hall** (*top*) collected tickets in the back yard. Regular volunteers **Antonio Henderson** and **James Walker** (*above center*) were part of the serving crew, and **John McRae** and **Nelia Kimbrough** (*above*) cooked hundreds of hamburgers. **Ira Terrell** (*above right*) made tea and then left to make his annual run in the Peachtree Road Race. **Eduard Loring** welcomed **Lynda Baker** (*right*) and several hundred other guests in the front yard. And **Samuel Walker** (*below right*), a trusted friend, enjoyed his meal a lot! We served some 400 folks hamburgers, baked beans, slaw, potato chips, iced tea and watermelon. It was a fine time in our back yard.



Calvin Kimbrough



Calvin Kimbrough

A Wedding!

Melissa Shank and **Chris Gratowski**, both of whom have been frequent visitors at the Open Door Community, were married in Lynchburg, Virginia in June. Johnny Devlin represented us at their wedding. We wish for them a long and productive life together in the movement as they build community and work for sustainable agriculture.



Johnny Devlin



Calvin Kimbrough

Visitors From All Over

The summer always brings many visitors to the Open Door.

from Germany

Jonas, Birke and **Lea Kleinwächter** from the Brot und Rosen — Bread and Roses — Catholic Worker community in Hamburg, Germany visited in July. The Open Door and Brot und Rosen (www.brot-und-rosen.de) have been sister communities since 1993.

from closer to 910

Jessica Sully (*right*) and her boys Kabir and Adeep joined us for a couple of weeks in June. They work and worship with us each week. **Nelia Kimbrough, Lindsay “Butler”**

Butler and **Catherine Lawson** (*below*) are all smiles during Butler and Catherine’s visit in July. Butler came as part of Pete Gathje’s Memphis Theological Seminary class in May; her painting and artist statement, completed as part of that class, are on page 2.

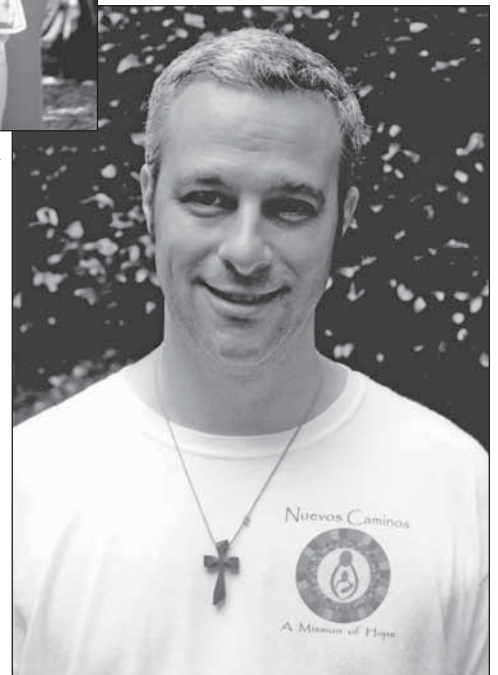
She and Catherine are both volunteers at Manna House in Memphis. **Rich Robinson** (*below right*) has come again to live and volunteer with us during his four weeks of study at Candler School of Theology. Rich is the pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church at James Island, South Carolina, and he comes each summer for the Course of Study School at Candler. Rich and his wife JoDee also shepherd Nuevos Caminos Mission in the South Carolina Lowcountry (www.nuevoscaminos.us).



Betty Jane Crandall



Calvin Kimbrough



Calvin Kimbrough

Turning Tables *from page 1*

So soldiers were dispatched to kill him. In the deep shadows of night, they surrounded Dothan. When Elisha's servant woke up and saw the Syrian army all around the city, he panicked. He ran to Elisha with the news: "Oh, man, we are cooked — done for. No hope. What shall we do?"

So Elisha says what the angels and the prophets so often say, the most impossible and ridiculous thing you could think of for them to say: "Don't be afraid." Uh, yeah, right. But Elisha induced a hallucination, and suddenly the servant saw the Syrians surrounded by chariots of fire and horses and soldiers from the army of Israel.

The soldiers did what they came to do. They attacked. So Elisha prayed that God would strike them blind: all of them, just like that! They were suddenly changed from strutting, mighty warriors who had the upper hand to helpless men wandering around a strange town having no idea what to do next.

Having neutralized the situation, Elisha became the Trickster. He walked out to them and said, "Hey, guys, you're on the wrong road, but I think I can help you find the prophet you're looking for." The soldiers, in a state of complete powerlessness, and having no idea that their "helper" was the very man they had come to kill, just followed along.

Elisha was perhaps praying and singing with his contemporary Psalmists that all the plans of their enemies would come to naught. May God create confusion among them and let them fall into the traps they have dug for others.

And thus it was that Elisha, singing and marching, led them right into the belly of the beast — Samaria, home town of the King of Israel. Then he asked God to open their eyes again.

It must have been a terrible moment when they could see that they were right at the epicenter of enemy territory. These people had every reason in the world to take revenge on the Syrians, so these soldiers knew they wouldn't get out of this alive.

**They were his enemies,
but Elisha
suggested supper.
After coming to table,
they become neighbors.**

Sure enough, the King asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them, sir? Shall I kill them?" Like an eager child wanting to do what he was supposed to do. After all, they're our sworn enemies, and they've been such a pain in the ass making all these raids on our people. Shall I kill them? Nothing unusual here — just the regular assumptions of warfare. But here is where Elisha changed the script entirely.

"No. Don't kill them. In the first place, they're captives and it's ethically unacceptable to kill soldiers that you've captured and disarmed. *So give them something to eat and let them go home.*" Singing in the depth of

his creative prophetic spirit, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Ah, this is how God welcomes us; perhaps it is how we ought to welcome our own enemies. When we prepare a table in the presence of our enemies, we can all be transformed; perhaps we can all become friends, or at least neighbors!

Now the King himself takes a creative turn. Did he send to the royal kitchen for 250 bologna sandwiches? Or maybe some peanut butter and jelly on Wonder bread? A can of Vienna sausages and a box of saltine crackers with a case of RC Cola and some Moon Pies, maybe? Absolutely not. "*The King of Israel*



provided a great feast for the soldiers." He let them eat and drink at their leisure, and then he sent them home to their own King, who must have been pretty stunned.

When you think about it, this was a pretty risky plan for this unnamed King of Israel. The King of Syria could have turned the soldiers right back around and sent them on another bloody raid. Macho kings are not easily given to plans for peace. And they are really paranoid about being tricked. Warfare was as regular and normal for them as breathing. "It's just the way things are," right? There was always somebody out there waiting to be dominated and plundered. It goes with the territory of being a king or a nation state.

Breaking the Vicious Cycle

But in fact the tables turned, and everything and everybody was transformed. The Syrians stopped raiding the land of Israel. No more raids, no more war, no more fear and terror. The King of Israel was transformed from defensive warrior in battle to gracious and generous host. The King of Syria became, if not a friend, at least a neighbor who lived in peace with Israel.

The table — the abundant, generous, friendly table, the Welcome Table — became the factor that interrupted the cycle of violence. The table, at least for a time, stopped the perpetual state of warfare. This little-known story tucked away in the Hebrew Scriptures is a bright, shining moment in the

history of creative nonviolence.

Warfare is stupid. But the reason it's so commonplace — the reason we assume warfare as one of the "givens" of life and international relationships — is that it's simple. We love simple. We're always caught up in war because any fool can do it.

It starts from basic childhood instinct. "You hit me, I hit you back." "Did too! Did not! Did too! Did not!" And it goes from there and escalates. "You hurt me and my family, I'll hurt you and your family and your whole town! Nyah, nyah!" "You torture my soldiers and I'll do the same to yours. See, it's not bad, because they did it first."

Diplomacy is for wimps. So for heav-

en's sake, why would you want to eat dinner with "those" people?

To do it any differently, to get out of this vicious repetitive circle, we have to engage our creative capacities to break the cycle of violence. It involves risk, and an element of surprise always helps. Isn't that, after all, part of what it means to be a prophet? To look at a situation you've seen a thousand times and see a whole new angle? A whole new set of possibilities? To transform tit for tat into something that could be good for everybody?

Walter Brueggemann refers to this kind of storytelling as "a generative sense of rhetoric." I think what he means is that the storyteller looks at "things as they are" and understands that the "facts of the situation" are not necessarily the way things must be. "Reality" is neither fixed nor absolute. The imaginative capacity of the prophet or prophetic community is invited always at this point to come alive.

Brueggemann quotes Paul Ricoeur's idea that "generative literature" destabilizes "the givens of Empire." The "theological artistry" of the Hebrew Scriptures invites us into a very different world, a world outside "the domain of royal administration," a world where things happen that we might want to say are scientifically impossible. This is what Karl Barth called "the strange new world of the Bible," which values imagination as well as factual reporting.

At any rate, what started out as another story of war and mayhem becomes a story of restored peace, in which people and even nations become neighbors at table.

Jesus, of course, knew this story of Elisha the Peacemaker Prophet. Perhaps he even thought of it when he told the story of the Good Samaritan's merciful intervention. He knew and taught that we *become* neighbors when we respond to a real, concrete need with love in action. "Justice is important; but supper is essential." (Ed Loring)

We have the Scriptures, and we have to admit that some things are much simpler than we want to admit. What if we responded to warfare, crime, punishment, the use of the death penalty, with invitations to the table? Where love is shared in the form of food, where we and our neighbors can be transformed?

Why Not a Banquet?

We are waiting in these days and weeks for a decision from Federal District Court Judge William T. Moore in the Southern District of Georgia. He will decide whether to grant our friend Troy Davis a new trial or let Troy's death sentence stand so he can be executed.

I wonder what it would be like if Judge Moore were to put his knees under Virginia Davis' table in Savannah. What would happen to everyone if Judge Moore were to share food and table fellowship with Troy's mother, his sister Martina, and maybe even Troy himself? What if we could let go of our treacherous and deceptive adversarial legal system long enough for the people involved to really come to know each other? What would happen to people eating fried chicken together and seeking the truth? What would happen if our national leaders could invite Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran to a great banquet where they could sit and eat and share their lives together? What if they all brought their children and talked about what kind of world they want to leave for their grandchildren?

Jesus' story for the teacher of the law suggests that our basic question should be not "Who is my neighbor?" but "How can I *be* a neighbor?" And the answer to the appropriate question is that we act like a neighbor when we actively intervene in a situation of suffering or oppression — when we reduce the distance between ourselves and our neighbors, strangers and even enemies. We find neighbors by *being* neighbors, by responding in love to suffering and need.

Imagine this: the King of Israel goes to the prophet and says, "Elisha, who is my neighbor?" Elisha answers, "The soldiers of the Syrian army."

What the ...? The King would have had Elisha locked up in the loony bin. But as the story unfolded, the King was presented with an opportunity. Here were the lost and befuddled Syrian soldiers before his very eyes. They were his enemies, but Elisha suggested supper. After coming to table, they became neighbors. There were no more raids, no more violence, no more warfare.

Another important element of both of our stories is generosity. Jesus makes it clear in his story that the Samaritan responded to the injured man not with any perfunctory rescue. Rather than the bare minimum, the Samaritan showed an outrageous level of care. He took the injured man to an inn, where he cared for him himself. Then he gave money to the innkeeper and asked him to spend whatever was needed to bring healing and comfort. He would return to pay more if needed. No HMO here imposing limits on the care available.

In the same way, when the King of Israel heard the prophet's suggestion of giving the soldiers something to eat, he responded with "a great feast." Such loving generosity is a wonderful context for transformation. This is the extravagant hospitality that we receive from a loving and merciful God. And because we know this overflowing love, this cup that "runneth over," we can understand our own role when we are taught that God comes to us hidden away in the guise of a stranger. If we understand that we are welcoming Jesus Christ himself to our table, we want to serve the best! As Stanley Vishnewski of the early Catholic Worker used to exclaim, "Nothing is too good for the poor!"

What God asks us to do with our lives is that which makes us most deeply human, that which incarnates our true selves as created in the image of God who is love: (1) Love God, and (2) Love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

But even more, God asks us to love in the very way that God loves: in flesh, in human history, in a way that brings love to intervene in the same-old, same-old of hostility and warfare, breaking all the patterns and expectations of hostility, divisions, retribution, revenge, war — at the table.

This is the New Song that the Psalmists call us to sing.

This is the New Covenant that Jesus calls us to live and celebrate.

Supper, anyone? ✦



Susan van der Hijden

Not Peace *continued from page 3*

armed empire the earth has ever been cursed with seems easier, at times, than confronting the petty little kingdoms of our own making. Yet it is exactly here, first, that Jesus says a sword must fall.

I write this in a bleak time, Holy Week 2010, amid the craven alibis of strong men in the Vatican defending a power structure that enables the abuse of the innocent and in the second year of a new president who promised change but seems instead hell-bent to surpass the cruelty and lawlessness of his predecessor. I write this at a time when close friends at a beloved Catholic Worker community are painfully addressing their own history of autocracy, struggling to accept the burden of freedom and personal responsibility to which they are called. I write this, too, as one full of complicity in the strong man's works, as one who enjoys the privileges and comforts of living in the false peace of his house.

For what can we hope? The sword that Jesus came to bring will fall, as it must, to rend and to destroy forever our households of dominance. The strong man at last will be bound (and so find liberation), and from the treasury of his (our) ill-gotten goods, the "hungry will be filled with good things" (Luke 1:53). I pray that we will have the courage not to fear that sword or the pain and confusion it is likely to bring us. May we have the courage not to raise a hand in defense against this holy and righteous sword. ✦

When Iraqis Wear *continued from page 1*

our money and instead asked us to tell the world about Rutba. We have remembered their compassion and generosity and have been telling the story ever since that day (see resources listed below). But the story does not end with what took place seven years ago. We wanted to return to the town and find the Good Samaritans who cared for us even while our country was bombing and invading theirs.

'Your Mission Is a Noble One'

In January 2010, eight of us met in Amman, Jordan, to make the journey to Iraq. We called ourselves the Rutba Peace Team. It included four members of the original team, three of whom had been among the injured: Shane Claiborne of the Simple Way; Cliff Kindy, a veteran CPTer; Peggy Gish, another veteran CPTer in Iraq; and me. The others were Greg Barrett, a writer and journalist who will write a book about the Good Samaritans of Rutba; Sami Rasouli from Najaf, Iraq, leader of the Muslim Peace Team; Logan Mehl-Laituri, a former U.S. soldier in Iraq who became a conscientious objector and left the Army in 2006; and Jamie Moffett, a filmmaker and photographer who will produce a film about Rutba.

We spent four days in Amman trying to get visas to enter Iraq. After exhausting all normal procedures without receiving visas, we asked to meet with the Iraqi ambassador to Jordan. We were granted a visit with Ambassador Saad Al-Hayani, who welcomed us into his office and served us tea. He listened to our story, then told us, "Because your mission is a noble one, I will grant you a special visa to go to Iraq." We thanked him profusely and went happily on our way to arrange the journey.

Early the next morning we eagerly set out for Iraq, in two taxis. I noted in my journal: "Friday, January 15, 2010 — Martin Luther King Jr's birthday — how appropriate!" At the Jordanian-Iraqi border, it took three hours to get through a total of six security checkpoints. At every checkpoint, the border guards were surprised and puzzled to see Americans going to Iraq in peace, without weapons. But every time, after checking with higher officials, they sent us on our way.

The strangest experience of our journey took place in the "no man's land" at the border, between the Jordanian and Iraqi border guards. Here we encountered a Captain Foster, the U.S. Army officer responsible for the security of the Iraqi border. He arrived in an impressive show of military might, with two fully armored Humvees topped by camouflaged machine guns. My saddest moment was to see these huge machine guns operated by young American soldiers solemnly scanning the landscape for signs of danger on which they could unleash a barrage of deadly bullets.

Captain Foster warned us not to go into Iraq unarmed. "It is a dangerous world over here," he told us. "A hundred yards beyond this border, you're not safe. You can be kidnapped or get your heads cut off." He was not persuaded by our response that weapons would make us less secure on our journey and that we were going in peace to thank the Iraqi doctors who had saved our lives early in the war.

Despite Captain Foster's ominous warnings, we arrived in Rutba late that afternoon. We were taken to the hospital and welcomed by its administrator and Dr. Nazir, the managing physician. We were soon joined by Rutba Mayor Gasem Meiry Awaad, who also welcomed us to the city. With typical Iraqi hospitality, they offered us sweet tea and bottled juice and informed us that we were their guests. They graciously provided our lodging and meals for the duration of our visit.

The next day we were given a tour of the small hospital, which had been rebuilt after it was bombed by the Americans during the first week of the war. We saw the small operating room, with its old operating table that had been dug out from under the rubble. We met a father and mother who brought their very ill baby daughter to be treated at the hospital. We

When Iraqis Wear *continued on page 10*

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Betty Jane Crandall

Itinerant Community Member Diane Wiggins was here for a nice long visit in May and June. Her travels take her between Peru, West Virginia and 910. We look forward to her return in November.

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.

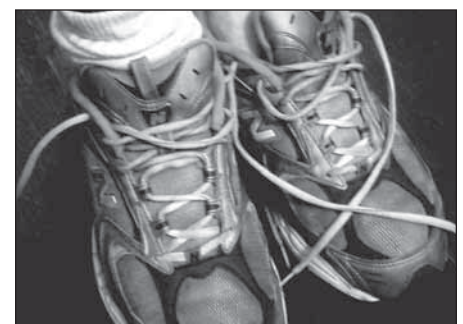
Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.

You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Sarah Humphrey
at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7618

For information and application forms visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Please Help!



We need gently used running and walking shoes for our friends from the streets.

Men's shoes sizes 11-15 are especially helpful.

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 for more information about RV opportunities.)

name _____

address _____

email _____

phone _____



volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community

Volunteers for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Soup Kitchen (9:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.).

Volunteers to help staff our Foot Clinic on Wednesday evenings (6:45-9:15 p.m.).

Individuals to accompany Community members to doctors' appointments.

Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and 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 the Community on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

**For more information,
contact Chuck Harris at
odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7627**

When Iraqis Wear *continued from page 9*

saw again that what the hospital lacked in modern medical facilities and equipment, it more than made up for with compassionate care, just as we had experienced seven years before.

One day while we were there the electricity was out almost all day long, so there was little the doctors could do. That day Dr. Nizer saw five or six patients, rather than his usual 100 or more. He told us that they have only half the medical staff and supplies they need to meet the medical needs of the town.

Not the Enemy, but People Needing Help

A highlight of our visit came when we met with some of the people who had cared for us when we were injured seven years before. Late one afternoon, we were in the hospital guesthouse lounge when a man wearing a white coat and a big smile walked into the room. He was soon followed by another man with a beaming smile. They were Tariq Ali Marzoug, a nurse, and Jassam Mohamed, a medical assistant, who had been at the clinic and tended to our injured bodies on March 29, 2003.

When Jassam entered I reached out to shake his hand, but he gave me a big hug and exclaimed, "I welcome you with an Iraqi greeting!" He went on in amazement: "When I heard you were here, I thought you must have forgotten something. I could hardly believe that you came such a long distance to thank us." Later he added, "This moment makes me very happy. It is my reward for all my thirty years of medical service."

We eagerly asked questions of Tariq and Jassam and listened as they told us their story of their encounter with us that day. They explained that they had still been setting their clinic back in order following the American bombing of their hospital three days before. We asked what they had thought when injured Americans were brought to their clinic that day.

"We did not see you as Americans or as an enemy," they replied. "We saw you as injured people who needed help. It is a matter of ethics. It is also the Iraqi way and what Islam teaches."

Cliff and I asked whether it had been one of them who had stitched up the cuts in our heads. They replied that they both had cleaned and stitched our wounds. I will never forget the feeling of having stitches put into my head without anesthesia because none was available.

I asked whether they had given me anything intravenously. I could not remember for certain, but I remembered that they had few medical supplies. Jassam confirmed that he had put an IV into my arm. He told us how once he had given someone an IV and then stood by the bed holding the bag above his head, because no IV stand was available.

Jassam and Tariq told us about Dr. Farrouq, the doctor who had taken care of us and talked with us that day. Dr. Farrouq, we were told, was now at the hospital in Ramadi, near Baghdad, more than three hours' journey from Rutba. As much as we wanted to see Dr. Farrouq, it was not possible for us to go to Ramadi or for him to "leave his post" and come to Rutba. We were sorry not to see him again, but we were deeply grateful to have visited with Jassam and Tariq.

"We have not forgotten you and we will never forget your great care for us," I assured them. "Now we will tell even more about you and Rutba."

"This story has been transformative to many people in the U.S. who have heard it," Shane added.

Our Iraqi friends responded, "We are also committed to tell about you here in Rutba."

A Transfigured Face

The most emotional moment for me came that evening, when we were in the guesthouse lounge. I was sitting near a corner beside the door. Suddenly I saw a big smile on the weathered face of a man standing in the doorway. Instantly a

strange feeling flooded over me, a feeling of puzzlement and recognition, as if "I know this face!"

He surveyed the room, walked in and said with delight, in his native tongue, "I remember you," pointing to Cliff, "I remember you," pointing to Shane, and "I remember you," pointing to me. Then he told me, "And I carried you."

It took a moment for Sami Rasouli to translate what had been said and another moment for me to fully grasp it. The man told us that his name is Sa'ady Mesha'al Rasheed and that he is the ambulance driver for the hospital. Sa'ady explained that he had been at the clinic when we arrived that day and that he had helped us into the facility for the treatment that had saved our lives.

I had told our Rutba story many times, but I had never told about Sa'ady carrying me from the car into the clinic, because I had not remembered — until I saw his face in the doorway at that moment and heard him speak. Then my body began to remember! With tears in my eyes, I thanked him and listened as he told us of his experience that day. He was suffering from asthma, he explained, then added, "But you were collapsing."

At that moment, I knew that my dream for returning to Rutba had been fulfilled — and that I was seeing the face of Jesus in Sa'ady Mesha'al Rasheed. Seven years earlier I had seen the transfigured face of Jesus in an Iraqi man who helped carry me on a stretcher from the clinic to the car that would take us back to Jordan. Now I was seeing the face of Jesus again.

In Sa'ady, Tariq and Jassam I see people of great faith and compassion whose standard greeting, "Salaam Alaykum," voices their genuine desire that "the peace of God be with you." Their lives give answer to Jesus' great Good Samaritan question, "Who is neighbor to the one who is injured?" (Luke 10:36).

I will forever see Jesus and hear that parable in a new way. I am also haunted by Jesus' weeping lament over Jerusalem: "If you had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes." (Luke 19:42) Deep questions confront Christians today, especially in the United States: Where do we see Jesus? Who is neighbor to those who are wounded? How do we give answer?

One way you can "give answer" is to join the members of the Rutba Peace Team to support the hospital there. Its urgent need is for \$3,000 to repair its generator. Before we left, we gave Dr. Nizer \$1,000 toward the repair of the generator and promised to raise the rest and send it as soon as possible. You too can remember Rutba and help make peace by joining us to support this struggling hospital and its dedicated doctors and nurses. To contribute, please make your check payable to "The Simple Way," write "Rutba Jubilee" on the memo line and send it to: The Simple Way, P.O. Box 14751, Philadelphia, PA 19134. May the salaam/shalom of God be with you! ✠

For background on this article, please see:

- ♦ "Victims of war are not our enemy" by Weldon Nisly, *op-ed column written while recovering in Amman, Jordan*, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, April 4, 2003: www.commondreams.org/views/03/0404-04.htm
- ♦ The Mennonite, May 6, 2003: www.themennonite.org/pdf/magazine_pdf_51.pdf
- ♦ <http://peace.mennolink.org/articles/weldonvictims.html>
- ♦ "Healing Hands in Rutba" by D. Hostetter: <http://www.afsc.org/Newsroom/ht/d/ContentDetails/i/>
- ♦ "Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace" by Peggy Gish, *Herald Press* (2004)
- ♦ "To Baghdad and Beyond" by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *Cascade Books* (2005)
- ♦ "The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical" by Shane Claiborne, *Zondervan* (2006)

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Editor,

Somehow my wife turned up on your subscription list, and I have been reading your paper regularly. It is a much needed antidote to the official and unofficial failure of charity and humanity in which I live and work. It goes a long way to the preservation of sense, perspective and sanity.

My work is in a forensic hospital, originally and less euphemistically called an institution for the criminally insane. It is a position of increasing moral ambiguity: A point not explored nearly enough in any venue known to me.

Prisoners, mentally ill felons and mentally ill convicted sex offenders do not get a whole lot of public sympathy. Indeed, many would really like to give them Argentine "airplane therapy," particularly the sex offenders.

Thank you for your efforts with prisoners and their families. Your piece about "Hating Our Children" (November-December 2009) was right on. Mentally ill prisoners don't come from nowhere.

The irony (well, part of the irony) is that about 85 percent of what comes to us is preventable if children are treated well with prenatal care, nutrition, attention, schooling and support. Five thousand dollars for language help in second grade might sound like a lot, but lacking it, the kid may easily top a societal cost of five million dollars in a lifetime. Almost all our clientele are from the disadvantaged. We are now somewhere over \$200,000 per incarcerated sick man per year, much of it wasted.

Those of us in the field who feel the moral ambiguity are bound by pension rights, geographic chains of one sort or another, and by the difficulty of finding other employment. I can feel the heat of the agitated on my neck for lack of courage.

Some have left, but the place is worse without them. So we offer ourselves the possibly false consolation that we temper things a little and that without us maybe nobody would see the beauty of His house and the place where His glory dwells.

Give my best to all of your community, and check Edward's blood pressure now and again. KEEP PUBLISHING!

Yours,

John Coyle

Cambria, California

Thanks for your concern, John. Ed's doctor recently increased his blood pressure medication!

Dear Calvin and Nelia,

We want to thank you for your hospitality last weekend. It was certainly a wonderful and eye-opening experience for us. We are so grateful that there are dedicated people like you and your household and volunteers who so beautifully minister to those who come to your open door. Thanks for all you do and for being our friends.

Blessings,

Marita and Tom Dieter

Evansville, Indiana

Dear Murphy Davis,

Hello, Mrs. Murphy! I received your letter a few days ago. I surely was glad to hear from you. When you are in prison, it is always nice to have your name called at mail call. It lets us know that there is always hope left for people behind bars.

Peace, love, joy and hope is what keeps us hanging on to hope behind bars. Thank you and the Open Door for bringing us hope for tomorrow. Thank you for being a friend!

Yours truly,

J.L.

Georgia Prisoner

Thanks for the love and support, it's greatly needed and appreciated. It's rough around here right now, but the great Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where [they] stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where [they] stand at times of challenge and controversy." And this logic is what I'm trying to live by each day and right now. I'm just taking it one day at a time and trying to continue to learn and improve with each passing day!

Thanks again for your help and love!

Georgia Prisoner on Death Row

Jackson, Georgia

I want to cancel our subscription to *Hospitality*. I don't want it to come to the house any longer.

Patsy and Douglas Cannon

Tucker, Georgia



Rita Corbin

Dear Murphy,

The time I spent at the Open Door has shaped my life in ways that I never imagined possible. In a lot of cases, the values and commitments I learned while in your midst have gotten me into trouble — the good kind of trouble that you know you are supposed to be in, otherwise you are siding with the wrong folks. I am especially grateful for all that I learned about justice and injustice, Jesus, God, the poor, the powers and principalities from you.

Now that we have a daughter who is a year and a half old, I find myself being even more grateful for my time with you, to be able to tell her about your work at 910 Ponce. I already sing to her many of the songs I learned from you as you led music in worship there — she loves "Wade in the Water" and "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel" — though my off-key singing doesn't do justice to the collective voices in the dining room. I am grateful for your influence in her life even before she is aware of it.

She had some health struggles last year, and Joyce [Hollyday] sent one of Wiley Dobbs' crocheted angels to her. [Wiley is on death row in Georgia.] Wiley even wrote to us himself.

I look forward to bringing her to visit the Open Door some day.

With gratitude,

Missy Harris

Weaverville, North Carolina

Missy Harris worked, worshipped and agitated with us for four years while she was a student at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. She and her family are now part of the Circle of Mercy congregation in Asheville, where her pastors are Joyce Hollyday and Nancy and Ken Sehested.

Dear Hospitality,

I just received the January edition of your newspaper. On the front page was a sermon from Heather Barger on concerning her views on the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. She calls it the School of the Americas, even though that school has been long closed and WHINSEC has been around for close to a decade.

As I was reading, I came across this quote: "I propose that our witness at the School of the Americas — an institution funded by the U.S. government to train Latin American soldiers in tactics of intimidation, torture and 'disappearance' of civilians who seek social change — is a most appropriate celebration of Christ the King."

While I cannot speak with any authority about the School of the Americas, I certainly can speak for WHINSEC. I served as an advisor to the school for four years and then as a full Board of Visitors member for four years. I have traveled to the school many times and have studied their teaching materials, interviewed their instructors, and talked with their students many times.

My original contact with the school was because of an article similar to this sermon which outraged me and caused me to want to take action. I was prepared to march on the school and protest their actions. However, the Bible tells us that if we have a problem with somebody, we should first go to the person (or organization) and attempt to be reconciled. I challenged the school, and they opened their doors and invited me to come in and investigate to see if the accusations were true or false. That was 2001, and I have not only been continuing to investigate the school and ask the hard questions, but I have also been a part of the development of one of the best human rights protection training programs in the world. Their human rights course is a requirement for all students at the school. It teaches the value (and responsibility) of governments as well as the military (WHINSEC teaches police and civilian authorities as well as the military) to protect human rights and allow for those who are peacefully seeking social change. According to my research, WHINSEC has never taught any type of tactics that were described in this sermon.

The only conclusion I can come to is that while the author has been outside the school, perhaps she has never actually been in the school to verify her information. Each year during the fall protest (and at any other times if asked), the school offers tours of the school and a question-and-answer forum for those wishing to learn more about it. It's tragically ironic that individuals are protesting and forcing themselves to get arrested for a cause, human rights protection, at a school that is actually doing a wonderful job of promoting human rights protection. If anyone is interested in more information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Rev. Ken Svendsen

Forreston, Illinois

Dear Gospel-friends, Ed and Murphy,

Even though I winced at the article "Dear Pope: Call Me" in the May-June *Hospitality*, it is all so very true, completely accurate, and needs to be read by most Catholics, who tend to blindly side "with our Holy Father." The multiplicity of [sexual abuse] cases and the extent of the cover-up by the bishops are ghastly evidence that even church institutions "protect" their reputations and money bags, ignoring grievous injustice to children and parents and the betrayal of the trust given to clergypersons. I hope this rightful exposure will bring our Catholic Church to complete transparency on these matters, now and in the future.

Father Tom Francis

Monastery of the Holy Spirit

Conyers, Georgia

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon.
Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Men's Showers: Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

Women's Showers: Thursday, 2 p.m.

Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinic:
Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Mail Check: Tuesday – Thursday, during Soup Kitchen
Monday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.

Use of Phone: Tuesday – Thursday, 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 or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--------------|---|
| August 1 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharist Service film - 17 Degrees A in't Nothing | September 5 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 the Singing Labor Movement Calvin Kimbrough leading |
| August 8 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance Dick Rustay preaching | September 12 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharist Service |
| August 15 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharist Service music by Yes Virginia! | September 19 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharist Service |
| August 22 & 29 | No Worship at 910 Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm | September 26 | 4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharist Service joint worship with the Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship |



The Sojourner Truth Prayer Room at 910.

Calvin Kimbrough

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)
- combs & picks
- hair brushes
- lip balm
- soap (small sizes)
- multi-vitamins
- disposable razors
- deodorant
- vaseline
- shower powder
- Q-tips

Food Needs

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

Special Needs

- backpacks
- MARTA cards
- postage stamps
- Futon sofa
- single bed mattress

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.

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.!