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

Vol. 28, No. 8

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

August-September 2009



Come Forth to Life

Lavrans Nielson

Resurrection and Restoration A Woman and a Girl

By Murphy Davis

“Jesus went back across to the other side of the lake. There at the lakeside a large crowd gathered around him.

“Jairus, an official of the local synagogue, arrived, and when he saw Jesus, he threw himself down at his feet and begged him earnestly, ‘My little daughter is very sick. Please come and place your hands on her, so that she will get well and live!’ Then Jesus started off with him.

“So many people were going along with Jesus that they were crowding him from every side. There was a woman who had suffered terribly from severe bleeding for twelve years, even though she had been treated by many doctors. She had spent all her money, but instead of getting better she got worse all the time.

“She had heard about Jesus, so she came in the crowd behind him, saying to herself, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will get well.’ She touched his cloak, and her bleeding stopped at once; and she had the feeling inside herself that she was healed of her trouble.

“At once Jesus knew that power had gone out of him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’ His disciples answered, ‘You see how the people are crowding you; why do you ask who touched you?’ But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.

“The woman realized what had happened to her, so she came, trembling with fear, knelt at his feet, and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, ‘My

daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your trouble.’

“While Jesus was saying this, some messengers came from Jairus’ house and told him, ‘Your daughter has died. Why bother the Teacher any longer?’ Jesus paid no attention to what they said, but told him, ‘Don’t be afraid, only believe.’ Then he did not let anyone else go on with him except Peter and James and his brother John.

“They arrived at Jairus’ house, where Jesus saw the confusion and heard all the loud crying and wailing. He went in and said to them, ‘Why all this confusion? Why are you crying? The child is not dead — she is only sleeping!’

“They started making fun of him, so he put them all out, took the child’s father and mother and his three disciples, and went into the room where the child was lying. He took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Talitha, koum,’ which means, ‘Little girl, I tell you to get up!’ She got up at once and started walking around. (She was twelve years old.) When this happened, they were completely amazed. But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone, and he said, ‘Give her something to eat.’” (Mark 5:21-43, Good News Bible)

The long Gospel story for this week is actually two stories woven together. We begin with one story just as Jesus and his friends get out of the boat coming from the Gentile side of Lake Galilee. Then the main story is interrupted with

It Is Enough

By Stacy Rector

Editor’s note: Stacy Rector is a Presbyterian minister, the executive director of the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing, and a longtime friend of the Open Door Community.

“The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught.

“There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn’t even have time to eat. So he said to them, ‘Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while.’ So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.

“Many people, however, saw them leave and knew at once who they were; so they went from all the towns and ran ahead by land and arrived at the place ahead of Jesus and his disciples.

“When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw this large crowd, and his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things.

“When it was getting late, his disciples came to him and said, ‘It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. Send the people away, and let them go to the nearby farms and villages in order to buy themselves something to eat.’

“‘You yourselves give them something to eat,’ Jesus answered. They asked, ‘Do you want us to go and spend two hundred silver coins on bread in order to feed them?’

“So Jesus asked them, ‘How much bread do you have? Go and see.’ When they found out, they told him, ‘Five loaves and also two fish.’

“Jesus then told his disciples to make all the people divide into groups and sit down on the green grass. So the people sat down in rows, in groups of a hundred and groups of fifty.

“Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

“Everyone ate and had enough. Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left of the bread and the fish. The number of men who were fed was five thousand.

“At once Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to Bethsaida, on the other side of the lake, while he sent the crowd away. After saying good-bye to the people, he went away to a hill to pray.” (Mark 6:30-46, Good News Bible)

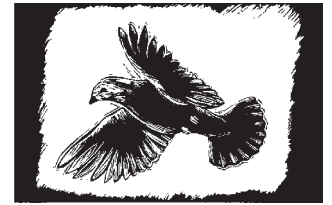
Please Help!



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!

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

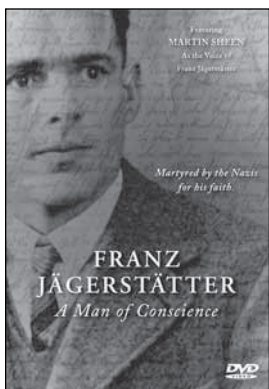
Ode to Open Door Grits

Your grits are great!
I like them early and I like them late.
I like them with cheese or veganesse.
I like them with sausage and egg,
And for them I will gladly beg.
Your grits are never lumpy,
And after you eat them
You just can't be grumpy.

— Peter Gathje

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.

Recommended Viewing



Franz Jägerstätter: A Man of Conscience

Featuring **Martin Sheen**
as the voice of Franz Jägerstätter.
Directed and Produced by
Jason Schmidt and Ron Schmidt, SJ

Color, 24 Minutes, English
© 2009 Produced by December 2nd Productions
and Hope Media Productions.
Distributed in the US by Hope Media Productions
and Maryknoll Productions.

This story of an ordinary man who performed an extraordinary act of conscience reminds us that with faith we can all do extraordinary things.

"As he stood alone against the greatest evil in the 20th century, Franz Jägerstätter discovered that conscience is costly, faith is necessary and one man with courage is a majority!" —Martin Sheen.

For additional information on Franz and for a discussion guide: www.stfranz.org

The Cry of the Poor

Eduard Loring's "The Cry of the Poor" series will resume soon.

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
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April Burt

Open Door Partner Barbara Schenk welcomed folks to the backyard picnic on July 4.

Newspaper

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

Open Door Community

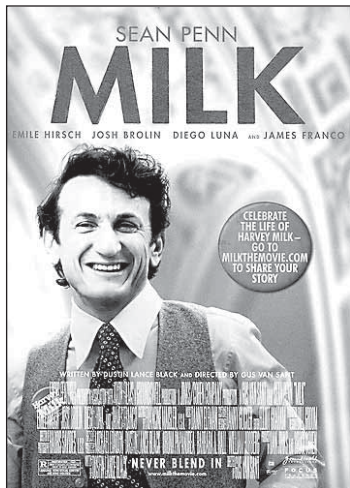
For more information about the life and work of the community, please contact any of the following persons.

Anne Wheeler: Administration & Finance
Alice Tudor, RN: Harriet Tubman Clinic Coordinator
Gladys Rustay: Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator
Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator
Eduard Loring: Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host
Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough: Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators
Chuck Harris: Volunteer Coordinator and Resident Volunteer Applications
Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry
Heather Barger: Hardwick Prison Trip Coordinator

Got Milk?

By Brother Aelred Dean

Editor's note: Aelred Dean is a member of the Episcopal Brotherhood of St. Gregory and is on the staff of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. He is a weekly volunteer at the Open Door Community and cooks for our holiday meals (see photograph on page 6).



Directed by Gus Van Sant
 Written by Dustin Lance Black
 Produced by Dan Jinks
 and Bruce Cohen
 Starring Sean Penn
 Emile Hirsch
 Josh Brolin
 Diego Luna
 James Franco
 Alison Pill
 Victor Garber
 Distributed by Universal Pictures
 Running time 129 min.

So if you have Milk,
 if you embrace
 the vision of Milk,
 you have the
 unexplainable and
 courageous gift
 of hope.

I have started several times to write about Harvey Milk as portrayed in the Academy Award-winning film “Milk.” But I fell into the trap of writing from a prescriptive posture, “preaching to the choir” and writing what is expected from a liberal, progressive and expansive Christian. Also, writing about Harvey from the point of view of the movie is challenging, because I tried to separate truth from fiction, and teasing those apart is quite difficult. So I’m going to write from my limited knowledge and experience of this man who was one of the central figures in the modern gay rights and liberation movement.

June is typically Gay Pride Month, celebrated, where possible, around the globe. There are many, too many, places, in the United States and elsewhere, where being a homosexual carries with it unequal rights, threats of violence and possible murder. During his life in San Francisco, Harvey Milk fought hard against such atrocities and worked for equal rights for homosexuals, which in turn guarantees rights for heterosexuals as well.

Watching “Milk,” especially the news clips in it, triggered memories from my youth of both him and his nemesis, Anita Bryant. It was during this time that I was beginning to understand my own sexuality and the personal conflict I had with knowing the truth of who I was (and am) and the satanic rhetoric from the religious right. I so much wanted to be accepted by the religious community I was then involved with, and being homosexual forced me to deny myself — to deny the person God in grace created, which I believe led to some horrible personal decisions in my life.

This personal confusion caused me to live a double life that Harvey would not have approved of. Once he came to understand and accept himself, which was only through the strength of community support, he invited all to be true to themselves publicly and openly. For he believed that if homosexuals were open to their colleagues, friends and family, then and only then would the dividing walls of sexual orientation begin to crumble. Wherever people would begin to know people, tolerance and acceptance would dispel the lies of the religious right. To his credit, or naiveté, Harvey believed that it was harder to hate and discriminate against someone you know, and hopefully love, than against an idea or notion. For the most part I have found his philosophical belief to be true, but with a small “t”; for I have encountered many who, in spite of their knowing me, hated me and wished me harm and hellfire damnation.

It was only through loving communities and individuals that I, like Harvey, came to love myself and accept the wonderful and unique gift God gave me to be a marginalized person. It is a privilege to be different — to be the other and the outsider — because I found it easier to empathize with others who are marginalized while working for justice on behalf of all castaways.

The film depicts Milk, played by Sean Penn, as unashamed and focused in his unrelenting drive for equal

rights for gays and lesbians. He did not come from a religious perspective, saying of faith traditions, “More people have been slaughtered in the name of religion than for any other single reason. That, my friends, that is true perversion.” His unwavering belief in the equality of all people was based in secular reasoning from the United States Constitution. He believed that it is unconstitutional to deny that equality. His voice was prophetic, and it was no wonder that he was murdered in cold blood by Dan White, a fellow supervisor in the San Francisco city government. Jesus acknowledges our human behavior and response to those who preach prophetic equality:

“Snakes! Reptilian snakes! Do you think you can worm your way out of this? Never have to pay the piper? It’s on account of people like you that I send prophets and wise guides and scholars generation after generation — and generation after generation you treat them like dirt, greeting them with lynch mobs, hounding them with abuse.” (Matthew 23:33-34, The Message Bible)

Unlike Harvey, I base my belief in equal rights not on the Constitution but on the very texts that have been used by certain self-proclaimed Christians to discriminate against and even condone acts of violence against gays and lesbians. At the very beginning, the Genesis myth teaches that all people are created in the image of God, and that alone puts us all on an equal and level playing field in which I, as an Episcopalian, can live into my baptismal vow of seeking and serving Christ in all people.

Dan White was raised a Roman Catholic, the valedictorian of his class, served in the military, became a police officer and actually stopped another officer from beating a handcuffed African-American prisoner. He then resigned from the force, became a firefighter and saved a woman and baby from a burning building. Even after being elected a supervisor, he opposed Proposition 6, known as the Briggs



Harvey Milk — On August 12, 2009, President Barack Obama presented the Medal of Freedom to Harvey Milk, posthumously.

Initiative, which would have barred gays and lesbians from teaching in the public schools. Why did this man snap and murder Harvey Milk?

From my perspective as a gay man, I think the answer is clear and obvious: when the white heterosexual-majority world of privilege and preferential treatment is threatened, the backlash is swift and severe. In the film, White tells Harvey in no uncertain terms that he will not be humiliated by Harvey. When insecure heterosexual men feel threatened by women, it can be an emasculating experience, but when the lifestyle of the heterosexual man is threatened by a homosexual man, the perceived threat is not only emasculating but a complete undoing of the foundation he has built for himself. This often leads to violence against the individual who is perceived as the threat, and for Harvey it led to his martyrdom.

His struggle continues as gay men and women everywhere demand rights that their heterosexual counterparts take for granted. We fight against hatred, we fight against the religionists, we fight against ignorance and fear, we fight for all people so that all people will enjoy equal rights and not live in fear.

As mentioned before, Harvey was not a fan of organized religion, because religion has been used to suppress and marginalize people. But, maybe without knowing it, he embraced a wonderful biblical belief and practice: vision. His vision was based in hope, and he often told others in the forefront of the gay civil rights movement, “you gotta give them hope.” He knew that, without hope, the people wouldn’t have a vision and would perish in their fight for equal rights.

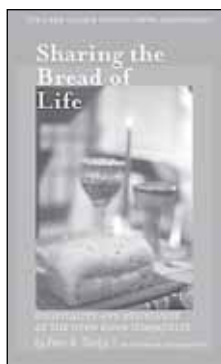
So if you have Milk, if you embrace the vision of Milk, you have the unexplainable and courageous gift of hope. A hope that Harvey held to that was written in the Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Do you have hope? Do you have Milk? ♣

The Open Door Community Press Books

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with Heather Bargeron
preface by Dick Rustay

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

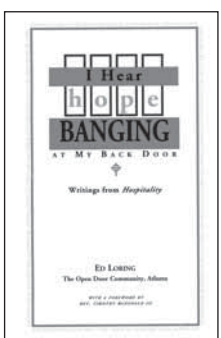
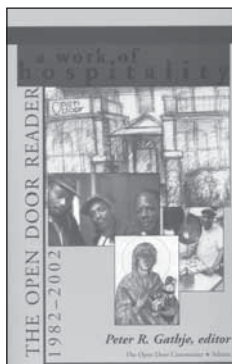
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Peter R. Gathje, editor

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Bibliography and Index
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By **Eduard Loring**

Foreword by Rev. Timothy McDonald III

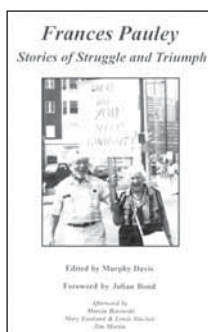
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'Prison Madness,' Seen From Inside

By **Jenny McBride**

Editor's note: Jenny McBride is a lecturer at Emory University's Candler School of Theology. She is part of the Open Door worship community and has recently led Clarification Meetings on the life, witness and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (see page 7 of this issue). Her co-edited volume "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King Jr.: Receiving Their Legacies for Christian Social Thought" will be published by Fortress Press in 2010. This reflection is a response to Jim Skillen's article "Prison Madness" in "Root & Branch" on the Center for Public Justice Web site (www.cpjustice.org).

"It's my job to make sure you repay society by working you hard," a guard at a Georgia women's prison smugly told my friend, whose assignment places her on her feet all day despite her "no standing" profile because of a medical condition. On those rare nights when she can obtain a bag of ice for the swelling that inevitably comes after standing all day, she can fall asleep. Many other nights she lies awake with pangs shooting up her leg.

They treat us like animals,
like caged dogs.
They take our self-respect, beat
down our self-esteem
and then expect us to go out
and be civilized.

I heard this story and many others after I read the article "Prison Madness," by Jim Skillen of the Center for Public Justice, to the group of fifteen inmates whom I've been teaching through a theology certificate program. They were deeply encouraged to hear that someone is naming realities too often unacknowledged — "overcrowded, ill-managed" prisons as "storehouses of degradation" and a society "that doesn't want to know" what happens to those we lock away — and also to hear that a U.S. senator, Jim Webb of Virginia, is initiating a conversation in Congress.

They want you, the reader "on the outside," to get a glimpse of the demeaning events they continuously undergo, which, drop by drop, accumulate day after day with an effect similar to Chinese water torture. Their souls are hollowed out as they remain subject to the whims of people whose arbitrary and often unwarranted distribution of "detention reports," along with the ever-shifting ground of permissions granted and denied, necessitates that many must work hard to avoid insanity and an all-encompassing rage.

Our discussion about Skillen's essay came back again and again to their simple desire to be treated as human beings — yes, human beings who are there, they readily admit, because they "made the biggest mistake of their lives," yet human beings nonetheless. The avenues in prison toward dehumanization, humiliation and devastation are many, and for the 90 percent of the women whom statistics show were emotionally, sexually and/or physically abused before committing a crime, the treatment they receive in prison is more of the same.

One woman shared how her ten-year-old son was crying uncontrollably at a visitation and, when she reached out to comfort him with a touch, the guard ordered her to sit on her hands, which sent the son into further hysterics.



Marla Mahola

Another told of being granted permission to make a phone call, only to be later denied by a guard. When she showed the guard the memo from the warden's office, she was accused of forgery, even though the memo was on government letterhead that would be impossible to obtain. Another woman shared that the inmates are allotted a certain amount of tampons per month but she has a heavy flow; when she asks the guards for more, she is denied and has to go without. Another told of inmates having to fight for their own betterment, of medical staff not taking her seriously when she told them she had blood in her urine after a hysterectomy. Some dehumanizing realities, however, cease to shock over time, such as not being served lunch on Fridays through Sundays. If a prisoner's family has placed money in her account, she can buy a honey bun from the commissary to tide her over.

The inmates whom I have come to know are courageous and insightful. They worry that, even as they try desperately to resist these forces of dehumanization through faith in a loving God, they are being formed in ways that will be hard to undo when they return to society. They wonder, for example, after repeatedly being chastised for looking guards in the eye, how difficult it will be to break the habit of avoiding eye contact when the time comes for a job interview. "They treat us like animals, like caged dogs," one woman said. "They take our self-respect, beat down our self-esteem and then expect us to go out and be civilized." "If my strength wasn't in the Lord," said another, "I would easily crumble."

Why would the inaugurator of the kingdom of God ask his followers to visit the prisoner? Perhaps it is because, as one who was about to undergo state-sanctioned execution, Jesus knew that the primary way the forces of death and dehumanization are exposed is through relationship with the ones who suffer the most under such dominating powers. And, as John the Baptist and Jesus taught, the coming of the kingdom is inextricably tied up with our repentance, in this case, as Skillen so rightly insists, with us repenting "for our complicity in a criminal justice system that perpetrates and perpetuates so much injustice." If we as North American Christians take seriously the call to "repent for the kingdom of God is at hand," this will necessitate that we rethink — that we unlearn and learn anew — biblical meanings of justice, judgment, salvation, healing, restoration and redemption, and that we take seriously Scripture's witness to the interconnection of all of humanity in sin and redemption. ✠

How I Came to the Open Door and Why I'm Still Here

By Jonathan Hovey

My faith journey that eventually led to the Open Door Community began during the Reagan Revolution.

I was born in 1980 and have been part of a Christian congregation, because church attendance was part of my family life. The first major faith experience I can remember occurred during a summer Bible camp at a Methodist church in Ontario, New York. I heeded the altar call after seeing a dramatic play about people being sent either to heaven or hell depending on their acceptance or rejection of Jesus. Feeling the weight of sin lift off my shoulders at the young age of eight years old, I put my faith in the evangelical paradigm of Jesus dying on the cross for my personal salvation.

The faith question that most plagued me up through high school dealt with this same paradigm. How did I know that I was saved? Throughout this period there were many instances when I "recommitted my life to Christ." These renewed times of vigor mostly included a promise to God to try and stop sinning, to read the Bible and pray more regularly, and to share with my un-churched friends the good news of Jesus. During this time I was steeped in conservative political views, and my faith journey did not include works of mercy, or justice work with the poor or marginalized.

In college I began to study the Bible more seriously. I took courses in New Testament and began to feel a discontent about the faith community I had grown up in. In particular, the courses on the Gospels made me think there was something missing from the congregations I had been part of. I saw the radical nature of Jesus' actions and words in the Gospels and began to look for examples of these things in my professors, pastors and other Christians I knew. The word "love" was thrown around a lot, but the fruit of that word did not seem to be very substantial in the communities I was a part of.

I decided to attend Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta and to work toward becoming a New Testament professor. Part of the way through the first year in Atlanta, I was invited to the Open Door Community for a worship service. After that first introduction to the Open Door, I came away thinking that this was the only place in the world that truly worshipped God! At the Open Door, there was a real connection between their confession of faith and the works of mercy and justice that they practiced. The meaning of the Eucharist that we all shared that night was made concrete by the six supper tables where we sat down to eat together after worship.

After first volunteering for several months and then living at the Open Door for the past year, I have reformed my first utopian impression. There are, however, several

elements from that first worship service that have changed the center of my faith journey from a faith focused on personal salvation to a faith focused on a call that compels the whole faith community to action. The emphasis on justice for the poor and Jesus' call to follow him, not only throughout his ministry of reconciliation but even into Jerusalem and unto the cross, is a continual call at the Open Door. At that first worship service I attended, I was asked by Eduard Loring if I was ready to die for the gospel, and I heard Lauren Cogswell speak about her work of visiting people on death row and to end the death penalty.

This call to justice was grounded in the acts of mercy that the community participated in: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick and visiting the prisoner. These acts for me changed from liturgical fluff that I heard on Sunday mornings to getting to know the names of people who were hungry, in need of a shower and a change of clean clothes, or who came for medical care at the Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic.

There are several reasons why I have continued to live at the Open Door. The first is the relationships I have made with our poor and homeless brothers and sisters who come here. As it says in the hallway above the pictures of our friends, "No, no, we are not numbers, we are names." Learning the names of men and women who have no house to live in or no food to eat in the city of Atlanta has changed the way I see the world. Not only have I made many new friends, but I have glimpsed the world from their eyes. I have seen the amazing faith and sense of community that exists among the homeless on the streets and also the cruelty of a city and country that is "too busy to care."

There are some in Atlanta and America who do care about the people who endure the cruelty of the streets, but not enough. I have learned that the question some people ask — "What is wrong with the homeless that they are living on the streets?" — is absolutely absurd. Often the assumed answer is that drugs, alcohol and/or mental illness is the "cause" of homelessness. This is complete baloney! The real cause is that people don't care enough about people on the streets to provide a home. Just take a look at the homes along Northside Drive through Buckhead. The real question should be, "What are you doing about it?"

In addition to getting to know our homeless friends from the streets of Atlanta, I have learned a lot about myself while living in community. Community has a way of amplifying the interpersonal dynamics of life. The things I have learned are mostly painful but become a source of healing as one begins to unravel the twistedness of prejudices and instilled social norms. I



Ade Bethune

learned about my own sense of entitlement, about racial prejudices I didn't even realize I had, but I also learned about the richness and strength of a close community of diversity to begin to heal these sicknesses.

At the Open Door Community there is an incredible amount of effort and intentionality put into developing the relationships that make up the household. We work hard to build trust with one another. The structure of pastoral friendships, where two people are intentionally paired together in a relationship of mutual accountability and support, is particularly important for the building of trust and love in the community. Through these relationships we learn how to live together.

Reflecting on the lessons of community that I have learned at the Open Door brings to mind a Scripture from the prophet Isaiah that matches up with my own experience of

living in community. "A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'" (Isaiah 40:3). For me the community of the Open Door has been a way prepared through the desert for God to work in and through me. I have a family that cares for me and a way of life that allows me to learn from and participate in works of mercy and justice.

The works of justice are the last major reason I continue to live here. Meals, showers, clothes and medical care are resistance work themselves, but we also make a practice of vigiling and protesting, for peace and against war, for life and against the death penalty, for sharing and against corporate greed.

One particular instance cemented my view on the death penalty and impelled me to continue participating in the Open Door's work against it. I was visiting a prisoner named Al at Jackson State Prison, where death row is located, and while there I also met Jack Alderman, who was going to be executed soon. As I shook Jack's hand and looked him in the eye, it became utterly inconceivable that anyone should be executed by an institution of the state. How could I stand by and let this happen? Even if Jack was guilty, killing him solved nothing but would only add more tragedy to the lives of all the people involved.

The Open Door is a radical Christian community that has changed the focus of my faith journey and compelled me to continue to participate in and learn from the works of mercy and justice that are practiced here. Principally it is the relationships I have made at the Open Door with the homeless and prisoners that have provided the concreteness of our faith. And the structure and intentionality of the community is, as the prophet wrote, a way that is prepared through the wilderness for the Lord. ✠

Jonathan Hovey is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

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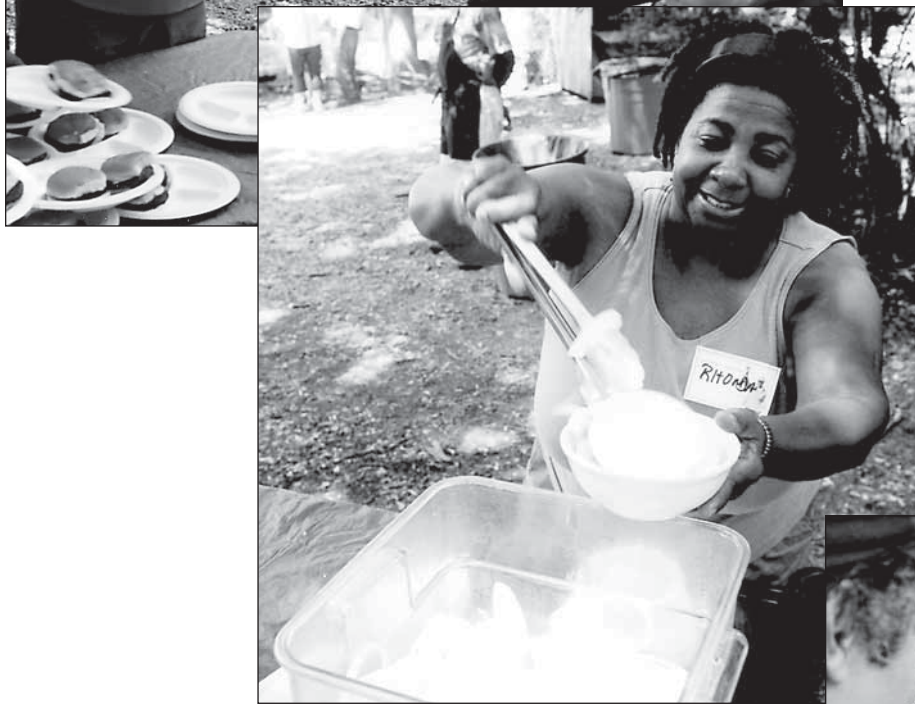
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For information and application forms visit www.opendoorcommunity.org

In, Out & Around 910

Compiled and Photographed
by Calvin Kimbrough



July 4th Volunteers

Volunteers are essential for the serving of our holiday meals. When we invite 500 of our friends from the streets to a picnic in our back yard, we need help! Volunteers cook and prepare food, set up the tables and chairs, welcome our guests, serve, fill bowls and pitchers, clear tables, drive the vans that return folks downtown, and help us clean up at the end. *Above left:* **David Christian** and Brother **Aelred Dean**, who are weekly volunteers, have been our baked bean chefs for the past two summers. *Left:* **Betsy Lunz**, who chairs our Advisory Board, served hamburgers to the guests as they arrived in the back yard. *Left:* **Rhoda Spratt**, one of our many volunteers from First Iconium Baptist Church, refills bowls of onions. *Below:* **Susan Evans**, a regular volunteer and a student at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, filled and refilled many bowls with the beans David and Aelred prepared. How thankful we are for our faithful volunteers who help us provide hospitality to our friends from the streets!



Joyce Brookshire

On Sunday evening July 3, **Joyce Brookshire** brought her Big Band to the Open Door following our Eucharist service. She sang some of the many songs she has written. "God Bless the Homeless," "Poor People," "Hunger Song" and "Fishing Fever" are always Open Door favorites. Left: The band featured (left to right behind Joyce) **Whit Connah** on harmonica, **Barbara Panter** on fiddle, **Elise Witt** on guitar and **Craig Rafuse** on lead guitar, all of whom also sang harmony vocals. We are blessed by Joyce's prophetic witness through her singing and songwriting.



One of Ten

Ashley Goff is the Minister of Spiritual Formation at the Church of the Pilgrims (PCUSA) in Washington, D.C., where she has served for 10 years. She is working on a project to interview the 10 clergywomen who have been vital to her formation and growth over these last 10 years. She came to Atlanta with her children **Sam** and **Maddie** to interview **Murphy Davis** (left), who is one of those 10. Ashley first met Murphy when she served in Atlanta with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in 1994-95 and worshipped at the Open Door. In 2000 Murphy preached for Ashley's ordination service at First Congregational Church UCC in Washington. Ashley, Sam and Maddie were a wonderful presence in the house during their stay.

Life Together

During July and into August at the Open Door Community, **Jenny McBride**, a lecturer at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, has been leading a series of Clarification Meetings on the life and writings of German pastor-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer with a focus on how his theology relates to our work. (Please see her article "Prison Madness" on page 4.) We began by viewing the 2003 documentary film "Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister." In the following weeks, Jenny has led us in discussions of Bonhoeffer's ideas as presented in "Ethics," "Discipleship" (better known as "The Cost of Discipleship") and "Life Together." Jenny is a fine teacher and our discussions have been quite lively.
Thank you, Jenny!



Congratulations, Stacey and Clark!

Clark Hand came through the front door of 910 to live as a resident on July 22, 2008. His goal was to spend a year clean and sober and start a new life. During the year Clark reconnected with his family and his former wife, **Stacey**. On July 22, 2009, he completed his year with us — and Stacey and Clark celebrated the new love God gave them with a wedding! We are excited for Clark and Stacey. We pray for their new life together and we ask you also to remember them in your prayers.



Resurrection and Restoration, *continued from page 1*

another story. And then finally we get back to the “main” story.

But in another sense, this is one story — and it’s the ongoing story that Jesus is telling with his parables, his teachings, his healings and his Life. It is the story of Resurrection — restored life to people who are sick, people who are dead, and to a dying social order, a dying community.

It is also the story of the Beloved Community — the New Covenant, the new set of relationships that make up the New Social Order of the Reign of God.

So much for anybody who dares to make a profit off of the misery and illness of others. Shame.

When we come to this part of Mark’s story, Jesus and his community have been going back and forth over the Sea of Galilee — making a strong point, of course, about the Beloved Community as a non-segregated, non-exclusive community. Jesus has come to welcome any and all comers to the Beloved Community. Gentiles who responded with faith and restored life were *in, y’all*.

Now Jesus and his community are back in Jewish territory. And right away, he’s approached by Jairus, the leader of the local synagogue. This is, of course, an unlikely scene. The presumably wealthy synagogue leader, because of his social and political standing, would be one of the least likely folks to come to Jesus. People might think less of him for approaching this vagrant itinerant preacher who hung out with so many sick and poor people and smelly working-class folks like those who fish for a living. Given all this, you know that Jairus had to be up against a wall to approach the infamous Jesus for help. This brother was desperate.

But Jesus, of course, said yes, and they started moving toward Jairus’ home. But then there was, as usual, a crowd — a large crowd. This meant that they moved slowly at best. Jairus was in a big hurry. It was a matter of life and death. But they were moving like an amoeba with this gaggle of the hoi polloi who latched onto Jesus whenever he came through. Who’s in the crowd? The poor, the hungry, the sick and all those other desperate people at the bottom of the heap under the heel of an Empire that was sucking the lifeblood out of them, body and soul.

So somebody reaches out to Jesus — a woman, no less. And, unbeknownst to Jesus or perhaps anyone else, she is bleeding. She is known classically as “The Woman With the Issue of Blood.” Unclean, unclean! Get away! If she touches you, you’re unclean too. She does not speak to him or ask him for anything, but simply reaches out to touch him. Gustavo Gutierrez says she is perhaps trying to “steal a miracle” from him. It

works. The blood flow stops.

“Who touched me?”

“Oh, come *on*, Jesus! A lot of people touched you.”

But watch it: he *knows* what he’s doing. He’s calling her out, giving her another opportunity.

It scares her to death. She could be severely punished for this. She is “unclean” and illegal and she’s out in the crowd touching people. She’s a woman and she touched a man. She’s poor and it makes everything worse. She is one of the “medically indigent,” just like so many among us today. She spent all she had on doctors, and she still didn’t get well. Now she’s not only sick, she’s poor — busted, in more ways than one.

Well, one more time, so much for commercial health care. So much for anybody who dares to make a profit off of the misery and illness of others. Shame. Then and now. Shame! This woman was poor because she had been exploited by a market-driven health care system. The doctors took all her money and she got worse. Once she was broke and suffering illness *and* poverty, the commercial system had nothing more for her and no responsibility for its failure to help. Once again, the for-profit system screwed her bad! Shame. All her money was gone, she was sicker than ever, and they kicked her to the curb like so much garbage

So she sees her chance. She reaches out for something that will cost her no money but could surely cost her all her remaining dignity and initiative. Maybe she had heard of the prophet who said, “Come all you who have no money. Come and eat. It will cost you nothing. Why do you spend your money for that which does not satisfy? Come.” (Isaiah 55)

She goes for it.

She carries three strikes against her: she is a woman, sick and poor. Each of these factors marginalizes her, so she is triply marginalized. She is *nobody*.

A Woman’s Decision

The law in Leviticus 15:25-31 governs the expected behavior for a woman of her circumstances:

“If a woman has a flow of blood for several days outside her monthly period or if her flow continued beyond her regular period, she remains unclean as long as the flow continues, just as she is during her monthly period. Any bed on which she lies and anything on which she sits during this time is unclean. Anyone who touches them is unclean and must wash his clothes and have a bath; he remains unclean until evening. After her flow stops, she must wait seven days, and then she will be ritually clean. On the eighth day she shall take two doves or two pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD’s presence. The priest shall offer one of them as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering and in this way he will perform the ritual of purification for her.

“The LORD told Moses to warn the

people of Israel about their uncleanness, so that they would not defile the Tent of his presence, which was in the middle of the camp. If they did, they would be killed.”

The woman surely knew the law, as did everyone in that crowd. So by her action, her “engaging in risky behavior,” as they say, she risks everything, even her very life.



Rini Templeton

By calling her out, Jesus frightens her nearly to death. But he is giving her an opportunity to move out of being *nobody* to being *somebody*. She has remained anonymous to protect herself. Now Jesus strips her of her only protection. What is he doing? Setting her up for even more contempt? Additional punishment? As Vanessa often says around here, “*Look at God! Watch what Jesus is doing!*”

Jesus of course knew who had touched him, but he wanted her to use her own voice. Rather than showing us his power, *he is interested in her exercise of her own power which she has already exercised secretly, surreptitiously reaching out.*

Now he wants her to seal the deal by identifying herself in the midst of a crowd that would happily and easily condemn her. Condemnation, after all, was easy for them. What Jesus wanted to show us — as he keeps showing us — is how to *welcome* the marginalized; how to invite and empower the marginalized to speak in their own voices; how to let us deepen our faith which is the basis for deep healing.

She trembles. She speaks. And gently, lovingly, he welcomes her and hears her voice. He in fact had already welcomed her touch — a touch that could have marginalized him as well, because when one who is unclean touches another, the other becomes unclean and must be marginalized for a time of purification. This would normally be seen as an inconvenience at least and a criminal matter at worst.

But no, he welcomes her and then goes on to affirm everything she has done. He of course could have said, “Well, I’m glad

you recognized my power and, yes, I healed you all right.” But no, he says, “*Your* faith has made you well.” She holds the responsibility for her own healing. You recognized the opportunity for your healing and you are the one who made a decision and then acted on the promise. You reached out to take your healing. Now it is yours. Go in peace. You are not only well, you are restored to community. You are not only “clean,” you are well — you have received the fullness of life. You will live in peace. Shalom! The full life is now yours, sister.

The law says she should have gone straight to the priest, purchased two doves — or, poor as she was, two pigeons — for a sin offering and a burnt offering. She had spent all she had on doctors and gotten worse, and now the purity code would require that she spend more on a ritual that would allow her to re-enter the community.

Jesus usurps the priest. Uh-oh. More trouble. He welcomed her, he called her *my daughter*, as a way to say that she was a full member of the community and even a beloved member of the community, and then he told her to “go in peace.” If she was stealing a miracle, maybe Jesus was stealing the blessing from the *only one authorized by the system* to dispense blessings and reconciliation. Only the priest, as gatekeeper of the hierarchy and purity of the community, was supposed to perform the purification ritual. Jesus says, *your faith* has made you well, and pure and whole.

This sister was empowered because she reached out for it and because Jesus blessed her faith and her initiative.

She came with three strikes against her. She left with three blessings for her. She came as one who was a woman, sick and poor. She left as still a woman, still poor, but as a poor woman who was thrice blessed. (1) She was healthy, and with the bleeding stopped she would get better and better as her anemia and weakness healed. (2) She was walking in dignity — a poor Jewish woman who was walking with her head up, her shoulders back, walking in the fullness of human dignity. And (3) she was restored to her community. No longer condemned to the margins because she was “unclean,” she was free to participate fully in the social and religious life of that community.

This sister was empowered because she reached out for it and because Jesus blessed her faith and her initiative. Her own faith and the claim she made on the loving, healing power of Jesus gave her back her life, but in a greater portion. She was healed — not just cured of her illness, but healed! Restored.

continued on page 10

It Is Enough, *continued from page 1*

We hear a lot about boundaries these days. Literal ones, like fences on the nation's border, and figurative ones like those of therapy-speak. Life is a constant dance of determining where the boundaries are and when or whether a boundary should be crossed or respected. Boundaries are everywhere, sometimes clearly marked and sometimes not. We grapple with boundary issues culturally, theologically and personally, as we reflect on our time, our priorities, how we care for others and ourselves in a world whose demands seem endless.

The issue of boundaries is the reason I so strongly resisted getting a cell phone, and now that I finally have one, the reason I so rarely use it. We must maintain boundaries for ourselves in order to be healthy people. Sometimes we just need some space, free from interruptions and life's demands. We need time to replenish the well. And, if used wisely, boundaries help us with that. But there are times when boundaries can become an excuse for rigidity — strangling freedom, binding the spirit and shutting others out.

With all of that said, I can't help but wonder whether, in today's text, Jesus needs a lesson in maintaining good boundaries. Most leaders of "how to avoid burnout" seminars would be shaking a finger at his lack of self-care and his seeming insensitivity to the needs of his disciples. In the preceding verses of Mark's Gospel, the disciples have been sent out two by two, taking nothing on their journey — no bread, no bag, no money — totally dependent on the hospitality of others. They have walked the streets, preaching repentance, casting out demons — which I can only assume to be an exhausting experience — and certainly, by now they are worn completely out.

Jesus has been on the move as well, traveling around, teaching all who will listen. Finally reunited, they learn of John the Baptist's brutal beheading — devastating news, not only because of their loss, but also because they are confronted in a very personal way with what Herod is capable of. They are wracked by exhaustion and grief, and the demands don't let up as they find themselves surrounded by needy people, begging for help to the point that Jesus and the disciples are weak themselves from having no time to eat.

Jesus and the twelve attempt to slip away from the need for now, only to discover that it follows them, running as a mob along the shoreline, arriving at the destination ahead of them. But as Jesus looks out upon the multitudes standing in that once deserted place — multitudes who find themselves deserted, deserted by ailing bodies and exploitive leaders, by failed economies and broken promises — Jesus, even in his weariness, is moved by compassion. And the loving shepherd steps onto the shore and tends to his sheep, teaching them and filling their hungry hearts with the hope of God's love — a love that does not desert them, a love that soothes the ache, a love that knows no boundaries.

The hour grows late, and the disciples urge Jesus to send the crowds away so that everyone can find food in the neighboring towns and villages. Instead, Jesus turns to his worn-out, hungry disciples and says, "You give them something to eat." Remember, these are the same disciples who have been wandering for days with no bread, no money and have just learned of John's death. And Jesus now demands that they feed 5,000 men, plus women and children, out in the middle of nowhere. The disciples respond in the same way that many of us would respond to such a demand: "There is not enough, Jesus, and we don't have it in us."

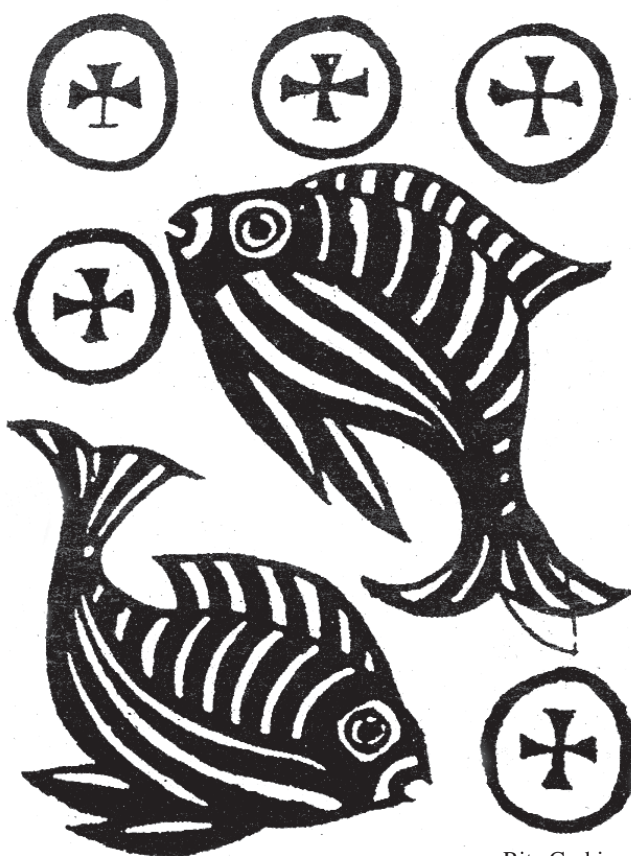
'What Do You Have?'

And we often don't have it in us. When we see the needs of the world and feel the tugs like weights around our hearts, we don't have it in us. As the economy falters and the search for jobs, food, housing and medical care becomes more widespread, we don't have it in us. As the money dries up while the bills mount, we don't have it in us. As refugees flee war, violence and poverty seeking sanctuary in our

communities but are pursued like criminals, we don't have it in us. As the alcoholic is arrested again for sleeping on a park bench, we don't have it in us. As one more poor person is sentenced to death based on flimsy evidence and dishonest testimony, we don't have it in us. We don't have it in us to meet such needs, to fight such battles. We are ordinary people with limited time and resources. There is nothing we can do. There is not enough, Lord; just send them away.

But Jesus asks us, "What do you have? Go and see." The disciples return to him with five little loaves and two measly fish, not even enough to fill their own hungry bellies. But as all those people sit on the grass, Jesus feeds them, with twelve baskets left over. The crowd is fed, and Jesus' disciples see in a new way that even when a little is all they've got, for God it is enough. Perhaps it takes the demands of 5,000 hungry people tearing at the boundaries of the disciples' limited understanding of how God can use tired, needy folks like themselves to help them begin to figure that out.

Some of you know of my journey over the last 10 years with my dear friend Steve Henley, a man on Tennessee's death row. Steve found himself on death row at 32 years



Rita Corbin

of age. At the time he had no real criminal history. By all accounts, he was a hard-working farmer with little education, divorced and the father of two children. A couple of bad years of crop yields led to the bank's foreclosure on his beloved granddaddy's farm, a grandfather whose death Steve was still struggling to accept. As the debts mounted, Steve's life began to spiral out of control, and he turned to drugs for comfort. An elderly couple, neighbors of Steve's grandmother, were murdered, and because his truck was seen in the area, as it often was because his grandmother lived there, Steve and another man, whom Steve did not know well, were brought in for questioning. Ultimately, the other man implicated himself to police and, in order to spare himself the death penalty, pinned the murders on Steve. With no physical evidence and only the word of this man who himself had a long history of addiction, Steve Henley was sentenced to death while his co-defendant made a deal and served only five years.

I met Steve after he had already served 13 years on death row, and we became fast friends. Last fall, as his scheduled execution approached, his anxiety understandably heightened, as did mine, though I did my best to deny it. His desperate telephone calls and demands on me became more frequent and urgent. I was organizing a clemency campaign, attempting to stop the execution, while at the same time trying

to support him and his devastated family — elderly parents who had lost another son to murder while Steve was on death row, two sisters, two adult children and four grandchildren whose grief was almost more than he or I could bear.

Boundaries Crossed

As the hour of execution came closer, Steve and I began to realize that the courts were not going to intervene, and neither was the governor. Despite all his attorneys' fine work, our organization's efforts to rally the public, the private conversations between the governor and one of his trusted friends, (a former prosecutor no less, who sat in on the whole trial and who believed that Steve's conviction and sentence were unjust), despite all the phone calls and lingering questions, despite all the prayers and pleadings, this execution was going to happen. The valley of the shadow of death loomed larger, and I wondered to myself, "What do we do now?" In my anguish and despair as I prepared for the worst, as my weariness enveloped me and the "what ifs" berated me from every side, a quiet voice whispered, "What do you have?"

The valley of the shadow of death loomed larger, and I wondered to myself, "What do we do now?"

What did I have? Not much that could stop the execution of my friend, my brother, Steve. What I had were my prayers and my tears. What I had were my love and my anger. What I had was the ability to will my weak legs to walk into that prison and sit with him as the clock ticked. And what I discovered, far more than what I had, was what I received: the profound presence of God in a stark, concrete death-watch cell. Two hours before his death, Steve, normally anxious, red-faced and flustered, sat calmly writing in his journal, sharing his poetry and his gratitude for his life and those he loved though incarcerated for 23 years. He told me how grateful he was for the life he had lived, even with all the suffering, because there were people in the outside world who never had folks love them the way he was loved. We shared a few saltine crackers and grape juice — blessed and broken — through steel bars as together Jesus joined us for a taste of God's Beloved Community. And in our meager sharing, God provided far more to us both than either of us thought possible in such a moment, for we both were loved and fed in ways that I am still struggling to understand.

In a moment of utter desperation, in the midst of helplessness and chaos, when facing a need that I could never hope to meet, God and Steve Henley helped me cross my own preconceived boundaries of who I am and what with God is possible. For the paradox remains that when we are weakest, least able, barely holding on to the few fish and loaves that we have, God sends us a hungry crowd or a homeless family or a condemned man, to say to us, "What do you have?" and then helps us discover it.

And another bit of good news from this Gospel story, after the crowds are fed: Jesus dismisses them, loads up the disciples and gets away from it all. Hallelujah! There is rest for the weary, even for Jesus, even for Steve, even for you, and even for me.

As we celebrate the love of our God which is always enough, let us remember that God is the provider, not us; that God is faithful, even when we are not; that God does not forsake us, even when it may surely feel like it. So now, sisters and brothers, take what you have, whatever it is, and thank God for the gift. Then share it with those around you. It is enough. Thanks be to God. Amen. ✠

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volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community

Please note our new schedule for Monday & Tuesday: Volunteers for Monday showers (6:45-9:30 a.m.) and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 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 certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

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

Resurrection and Restoration, *continued from page 8*

Resurrected from the death of oppression and marginalization. She was a heap of dry bones, and now she *lives!*

'Give Her Something to Eat!'

Well, as I said earlier, this story — which is really two stories — is about Resurrection from start to finish. Jesus moves from the Resurrection of the Woman with the Issue on to the Resurrection of Jairus' daughter.

"She's dead," said the messengers of doom. "Don't trouble the Teacher any longer." But Jesus said, what? "Don't be afraid. She's not dead, she's just asleep." "Oh *Jee-zus!* There he goes again! Right, teacher. Right." I mean, it's like this. We held a mirror to her nose and there's no breath, see? She might be sleeping, but it's the sleep of death, if you know what I mean. I mean, we don't live in a culture that doesn't know death when we see it. In fact, we see it all the time. Our children die on a regular basis. We don't have enough food for an adequate diet. We don't have access to health care. We drink water that might or might not be contaminated. We do the best we can for our families and children. But still most of them die before they reach adulthood. Jesus, she's dead. And we know what we're talking about.

**So these faithful ones
were the only ones
allowed into the sickroom.
Healing, you know,
requires a context of faith,
hope and love.**

No, Jesus says to Jairus and the child's mother. "*Don't be afraid. Have faith.*" Do you see, *you* need to learn from that bleeding woman who made us so late that your daughter died before we could get here. *You* need to be like *her* — you prominent Jewish male authority figure! You need to become like the poverty-stricken, disgustingly unclean, excluded segregated *woman* of no standing. There is the faith you should have. Blessed are the poor and blessed are the poor in spirit — the Beloved Community belongs to *them*.

No, said Jesus, she's just sleeping. So he made it clear that not just anybody could come into that room. There wasn't room by the sickbed for the skeptics. The parents were capable of hoping against hope, of holding on to the faith that she could live again because of their great parental love. Peter, James and John had seen enough amazing and unbelievable events to be able to hold to the faith that Jesus knew what he was doing here. So these faithful ones were the only ones allowed into the sickroom. Healing, you know, requires a context of faith, hope and love. Unbelief only restricts and limits.

For Ralph to get better and breathe more easily; for Barbara to walk straighter; for Clark to stay straight and clean; and, Lord knows, for me to live through four rounds of cancer when I was supposed to be dead 14 years ago! All of these require being surrounded and saturated with a community of faith, hope, love and prayer. So all the skepticism and laughter were shut out, and I think he slammed the door. He took her by the hand. *Talitha koum. Little girl, I tell you to get up.* And she did. And she began to walk around. "Give her something to eat," he said.

The little girl was twelve years old. The woman had been bleeding for twelve years. Twelve — like the twelve tribes of Israel, the full community which was of course in dire need of a healing and a Resurrection. Ched Myers points out that Jesus is telling the whole community of the need to be re-born: to reject the old order with its rigid hierarchies, purity code and particular exclusions. The time is upon us to move into the New Social Order with equal status for all, the New

Order which will liberate the outcast and can even "snatch the 'noble' from death." (Myers, "Binding the Strong Man," page 203)

No, said Jesus, she's not dead. Give her something to eat. This time they didn't laugh.

**And if you don't believe
in life coming from death,
please get on out of this room
while Jesus does his thing.**

Dead folk don't eat. Eating is for the living. That's what we do together. We eat together, just like we do around this table. Just like we'll do after we sing the last song and pray the last prayer. It restores us to health, restores us to our family — to our community. So the little girl was restored, like the woman with the issue of blood, not only to herself and her own life. She was restored to her community, her family, by the sharing of food. As Jesus said to the discipleship community when they were faced with 10,000 to 15,000 hungry folks in the wilderness, "*You yourselves give them something to eat.*"

I will show you how to reach out with hope, how to act in faith. But *you must participate in the miracle!* There is always a part for us to play. There is something for all of us to do — each and every one of us.

You — over there — give her something to eat! Hey, you in the back row! Give her something to eat!

Naw, Jesus, she's dead, and anyway, she was just a girl. "*Give her something to eat.*"

Tony, give her something to eat.

James, come out of the crowd and tell us how you were healed.

Jenny, give them something to eat.

Calvin, did you touch the hem of his garment? What needs healing?

Barbara, what is *your* story of healing?

And if you don't believe in life coming from death, please get on out of this room while Jesus does his thing. Make room for Resurrection. Don't crowd us with your skepticism and your conviction that it can't be done!

Ah! But if you've *seen* the dry bones come together and receive the spirit and breathe and stand up! If you've *seen* the dead children get up! Then stick around. And, hey, give them something to eat!

Amen. ✚

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community. She preached this sermon at Open Door Community worship on July 12.



Ade Bethune

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Murphy,

I have read and profited by your eloquent words on the death penalty in the series "Good Grief: Living With Loss in the Struggle for Justice" [*Hospitality*, October 2008 through January 2009]. Your description of the axial role that the death penalty plays in our culture and society clearly shows that this punishment is, indeed, a microcosm of an unjust and hateful system that on every side exploits the poor and nonwhite. What is worse is that people who should know better now zealously bend their efforts to see that the death penalty is more widely implemented. I have in mind the "Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act," signed into law by President Bill Clinton, who should have known better.

In an article in the publication "First Thoughts," Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, despite almost total ignorance of the Greek language, professed to find in the text of Romans 13:4 an endorsement of the death penalty by Paul the Apostle. Leaving aside the character of Scalia — an utterly corrupt and malefic jurist who prates about being a practicing Catholic while rejecting and denigrating repeated papal condemnations of the death penalty — Paul is writing here about being obedient to those who exercise *lawful* authority, and says, "Only if you do wrong, need you be afraid; it is not for nothing that he [the authority] bears the sword; he is God's minister still, to inflict punishment on the wrong-doer." (I use the excellent translation of the Bible by Monsignor Ronald Knox, the best English version in 2000 years.) Paul goes on to speak about the duty of paying taxes, but he is hardly advocating the death penalty for tax evasion. Yet Scalia, educated at Harvard Law School, feels no scruple about taking a Bible quotation and distorting it. But this shouldn't surprise anyone; in a dissent last year, Scalia stated absolute falsehoods about the consequences of allowing people to challenge their imprisonment at Guantanamo (*Boumediene v. Bush*, June 12, 2008).

You are right to point out how the struggle against the death penalty is "all part of a pro-democracy movement" and that those who fight against it "are part of a courageous people in every place and nation who stand up for what is right and just." What we see, on an individual level, when a poor or nonwhite individual gets killed by the state, is part and parcel of the great injustices inflicted upon all of us, not just those who are poor or disadvantaged. What really hits me the hardest is how the whole hateful structure of the death penalty apparatus affects all of us. Although it doesn't come close to the severity of pain experienced by the condemned person, his or her family, and the victim and his or her family, it scores deep and lasting wounds upon those who fight against it. I shall never forget a visit I made to the office of the anti-death penalty movement in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1984, where I heard stories about how the attorneys and paralegals were emotionally lacerated by the process, which moved forward inexorably and remorselessly, at a glacial pace. There was no respite. The death penalty is an equal pain giver; it distributes huge doses of suffering to all.

Faithfully yours,

Donald Juneau
Hammond, Louisiana

Donald Juneau is a human rights attorney in Louisiana.

Dear Friends,

We are glad to help out with your expenses. In this financially difficult time, my family and I feel extremely blessed by God that we still have a fixed-income job. We feel even more blessed that we are able to make this donation.

We would also like to thank all the volunteers for your kind hearts and hard works. May God bless you all.

In Christ,

J.F. and Tsu-Ming Yao
Milledgeville, Georgia

Dear Community,

So sorry to hear about the loss of your friend Geraldine Lee, who was hit by a car on Ponce de Leon Avenue [March *Hospitality*].

A few weeks ago, a member of my church was hit right outside the church after attending a meeting on social justice. He later died in the hospital, and we suspect that he may have been denied crucial treatment because he was "uninsured." We cannot close our eyes to the fact that pedestrian-car collisions are more than accidents. It is people privileged enough to have a vehicle in contempt of those not privileged in this way.

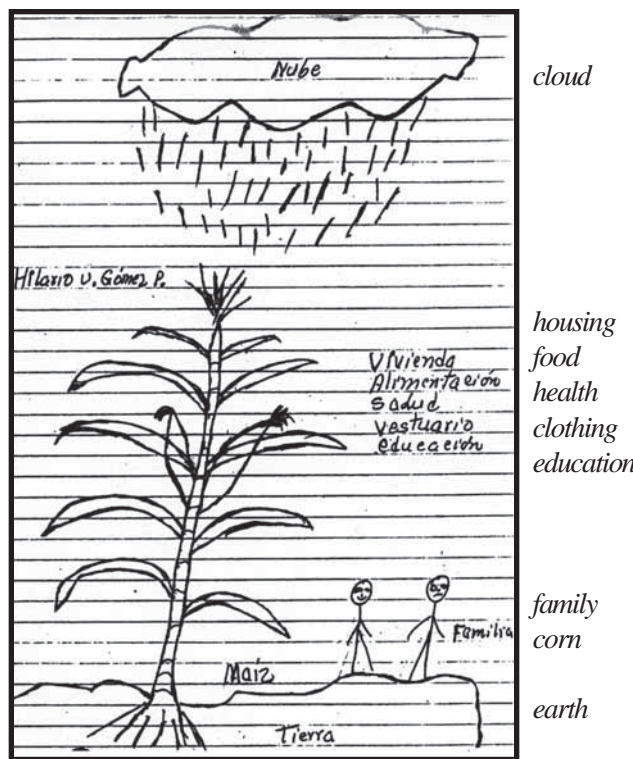
Buddy Bell
Chicago, Illinois

Friends,

Greetings from Louisville! I am living and working here for a year, at PCUSA headquarters, planning a big mission event for this fall.

Would you please send me *Hospitality* at my new address? Thought you would appreciate the drawing on this card, which was done by a pastor in Guatemala (*below*). I had asked a group of pastors to draw a picture of what an abundant life is for them. We can learn much from our brothers and sisters in other places.

Ellen Dozier
Louisville, Kentucky



Hilario V. Gomez P.

Dear Ed,

Last night I started reading "Sharing the Bread of Life." I couldn't put it down. It was 3:45 a.m., and I was just so tired I finally had to stop. I stopped at page 140.

From reading it, I learnt so much about the Open Door Community. It is like I am watching a movie, or more so, like I am traveling in time, looking at what has actually been happening as you are describing it. A roller coaster of feelings, a peek through the windows of your *journey*.

I still have almost half the book to read when I can, hopefully tonight again. I am sort of excitedly anticipating what is still to come in the book. And after reading this one, I think I can understand more of what I'm gonna read in your book "The Festival of Shelters." Knowing the background and who you really are will make me understand it better.

Thank you,

Lydia Riley
Henderson, Waitakere City
New Zealand

Wonderful news about Murphy's finishing chemo! And a wonderful poem (rap?!)—creative as ever. Do you know the African song *Mungu Nimemwa* ("Know That God Is Good")? It's going through my mind as I write this.

Not so good about Obama, though — I suppose it's just realpolitik taking over; but the ideals, dreams and hopes mustn't be dissipated too soon.

All's well here. Ruth's foot clinic is attracting such great interest — oversubscribed. More volunteers than she can accommodate. She's being asked to speak about it and do a workshop at a Wild Goose event (for the Iona Community)!

Usual stuff to keep me occupied — local services, some university lecturing while a friend is on sabbatical, on top of Iona and continuing Presbytery stuff. I was in an Iona Community plenary yesterday. A new leader has been elected: a parish minister in Edinburgh, who is Kathy Galloway's sister's husband.

We think so much about y'all, and avidly read *Hospitality* as soon as it arrives each month. There's so much in it that is creative, challenging and encouraging.

Much love to all!

Norman and Ruth Shanks
Glasgow, Scotland

P.S.: I miss the theological-existential conversations around the Open Door — disturbing, challenging, enriching, exploring divergence and common ground!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the "Second Concert" piece in the May *Hospitality* [by Arnold Steinhardt]. It immediately brought to mind the scene in "The Shawshank Redemption" where Tim Robbins' character gets into the prison office and plays opera over the loudspeakers for all to hear. Really, how much easier it is to reach out to the humanity in others than all the dehumanizing that goes on in this society.

As always, thank you all for your good and wonderful work.

In peace,

Rachel Gross
North Manchester, Indiana

Dear Friends in Ministry,

Greetings and blessings to you in this exciting and troubled world. If ever we needed the message of Hope and Good Will, and Light to all Captives, and the Prince of Peace, we surely need it now.

I have been on your mailing list for many years and several years ago was privileged to visit your program, and as I recall was honored to be able to share in opening bags of coffee into a large container. I was greatly moved by your ministry.

In retirement, I have continued to be involved in prison ministry at Morgan County Correctional Complex in Tennessee. I have shared articles from your newspaper with inmates from time to time. One of my friends was transferred to West Tennessee State Prison in Henning and asked if I could get his name on your mailing list. If that is possible, Randall and I will both be thankful.

May God bless and sustain you in your exceptional ministry.

Your Brother in the service of the King,

Richard W. Hettrick
Harriman, Tennessee

Editor's note: We will happily add prisoners to our mailing list. Thank you for asking.



Rita Corbin

Open Door Community Ministries

Men's Showers: Monday, 7 a.m.

Womens Showers: Monday - Wednesday by appointment

Soup Kitchen: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday,
11 a.m. – 12 noon.

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

Use of Phone: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday,
11 a.m. – 12 noon.

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.

We are open...

Sunday: We invite you to join us for **Worship** at **5 p.m.** and for
supper following worship. We are open from 9 a.m. until
4 p.m. for donations.

Monday through Thursday: We gratefully accept donations from
9 a.m. until noon 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 5 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 2	Worship at 910 Edward Loring preaching
August 9	Worship at 910 Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance Dick Rustay preaching
August 16	No Worship at 910 Wedding at Jubilee Partners
August 23	No Worship at 910 Plaining Retreat at Dayspring Farm
August 30	No Worship at 910 Plaining Retreat at Dayspring Farm
September 6	Worship at 910 The Singing Labor Movement Calvin Kimbrough leading
September 13	Worship at 910 Edward Loring preaching
September 20	Worship at 910 Ron Lister preaching
September 27	Worship at 910 Ann Lister preaching



Calvin Kimbrough

*Ed Weir and Lora Shain share smiles on
July 4 in preparation for their wedding at
Jubilee Partners on August 16.*

Needs of the Community



we need **blankets!**

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
- blankets
- 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
- used prescription
containers for lotions

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 and
box springs

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification
on selected Monday 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
404.874.9652

or visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medical Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

- ibuprofen
- 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.!**

From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Monday through Wednesday our attention is focused on Bible study, serving the soup kitchen, reflection and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. Please come before 10 a.m. or after 2 p.m. THANK YOU!