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July 2011

Three Little Words and the Mystery of Faith

By Murphy Davis

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community. She preached this sermon at Open Door worship on Sunday, June 5.

My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may be full of joy when Christ's glory is revealed.

— 1 Peter 4:12-13

Always be ready to give account of the hope that is within you.

— 1 Peter 3:15b

Little did I know when we planned for me to preach this week that we would also be dealing with the news that, in addition to the lymphoma that I've struggled with for more than 16 years, the fungal pneumonia that's been with me for more than seven years, and a certifiably broken immune system, now I also have breast cancer.

I have had a pretty good notion for several months that this was coming. The PET scan in March affirmed that the lymphoma has, once again, shrunk miraculously. But along with this great news, the scan showed some new activity in my left chest. The follow-up scans and biopsy confirmed a small malignant node that will have to be surgically addressed.

I do want you to know that the journey over the past 16 years — while I'd have to say that it's not a journey that we would have chosen — has been a journey filled with grace and beauty and joy.

**It's an odd sort of joy
that sneaks in the back door
when we least expect it,
and it's part of the journey
when we travel with Jesus and a
ragtag group of broken suffering
folks. It's called Resurrection.
It's an upside-down sort of Hope.**

In 1995, when I was first coming to consciousness after a major emergency surgery at Grady Memorial Hospital, I learned that most of my obsolete organs had been removed and that I had a very rare and strange cancer. I was surrounded by the love of this community and my family as we received the news that I probably had some six to 18 months to live.

After our immediate circle, the first words I began to hear were from our homeless and hungry friends and from



Rita Corbin

our longtime friends on death row. My foggy brain began to try to grasp the fact that fervent prayers were storming heaven on my behalf and that some of the most steady and passionate prayers were coming from cat holes and prison cells — from abandoned souls and the condemned, from those who did not know where they would spend the next night or where their next meal would come from, from those who waited for death at the hands of the state, from those who said, “Now you too know what it is like to live with a death sentence. Now you are one of us.”

It has been a humbling journey, to say the least! Ours is a journey that has been full of joy in solidarity. Perhaps it sounds strange to speak of joy with a new cancer diagnosis. But it's an odd sort of joy that sneaks in the back door when we least expect it, and it's part of the journey when we travel with Jesus and a ragtag group of broken suffering folks. It's called Resurrection. It's an upside-down sort of Hope. And it comes in the most unlikely places and circumstances. And, you know, we've just had to laugh at the absurdity of the whole thing!

So this is a bit of a jolt — another leg of a long journey. But, look, I was expected to die many times over these years. I wasn't supposed to live long enough to be around to get breast cancer. Besides, we've pumped all those toxic chemotherapy drugs into my body to treat the lymphoma; I've had hundreds of radioactive CT scans, PET scans, X-rays, sonograms and goodness knows what-all; and we know that while the treatments have saved me from one thing, they have probably created other effects. So there's a real sense in which this is not a big surprise.

I have wonderful doctors, the best to be found anywhere: Amy Langston, Bill Eley, Sheryl Gabram and Jada Bussey-Jones. They're not only the best and the brightest

practitioners, researchers and advocates, but they are people who love the poor and pour out their lives in compassionate healing with eyes and hearts bent toward the day when health care will be available to everybody, beyond our cruel, commercial, exclusionary market system. Now *that* is a healing context! And I am eternally grateful for the abundance of resources and grace that surround Ed and Hannah and me — and you who are our community — as we move into this next leg of the journey.

Thanks be to God!

The Allure of Language

And now I want to meditate on time and verbs.

I begin with a confession. I have certain obsessions about language. I grew up in a home with two parents with graduate-level educations, and my mother, Mary Bailey Williams Davis, was particularly a stickler for grammar and pronunciation. She did not hesitate to correct any child in her house, whether it was one of her own or one of our friends. Mama had an ear for funny folk expressions, rhymes and silly songs, but when she murdered the King's English, she did so very consciously. She always made it clear that she knew better, but she delighted in the fun of the odd slant of the down-home expression or language pattern.

With me, this interest stuck. Now, as an adult who has lived a very multicultural life for 40 years, I speak a language gleaned from an unbelievably diverse family, each bringing our own habits of the tongue and unique forms of expression and culture. But even now, language is rarely without consideration for me. I edit our newspaper, but actually I'm a follower of David Mann, our copy editor *extraordinaire*, and Julie Martin, our meticulous proofreader. David and Julie are two of the only people I know who could spend all day debating the placement of a comma or the use of a prepositional phrase. That is to say that they know, and I agree, that getting the words right is important.

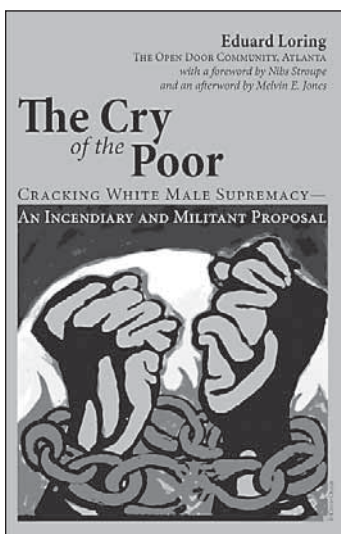
I love the various forms of the English language that are performed in the Open Door household. We've recently had a generous dose of Scottish brogue (Connie Bonner), quasi-Cockney English (Clive Bonner), and English with a heavy German accent (Christine from Hamburg). And, of course, we live with American accents from Laurel, Mississippi; Bamberg, South Carolina; Middle Tennessee; Eye-dee-Ho; Rochester, New York; rural Central Florida; Reynolds, Georgia; North Atlanta; Michigan; South Atlanta and so on.

It's part of what makes our life so rich. Our language expresses our values and the rich tapestry of our various cultures. I especially love the colloquialisms, the little expressions of *local* language that communicate a common experience in a particular and fresh way — made-up little words or phrases particular to a place or region that communicate in ways that aren't exactly “standard American English.”

My family moved from New Orleans to Eastern North

Three Little Words *continued on page 4*

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An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

By **Eduard Loring**

In "The Cry of the Poor," Eduard "the Agitator" Loring challenges each of us to ACT, and in doing so, to reduce the distance between ourselves and our sisters and brothers on the streets, behind prison bars, in the grip of mental illness, on the edge. He asks a lot, but it is the least we can do for the least of us. The Open Door Community shows us the way.

What ya gonna do?

— *Mary Sinclair, human rights activist*

The Open Door Community

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poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

It Sounds Like Jesus

I already got a job
Just staying alive.

I already got paid
When I saw God's face.

It sounds like Jesus, to me,
Already loved my Black brothers
And my White brothers too.

He already loved the human race and humankind too.

I already been to Hell,
But I did not cry.
When I get to Heaven,
I will smile.

It sounds like Jesus, to me,
Already loved my mother, my stepfather, my auntie,
And my cousins too.

It sounds like Jesus, to me, already loved
My grandpop and my grandmamma too.

It sounds like Jesus, to me,
Already loved all the people around the world.

— **Donald Wayne Thomas**

In 1980 Donnie Thomas was sentenced to death, but his sentence was later commuted to life in prison. He spent more than 25 years at Reidsville and now is at Valdosta State Prison.

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

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 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

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Calvin Kimbrough

Memorial Day Picnic served in the backyard at 910.

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A Stunning New View of the Bible

Reviewed by John Dear, SJ

A version of this review originally appeared in the National Catholic Reporter.

Early last year, I spent 10 days in Tahrir Square in Cairo, marching with protesters after 1,400 of us were denied entrance into Gaza by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. We were threatened, harassed and followed by undercover police. It was a scary experience of dictatorship, repression and empire.

So I rejoiced with the crowds who peacefully assembled and marched in Cairo early this year demanding an end to the brutal 30-year, U.S.-backed regime of Mubarak. I hope and pray that the good people of Egypt will find justice, nonviolent democracy and new freedom.

The long history of Egypt is a struggle for its people to come out of empire. One could argue that their story is the history of humanity — to come out of empire into the new life and freedom of loving nonviolence.

A groundbreaking new book by scriptural scholar Wes Howard-Brook reads the Bible itself as God's call to humanity to come out of empire and live in peace in God's creation. "Come Out, My People!": God's Call Out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond" is an astonishing commentary — on the entire Bible! It is a masterpiece of scholarship and political commentary that could help everyone everywhere come out of their culture of violence and empire into the new life of God's love and peace.

I think this book is a defining moment in scriptural study. I urge everyone to get it, study it and discuss it. It charts a new course for all of us.

Biblical history leads up to the appearance of the nonviolent Jesus, who once and for all denounces the religion of empire and proclaims and embodies the religion of creation as the way of love, truth, justice and peace.

In a nutshell, Howard-Brook walks us through the Hebrew Bible and its "war of myths," leading up to the nonviolent Jesus, St. Paul's writings and the concluding book of Revelation, to see the movement of God through history as a call to humanity out of empire into God's realm of peace, love and justice.

He contends that there are two fundamental religions throughout history: the religion of empire and the religion of creation. (I might have called them the religion of violence and war vs. the religion of nonviolence and peace.) In this sweeping and transformative approach to biblical interpretation, he presents the Bible as a struggle between these competing "religions."

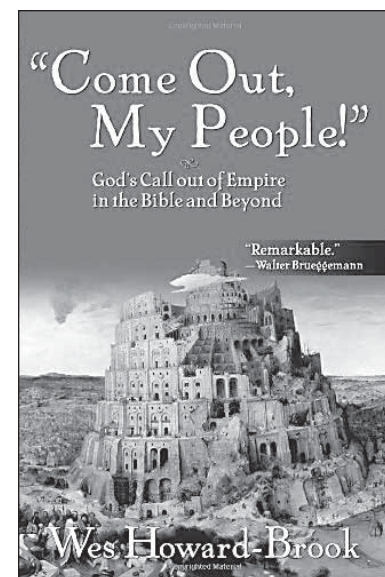
Throughout the stories, struggles and ages, people have been caught in empire and renounced God and the gifts of creation. Biblical history leads up to the appearance of the nonviolent Jesus, who once and for all denounces the religion of empire and proclaims and embodies the religion of creation as the way of love, truth, justice and peace. In Jesus, God fulfills the call to humanity to "come out of empire." "The Gospels portray a Jesus who sides consistently and definitively with the Creator/Liberator God and against the gods of empire," Howard-Brook writes.

Because Jesus is killed by the empire, his resurrection is the definitive vindication of the religion of creation. Conse-

"Come Out, My People!" God's Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond

by Wes Howard-Brook

A 2010 Honor Book—Englewood Review
ORBIS BOOKS
544pp.
Index
Paperback
\$30.00



quently, those who follow him renounce violence, domination and empire to live in the peace of his creation with humanity. Instead of "Onward Christian soldiers," their mission is "Onward Christian peacemakers."

The cumulative effect is nothing less than a revelation. It's as if we've missed the point of the Bible for centuries, using it to support our wars, injustices, violence and empires. Instead, the Bible is a summons to cut all ties with empire — with all the political structures and systems that claim God's power — and to enter the freedom, nonviolence, peace and justice of God and God's creation.

The best scriptural commentaries of my lifetime are "Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus" by Ched Myers and "Becoming Children of God: The Gospel of John" by Wes Howard-Brook. If you have not read them, get them and take 10 years to study them! Another excellent resource is a superb collection of essays co-edited by Howard-Brook and Sharon Ringe, titled "The New Testament: Introducing the Way of Discipleship," which I also highly recommend.

These two great scholars, Myers and Howard-Brook, build on the work of William Stringfellow, Walter Wink, Walter Brueggemann and Richard Horsley to develop the best scholarly studies of the Gospels from the perspective of war and peace, violence and nonviolence, injustice and justice, empire and creation. "Come Out, My People!" takes this powerful new political reading even further, daring to walk us through the entire Bible. It is the first such book of its kind, and Orbis is to be commended for publishing it.

The mass of data, brilliant interpretation and sheer intelligence are overwhelming. They're also readable and manageable if you take them in small doses. I read about 25 pages a day, underlined as I went, and pondered the insights I found.

I trust Wes Howard-Brook's insights because they flow not just from his academic studies but from his activism for justice and peace. "I have discovered an exciting, worldwide circle of discipleship that transcends previous denominational divides, ages and nationalities, in which people are seeking to discover and to live the authentic Way of Jesus, leaving behind the legacy of 'Christian' empire," he writes in his introduction. "Recognizing how Jesus definitely embraced the 'creation' story in the Bible while rejecting the 'empire' story provides a new foundation for engaging our scriptural inheritance in service of personal, communal and global transformation."

It's virtually impossible to review this book, which would be like writing a review of the Bible itself. My copy of "Come Out, My People!" is marked up with passages I've noted for their fresh insights, from Genesis to Revelation. Here are some of the aspects, themes or passages that helped me:

- ◆ The opening discussion of the culture of empire and how it co-opts every religion to serve its will. How in the book of Genesis the Creator gives us paradise to live in peace on the land and how we reject that gift for the "Great City" — for empire as a way of life.

- ◆ The brilliant review of biblical history under various kings and empires. How some people were faithful to the call out of empire; how most not only served empire but thought they were serving the Creator by doing so; how the Bible became a counter-narrative to the Babylonian world view, which Isaiah and Jesus used to explain our way out of the culture of violence into fidelity to a loving God.

- ◆ In particular, the treatment of Genesis was eye-opening, as a counter-narrative to the Babylonian imperial world view, to Cain, vengeance, agriculture and the "Great City."

- ◆ How biblical Israel rejects reliance on "YHWH alone," uses the realism and militarism of empire, and never succeeds because it trusts in violence, not in the nonviolence of God.

- ◆ How the counter-narrative to empire begins in the Bible with four women: two midwives, Pharaoh's daughter and Moses' mother, who fear God and disobey the king.

- ◆ Side comments on the nature of God, such as God's appearance to Elijah in the silent wind (1 Kings 19:11-12): "YHWH is not to be encountered only in external events of visible and audible power, but also in utter stillness," Howard-Brook writes. "Such an experience is unknown to the religion of empire, where elaborate spectacles visibly linked gods and kings."

- ◆ The differences among the prophets, especially the distinction of Micah, who offers a truer creation-oriented alternative, even to Isaiah: "Isaiah's vision is one that imagines a renewed kingship and a restored Jerusalem in which YHWH's peace will be found. Micah, on the other hand, foresees revolution: an utter rejection of monarchy as the basis for the end of war and the establishment of justice on Zion."

- ◆ The discussion of the non-canonical, radical text of 1 Enoch as pivotal to the anti-imperial identity of the Gospels, and the analysis of the apocalyptic writings in Daniel (my favorite book of the Bible).

- ◆ The summation of New Testament studies over the past century, and the announcement of a new moment as we understand the anti-imperial thrust of the Gospels in its call for total trust in the peacemaking Creator.

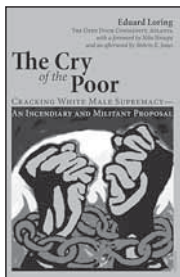
- ◆ The reflections on the writings of St. Paul within the context of the Roman Empire, showing Paul's radical anti-imperial stand in light of his assertion that in the resurrection of Jesus, God calls us out of empire into the Christ's communal life of love.

One passage sums up Howard-Brook's take on Jesus:

Jesus' mission was clearly not to "bring down" the Roman Empire in the traditional militaristic sense. At the same time, his goal was not to "spiritualize" political notions such as "kingdom" and "messiah" so as to render his followers either indifferent to "the

A Stunning New View continued on page 6

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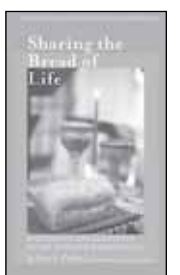
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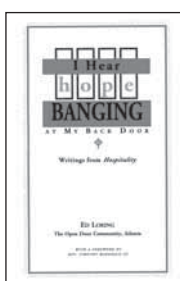
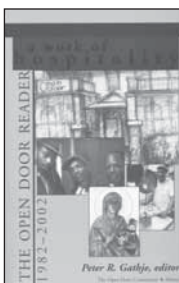
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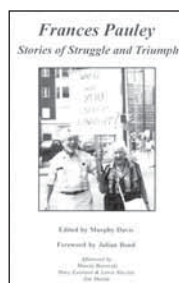
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Three Little Words and the Mystery of Faith *continued from page 1*

Carolina when I was eight years old. At first I thought the people there talked funny, and at the wise old age of eight, I decided not to adopt that accent. Those who became my friends spoke of having brothers and “sustuhs.” They wrote with “punsuls” and went down to the “ruvuh” to swim. Though I loved to hear it, it seemed a bit peculiar to my ear. Then I grew up and married a man from “Lowcountry” South Carolina, with a very similar accent. Southern, as our South Carolina grandson would say, “for reee-uhl!”

There’s something to be said, of course, for the rules of grammar, pronunciation, punctuation and syntax. We don’t have to explore the subtleties of, for example, the difference between grammar and syntax (especially in an age when you can finish college and never know what it means to diagram a sentence!). But it’s all about communicating clearly. There are standards that should be, if not slavishly obeyed, at least respected.

This is what makes reading *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* these days a royal pain in the neck. After David retired as their most erudite copy editor, things started going downhill. Then they started cutting back. Where? By eliminating some of their best reporters and apparently getting rid of most of the headline writers, copy editors and proofreaders worth their salt.

(Here’s my current pet peeve. You now regularly hear people say, “She graduated high school.” And I’m sorry to say that we’re also seeing it in print — I’ve seen it three times in the AJC, and even Dictionary.com now accepts it as “common usage.” I hold to the standard that the verb “graduate” takes a preposition, as in “She graduated *from* high school.” Well, I’ve lost that fight, but it just seems *wrong!*)

“Has,” “Is” and “Will”

But today I want to focus primarily on verbs, three specific verbs: *has*, *is* and *will*.

We use these words every time we gather around the table to celebrate the Eucharist — the Lord’s Supper, the Welcome Table, Communion, the Holy Sacrament of the Table. We call it by many names to indicate that this table is the center of our lives. We circle around it, and everything we do is an extension of this Welcome Table spread for us.

We are first welcomed by God in the person of Jesus the Jew. We are empowered to prepare a Welcome Table for our friends and enemies and strangers, who become for us, at this table, the very presence of Jesus in his suffering, in his execution, in his healings and restorations to life, in his Resurrection, in his promise.

That is, we meet the fullness of Jesus Christ in one another around this table. The Welcome Table is sometimes in our dining room, sometimes in a prison visiting room, sometimes on the streets or in a church basement. We can share food and welcome, we can share the flowing waters of baptism in the shower room, we can bend and wash one another’s feet, we can bend down in our foot clinic and wash

feet that are bent and bruised by oppression — all of this because God first loved us. All of this because Jesus came and was one of us and showed us the way of welcome.

Toward the end of every Eucharist, we stand and the celebrant says, “Let us say what we believe.” Or “Let us confess the Mystery of our faith.” Or simply “The Mystery of our faith.” In Latin, the *mysterium fidei*.

And then we all respond:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen

Christ will come again

Did you notice those verbs? *Has* (past), *is* (present) and *will* (future). Three different and specific verbs.

This is classically called the Memorial Acclamation, and it’s a confession almost as old as the church itself. In the Middle Ages, it became a regular part of the Latin liturgy.

As part of the Christian tradition, we confess that we live *in* and *with* and *through* Jesus Christ. That our lives are, in some mysterious way, *in* Jesus, in the continuing life of Jesus.

The acclamation actually has several forms:

“When we eat this bread and drink

this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.”

Or “Lord, by your cross and Resurrection, you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world.”

Or, my personal favorite, “Dying, you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.”

But what in the world does this ancient “churchy” language have to do with us?

History, Power and Hope

Let’s look at the three parts of this affirmation.

First we say, “Christ *has* died.”

This is our history. And of course a primary thing that we say when we come to the table is that we *remember*. We remember that “on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took bread...” In this act we remember the past: Christ has died. That is, God has judged the world in mercy by taking onto the very person and body of Jesus Christ, the harshest, most violent and torturous power of the world’s judgment. The power of death is exposed in the death of Jesus of Nazareth.

That’s what we mean when we say that in the execution of Jesus, death itself is exposed and loses its power. The execution of Jesus tells us what the world as a system of domination really is. And therefore we can look at the world as it really is. God has judged the world by taking all of its rejection and judgment into the very *personhood* of God. Therefore we know what the world really is and what the world’s power has to offer.

Then we say, “Christ *is* risen.”

The Resurrection tells us that the power of the God of Life is greater than and beyond the power of domination, violence and death itself. The love of God, the life that God gives



Brian Kavanagh

Three Little Words and the Mystery of Faith *continued*

us, is more powerful than death. The power that God offers as an alternative to the world's power is greater than anything the world can offer, including execution. The Domination System, then, is something that we see clearly in the execution of Jesus, but we are freed from this power because we come to understand that, in spite of what the executioners and fearmongers want us to believe, their power is not ultimate. There is something greater and more powerful: the power of Life and Love and Liberation.

**The Beloved Community
is *outside* the Domination System.
We live in that promise.
It's not yet fulfilled, but we do get a
taste or a glimpse from time to time.**

God is redeeming the world through the community of radical discipleship. When this community lives as the Body of the Risen Christ in the world, it — or we — become the living presence of the unity between God and the human family restored to freedom and the fullness of its humanity. As we struggle to live in unity, we live in a promise. This is to live as Jesus of Nazareth lived, *in* the world but not *of* the world — but for the sake of the world. This means that we are saying quite a lot when we say, “Christ is risen.”

Finally we say, “Christ *will* come again.”

Simply put, this affirmation tells us that we live in hope, and today's scripture reading tells us that we should always be ready to “give account of the hope” that is within us. God's power of life, mercy and justice is greater than the power of death, domination, violent coercion, war and executions. That means that we can be fully alive to hope, freedom and love. What we see is not the whole story about reality. This world of war and hatred is *not* all there is.

“We have another world in view.” We sing that folk tune from Ghana often at the Open Door. There's another world in view, and it's different from all this mess out here. And in the alternative world nobody puts up with the insanity of empire's warmongering or the Domination System that props it up. It's a just world where everybody has enough, not too much and not too little, a world of peace in which differences are honored and enjoyed but divisions and hatred are history. When we say, “Christ will come again,” we live *into* this hope.

The Beloved Community is *outside* the Domination System. Our version of the Jesus Prayer begins, “Our Beloved Friend, outside the Domination System . . .” We live in that promise. It's not yet fulfilled, but we do get a taste or a glimpse from time to time.

One Great Sacred Story

We need to name these experiences to remember and affirm what it is to live in the world but not of the world. Phil Berrigan is one of the great cloud of witnesses whose long and strong witness of resistance continues to inform us. He used to say, “The poor tell us who we are; the prophets tell us who we could be. So we hide the poor and kill the prophets.”

We don't want to know who we are. When we look at the suffering and degradation of the poor, we hate the mirror that it puts in front of our faces. When people suffer, especially in the midst of such abundance, it tells us that we as a people are greedy and mean, and that we will *not* share. It tells us that our political will is to exclude and criminalize and punish our sisters and brothers for their poverty. Indeed, the poor tell us who we are.

Then there are the prophets who tell us who we could be and perhaps even what we *should* be. Think of Martin Luther King Jr., who told us so clearly of the Beloved Community. He described “the world house,” where people live in abun-

dance because everything is shared. Everybody has enough. Dr. King helped us to see and believe that another world and another way was and is possible.

But we couldn't take his prophecy. He was even starting to get poor white people and poor black people and poor brown people to make common cause and to advocate *together*. He had to go. The Domination System would not have it. He was making too much sense. He had to die. And so it was arranged: he was assassinated. And we don't believe for a minute that he was killed merely by a bullet from the weapon of one insignificant little man. (See Jim Douglass' “King and the Cross,” at www.jonahhouse.org/DouglassSummary.htm.)

This is why we say not only “Christ has died” — that we know about the suffering. And “Christ is risen” — that there is something more powerful than that death and suffering. We also say, “Christ will come again.” And all the world will be redeemed — restored to its right order, which is justice and abundance for the earth and its people. That means that even the grouchy, greedy, mean, super-rich folks who want to take everything for themselves, and to hell with everybody else, will have an opportunity to look at how awful they've been and an opportunity for transformation.

All things will be made right. That is what it means to say, “Christ will come again.”

So this is not just some pious gobbledygook that we spout because we're in church. It is about the truth of our past, present and future. In all of time, we are in God's hands.

“Christ has died” is our past. It tells us the truth of history: the suffering of the powerless at the hands of the powerful who wield the power of death. And God has always been among the powerless in their suffering.

“Christ is risen” is our present. It tells us the truth of our present reality: we live in the power of the God of Mercy in the midst of the Domination System. We live between the history of oppression and the future of hope.

“Christ will come again” is our future. The truth of our lives is hope, not of our own creation but the gift of God's promise.

We do not belong to ourselves, but to God and one another. All of our time is in the hands of God and it is lived as part of this one great sacred story.

**And all the world will be redeemed
— restored to its right order,
which is justice and abundance
for the earth and its people.**

We live now between history and “the new world a-borning.” We live with eyes wide open, but not as a people without hope. We live in what has been called “the already and the not-yet.” We live with the taste of hope on our tongues for life in and with Jesus Christ.

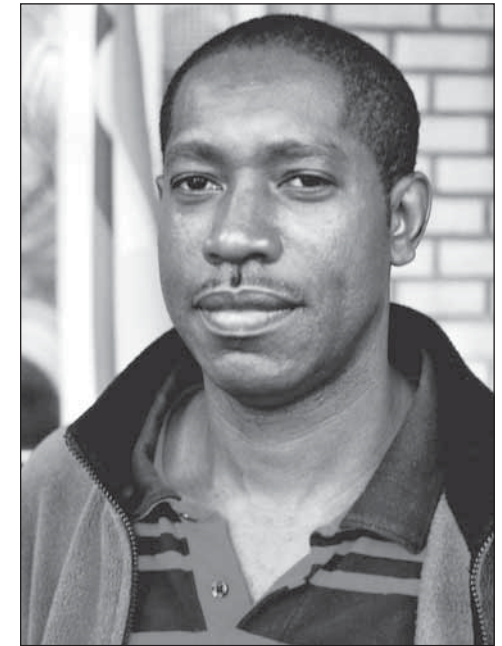
We know who we *were* — part of the system that killed Jesus then and now. We know who we *are* — in the world but not of it, with another world in view. We know who we *will become* — because death has lost its power. We live free from the power of death over us and look forward to the restoration of all systems and persons — the restoration of the Creation itself.

Love reigns. Grace is amazing. We will live in the Beloved Community.

We can tell the stories, and tell them we must. We recognize the signs of Resurrection in our little circle at the Open Door. All of us who have lived this life for any length of time know something about Resurrection. And — bye and bye, soon and very soon — we will know fulfillment.

Glory be to God! ✠

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Come live as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community and join Jay Ashmear as we provide hospitality to our friends from the streets.

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 770.246.7625

For information and application forms visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Please Help!

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

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

Thank You!



this year give
HOSPITALITY

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

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

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

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

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

name _____

address _____

email _____

phone _____



volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community

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

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

Individuals to accompany community members to doctors' appointments.

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

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

**For more information,
contact Sarah Humphrey
at odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7618**

Looking Through a Glass Darkly

Random Observations by **Eduard Loring**

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

— 1 Corinthians 13:12-13 (King James Version)

Means and Ends

When Yahweh-Elohim decided to free the Hebrews way down in Egyptland, she used only the forces of nature and the devastation of death (flies and toads, etc., but no drones). In the usa today we are dying by disease and workaholism. Many of our diseases are caused by American culture, based as it is on the need to work and produce all the time. God is at work "blessing" the usa by destroying the Domination System via natural and cultural catastrophes.

Is Murphy's breast cancer caused by too much radiation over the 16 years of MurphyCare for lymphoma? We are oh so grateful for the scans that have made tracking her disease possible, but the "cure" is not without other effects. Radiation in our environment that we have caused with our development and use of nuclear weapons and power is poisoning us all. Perhaps it is a "natural" means that God is using to destroy the Domination System.

We are so happy that Japan is closing down all its nuclear power plants — and so is Germany. In Georgia, usa, we are building two more nuclear power plants.

Bob Dylan's Vocation

On Tuesday, May 24, 2011, Bob Dylan turned 70 years old. In 1963, he shared his vision of vocation with us in the greatest protest song ever written: "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall." As Rolling Stone magazine put it in its May 26, 2011,



Tom Lewis

issue, that vocation is "to sing out against darkness wherever he sees it — to 'tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it' until his lungs burst." Dylan listens to "the cry of the poor" and to the anguish of our souls.

Sonograms

Several Republican-dominated state legislatures are proposing and passing laws that require a pregnant sister to have a sonogram and look at the image for 24 to 48 hours before an abortion procedure.

I suggest we pass a law that every military recruit, brothers and sisters, must look at sonograms of dead mothers, bloody chunks of children, chest-less fathers and brain-smearred "enemies" torn to bits by bombs and drones for 24 to 48 hours before being allowed to join the military. †

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community. This is one in a series of occasional columns.

A Stunning New View of the Bible *continued from page 3*

world" or ineffective in participating in God's project of renewal and restoration. Finally, Jesus did not "inspire" his disciples to engage the empire's own social and political machinery in order to "reform" it.

Rather, his purpose — as seen through a resurrection-oriented reading of the thousand-year-long storyline we have followed — was to bring YHWH's ancient purpose for humanity to fruition: the bringing forth of a people whose lives would be a light for others to show them how to live in true harmony/shalom with God, one another and all creation.

This understanding of YHWH's purpose would have been obvious were it not for the persistent, powerful presence of the religion of empire claiming YHWH's authority, practiced by the Jerusalem temple, its priesthood and its collaborators, among both the elite and ordinary people. Jesus, experiencing God's overwhelming love for him and for all creation, took up the sacred vocation of embodying YHWH's will by engaging in the two-part mission of denouncing the religion of empire and proclaiming as Good News the religion of God's immanent and abundant kingdom of peace, justice, love and joy for all.

As I read the clear, stunning analysis in this book, I couldn't but help wonder and grieve at the great distance we

have traveled from this anti-imperial, pro-peace Jesus.

I only wish Howard-Brook had written twice as much about the Gospels, because his insights are so rich. I would have liked 50 pages on the Sermon on the Mount alone, which I consider the ultimate teaching about resistance to empire and the nonviolent life outside empire. The author hints at the end that more volumes may follow, so perhaps he could unpack more of the Sermon on the Mount in the next book.

"Come Out, My People!" is certainly one of the best scriptural books I've ever read, and one I will return to for the rest of my life. I urge everyone to use it not only to better understand the Bible, but to live the biblical mandate to reject empire and choose instead Christ's way of peace, love and nonviolence. †

John Dear is a Jesuit priest, activist for peace and nonviolence, and the author of more than 20 books, most recently "A Persistent Peace: One Man's Struggle for a Nonviolent World." A resident of New Mexico, he has traveled the war zones of the world, given thousands of lectures for peace, been arrested at least 75 times for peace actions and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu. For more, see www.fatherjohndear.org and www.ncronline.org/blogs/on-the-road-to-peace.

Love and Nonviolence

By Tom Monahan

Two things have had a profound effect on my personal growth: the transformative power of spiritual love and the practice of nonviolence. True love and nonviolence are inseparable; you can't have one without the other. The reality of love's ability to transform everything it touches is the genius of the teachings and actions of Jesus, the Human One. Because he loved everyone, he didn't harm anyone.

There are three words for love in Greek: *philia*, *eros* and *agape*. *Philia* is friendship, love based on common interests. *Eros* is physical love, love based on physical attraction. The nature of *agape*, spiritual love, transcends both *philia* and *eros* and, unlike them, is unconditional and therefore inclusive.

I came to understand the nature of *agape* through the direct realization of the interconnectedness of all life. It came to me in a flash of intuition, an epiphany, and the illusion that we exist apart, separate from one another, dissolved like a morning mist in the warmth of sunlight.

As Christians, our primary concern is with spiritual love.

We wouldn't normally consider quantum physics when thinking about the oneness of all life, but it has revealed that we are in fact all interconnected. We perceive material objects, humans included, as being solid, but in reality everything we see is composed mostly of empty space. But because electrons move in their orbits at close to the speed of light, they create the illusion of solid matter. If we scaled up a hydrogen atom, made the nucleus the size of a golf ball and placed it in

the center of a football stadium, the electron would be the size of a pea and its orbit would be out in the bleachers. In reality, then, all physical creation is just a set of relationships among atomic particles. As humans we don't begin or end at definite boundaries, we exchange atoms and molecules with everything around us. The interconnectedness of all creation is not a belief but a scientific fact.

(For those who would like to learn more about this fascinating subject, there is an excellent film, "Mind Walk," that explores the nature of reality and the difference between Newtonian and quantum physics.)

I had a teacher years ago who wrote, "To love a fox" — that is, anything in particular — "is to have something against love." I thought about this for some time and realized that what he meant was that *agape*, spiritual love, is not exclusive but inclusive — it is unconditional and excludes nothing. Conscious deliberation is not involved. *Agape* is not something you do, but the spontaneous expression of your being, what you are. It is the manifestation of your higher self, the part of you that identifies with and experiences the oneness of all life. Jesus did not ultimately condemn anyone, because he identified with and was one with all of creation.

If we hesitate in accepting and loving others — or worse, avoid relationships with them, reserving our "love" for one or a few — is what we feel for the one or the few really love in the deepest sense, or are they simply fulfilling a need or needs of ours? I think that, in most ordinary relationships, our "love" is at least partly a response to what the other does for us. True love, *agape*, doesn't ask for, demand or expect

anything in return. It just is.

Maturing into *agape*, the love embodied in Jesus, does not mean you have to like everyone or everything. Some things, like tigers, need to be loved from a distance. The important thing is not to hate anyone, as it will harden your heart and reinforce the illusion of separation. Because personal growth occurs in relationship with others, avoiding relationship with others, or having any feelings of strong dislike or hatred for them, indicates that we still have work to do on ourselves. Particularly if we have feelings of hatred, the importance of practicing nonviolence becomes apparent.

Nonviolence — *ahimsa* in Sanskrit — is defined in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali as behavior that does not harm any sentient being in thought, word or deed. A person maturing in nonviolence has a nature of loving kindness toward and compassion for all beings. Mahatma Gandhi, like Jesus, understood the power of *ahimsa*.

It is not at all easy to become mature in nonviolence, but the result of doing so, according to the Yoga Sutras, is that all creatures will cease feeling enmity in your presence and in your presence the lion will lie down peacefully with the lamb. By growing in nonviolence, you will become an embodiment of spiritual love and dwell in the heart of God. Could there be anything more worthwhile to attain?

"Use your freedom to serve one another in love, for the whole law can be summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:13-14) ✠

Tom Monahan is a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community. He now lives in Santa Cruz, California, and volunteers at the Resource Center for Nonviolence.

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Ms. Davis,

My name is Lee Hughes and I live in Savannah, Georgia. I've been a longtime supporter of the Open Door.

I just got your newspaper, as I always do, in the mail, and was curious to read your article "Something's Rotten in Savannah" (June). I have to tell you it's been a long time since I've read an article that was full of so much speculation and erroneous information. Troy Davis cold-bloodedly murdered a police officer. Every single step of the way, every single appeal has been denied. There are mountains of evidence against him and no evidence that he is innocent.

It's ridiculous for you to take a newspaper, a publication of a homeless shelter facility, and promote this erroneous political agenda by saying that he should be spared. He killed a police officer in cold blood. Until you are ready to look that officer's children in the eyes and tell them that you want Troy Davis to go free, I think you should drop this. I will never, ever support the Open Door Community ever again under any circumstances, because of what you put in the newspaper.

If you would like to call me about this, I'd be happy to discuss it with you on an intellectual not emotional level.

Lee Hughes
Savannah, Georgia

Editor's response:

Dear Mr. Hughes,

We are sorry that you found our article on Troy Davis offensive. The fact remains that no physical evidence (nor any other "mountain" of evidence) against Davis has ever been presented. The case has relied solely on "eyewitness" testimony, most of which has been recanted. Chatham County never has proved Davis' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Will executing the wrong person relieve the pain and loss of Officer MacPhail's family? We pray for them in their suffering; but more violence will heal nothing.



Meg Crocker-Birmingham

Dear Ed,

In my disorganization, I sometimes put a copy of *Hospitality* down and wind up reading it in not-chronological order (though still in good *kairos* order). This just happened, and I just finished the February issue. I do read every one from cover to cover.

But the cover especially caught my eye this time. Meg Crocker-Birmingham [whose illustration was used with the "Death on the Streets" article] was a dear friend, and she contributed a number of strong images to the New York Catholic Worker while I was there. It's so great to see them continue to be reproduced!

We lost Meggie to cancer on February 7, probably around when that issue was in the mail. She is another in our cloud of witnesses, her life changed, not ended. But my eyes are full of tears as I write.

I thought you would want to know.

Much love to all,
Bill Barrett
Webster University
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Ed and Murphy,

I'm still thinking about the killing of Osama bin Laden, and feel increasingly uncomfortable about this American action, particularly the way it was done: shooting point-blank a criminal who admittedly was defenseless and whom they might have captured without killing. And I don't think gloating over a murder, as many Americans have done and are doing, is ever justified.

And how about the Christian doctrine of forgiveness? Or love thy enemy? Or do not kill?

I'm disappointed that President Obama said that anyone who questions the justification for killing bin Laden needs to have his head examined. As an alleged follower of Martin Luther King Jr., he is hardly showing the human sensitivity and reverence for human life that Martin showed. Or that Gandhi exhibited.

I am a critic, as you know, of the doctrine of "just war" and the thinking surrounding it. I think Obama and many others are trying to justify the murder of bin Laden by appealing to selected aspects of that doctrine (but not all, for example, "after all other means have been exhausted"), just as the advocates of the doctrine, especially generals and presidents, readily justify going to war by appealing to selected provisions of it (e.g., "just cause") and ignoring the rest. (And whose "just cause"? Obama and others are even making unfair use of a doctrine that is itself inadequate.

So, just know that I'm still stewing over this issue of whether it is ever moral to "kill" (don't you cringe at the easy use of that word these days?) an agent of horrible evil.

Please know that we are thinking of you all, praying for you daily, hugging you and all who come to the Open Door. We love you!

PEACE and HOPE!
Ron Santoni
Granville, Ohio

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon
Men's Showers: Tuesday, 10:45 a.m.
Trusted Friends Showers & Sandwiches: Thursday, 10 a.m.
Women's Showers: by appointment
Harriet Tubman Free Women's Clinic:
 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinics:
 Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Mail Check: Tuesday – Wednesday, during Soup Kitchen
 Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 1 p.m.
Use of Phone: Tuesday – Thursday, during services
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.

- July 3 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service
singing with Elise Witt
- July 10 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service
- July 17 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Rich Robinson preaching
- July 24 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Mark Harper preaching
- July 31 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service



John Overmyer



Helen Siegl

- August 7 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance
Dick Rustay preaching
- August 14 4 p.m. Worship at 910
Eucharistic Service
- August 21 No Worship at 910
Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm
- August 28 No Worship at 910
Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm

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
- acetaminophen
- 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.!

Needs of the Community



Chad Hyatt

Living Needs

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

Personal Needs

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

Food Needs

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

Special Needs

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