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Open Door: A Prophetic Discipleship Community Honoring The Black Jesus, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr.

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October 2018

Border Control

By Joyce Hollyday

To our right, the desert sunset is a dazzling blaze of gold with streaks of red behind towering saguaro cacti as my partner, Bill, our friend Becca and I drive south from Phoenix to the Arizona-Mexico border. To our left, a glowing, salmon-colored full moon rises and perches on a blue-gray mountain peak. It is August 25 and we are on our way to participate in a week of prayer and protest, communion and confrontation, organized by the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ and its partners on both sides of the border.

The breathtaking beauty of the moment is interrupted by a bank of glaring floodlights affixed to an enormous metal arch spanning the other side of the highway, behind which waits a backup of northbound traffic. The Border Patrol checkpoint is chilling, like something out of a futuristic sci-fi movie: the blinding lights, a phalanx of agents dressed in army green with weapons at the ready, a drug-sniffing dog running between cars.

People here remember when this border was porous and they crossed over freely to work, visit family members and share food. After NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) went into effect in 1994 — undercutting the livelihoods of masses of Mexicans and imposing widespread poverty — the Border Patrol ballooned from 4,000 agents to 21,000 now. A U.S. policy of “Prevention through Deterrence” took effect: Make life so brutal for migrants from Mexico and Central America that they won’t even think of coming here.

Last spring’s “Zero Tolerance” policy is a further escalation of the barbarity: indefinite detention, tricking and coercing migrants into signing voluntary deportation orders, stealing children. At this writing, 565 children still remain separated from their parents, more than 300 of whom have already been deported. ACLU attorneys have been tromping around the isolated highlands of Guatemala and other corners of Central America, desperately trying to find parents who are virtually impossible to locate.

On our first day at the border, we witness Tucson federal judge Bernardo Velasco sentence 83 migrants recently captured by the Border Patrol to detention or deportation in an hour and a half as part of “Operation Streamline.” Buses wait outside to take the Mexicans back across the border. Those from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador will be detained until there are enough of them to fill a plane. Then they will be dumped back into the same dire poverty and rampant violence they left — now targeted as individuals who tried to escape to the U.S.

We cross into Mexico on our second day and stand on a Nogales street corner by the border wall. In front of us is a large mural of José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, and above our heads are bullet holes in the wall of a small store. On the night of October 10, 2012, 16-year-old José Antonio was walking to his home four blocks away when Border Patrol agent Lonnie Swartz fired 16 bullets at him through the border fence



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and killed him, claiming later that the teenager was throwing rocks.

Our group circles for a communion service at the wall, an instrument of racist hatred and separation that has been transformed into a canvas of artistry and hope. We break bread beside rows of handprints, candles, and angel wings that have been painted on rusty slats. Above us is a quote carefully written in Spanish: “We fly without a path; we follow the wind.”

The next day we head to the site where Miguel Vasquez Lara died. As we begin our two-hour pilgrimage into the desert, our guide instructs us to drink two bottles of water as we walk and warns us to watch out for scorpions, tarantulas, rattlesnakes and the very sharp cactus needles that are everywhere. What strikes me is that we do not need to be warned about drug cartels, militia thugs, kidnappers, *coyotes* (smugglers), traffickers, thieves — or Border Patrol agents and their watchtowers, floodlights, electronic sensors, thermal reconnaissance cameras, pistols, rifles, tasers, batons, horses, dogs, drones and helicopters.

Miguel, one of 3,000 migrants who are known to have lost their lives in the Arizona desert in the last decade, was 26 when he succumbed to dehydration in May 2011. Two crosses mark the place where his body was found, part of an effort to mark every spot where a migrant has died. We place flowers and icons and sing the plaintive African-American spiritual “There Is More Love Somewhere,” as a throng of butterflies flutters around us like a hovering cloud of witnesses.

A fighter jet streaks across the sky above us. Our guide

Border Control continued on page 4

The Jesus Prayer

Adapted by Eduard Loring
in conversation with the Holy Spirit

Ho! Holy One

Who is in eternal hostility with the American Empire,
Its countless wars against the Poor and the Palestinians
May your marginalization for liberation of the bodies
and souls

For all people
Be proclaimed by the Way we live our lives.

Your Beloved Community come.

Your Way be walked.
Your Word be talked.
Your non-violent Revolution be in the streets today.

Thank you. We have everything we need.
We shall not want.

Do not assure us of pardon

Until:
We have been transformed into your
Way of Discipleship
Which is the Way of No Justice No Peace.
With Justice give us Peace and Shalom.

Until we have joined the work
of tearing down the dividing walls.

Until we have done good works
that produce the fruits of repentance.

You have, Oh Holy One, by the lies and machinations of the Republio-Libertarian Party, the Democratic Party, Wall Street, Mass Incarceration for profit prisons, SCOTUS and the fossil fuel Corporations brought us to hard testing. We are tempted to despair or join the Lords of the Flies.

Grant us Courage and Vision, we pray,
to pray for the dead and
Fight like hell for the living.

Please. Keep us safe as we struggle, march, write, support movements, go to jail, shout inside the Domination System.

For thine is the Beloved Community
of economic justice, equality and peace.
For thine is the alternative power
of the Cross of Christ and the bullet of Martin.
For thine is the Light which shines in Darkness;
and the Darkness cannot put out the Light.

Hallelujah! Amen. ✠

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How Can We Sing the Song of the Lord on Alien Soil?

By Peter Gathje

Sometimes I feel deeply estranged from the world as it is. I feel like I am living in an alien place, that I do not belong here. Sometimes I feel like we are all strangers in a strange land.

On such a day, the power of death hangs heavy in the midst of hospitality. Thaddeus Lawrence was killed last Saturday. Manna House guests shared the news with Kathleen and me at church on Sunday.

Thaddeus was a tall, slender, African American man with a loping stride that covered a lot of ground. He had been coming to Manna House for a number of years. He wrestled with mental illness, but more, he wrestled with the harshness of homelessness.

On his good days, his face would light up with a mischievous smile. On his bad days, he appeared with a very stern face, and he would say angry words, usually not to us, but to the world in general. But whether smiling or struggling, each day that Thaddeus came to Manna House to get on the list for showers or socks and hygiene, he would present his ID. We do not require ID for any services at Manna House, but he would always show his ID, point to his picture, and say his name, "Thaddeus Lawrence."

When we opened for the day, Thaddeus would come and get his coffee. Typically, he would then stand off by himself. But some days he would get very close up in my face to share some secret insight. I never could understand what he was saying. I never could follow his train of thought.

Thaddeus was killed by a hit and run driver near the intersection of Claybrook and Jefferson, one block from Manna House. He

had been attacked and thrown into the street, and that was when he was hit. Guests were very shaken by his death. Others in hearing the news reflected on the violence they know so well.

In the midst of our grief, a guest asked me for the "Word of the Day." I was moved to share Psalm 137. Originally, this psalm was about the Israelites in exile. But in Christian usage, "heaven" stands in for "Zion," and "the City of God" for "Jerusalem." I like to think of the vision of the Beloved Community as replacing Zion and Jerusalem. In the Beloved Community, we will all come together, all will be welcome, and we will all flourish together in the presence of God. So I paraphrased a bit as I shared the psalm.

By the rivers of Memphis
there we sat and wept,
remembering the
Beloved Community;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps.
For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
"Sing to us," they said,
"one of your freedom songs."
O how could we sing the song
of the Lord on alien soil?
If I forget you, City of God,
let my right hand wither!
O let my tongue cleave to the roof
of my mouth if I remember you not,
If I prize not the Beloved Community
as the first of my joys!

The words of the psalm hung in the humid morning air. For a while, no one said a



Brian Kavanaugh

word. Then a guest responded, "Slaves won't sing for their masters." "They aren't going to entertain those who are killing them," said another. "Someone might steal one of those songs, like Elvis took the Black man's music," said yet another. "That's a sad Bible reading," said one more guest. "It's bleak, but so right."

"That's how I feel this morning, knowing about Thaddeus's death," I said.

"No one deserves to go that way. Run down like a dog in the street," a guest added.

Later that morning, after I had left Manna House to go to work, I got a phone

call from a minister at a midtown church. An apparently homeless man had been found dead on their property. Could I come and see if I knew who he was? I went. I saw him lying dead. I did not know him. None of us gathered recognized him. As I walked back to my car I started to cry. Thaddeus and this unknown man, both dead. I called Kathleen and returned to Manna House. I had to grieve with her.

I thought of another phrase, "vale of tears," that comes from a translation of Psalm 84:6, which describes those strengthened by God's blessing in the midst of sorrow. Even in the valley of tears they find life-giving water. I feel the tears, but I am also feeling pretty thirsty for that life-giving water. Come Lord Jesus, come! ✠

Peter Gathje is Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Memphis Theological Seminary, and a founder of Manna House, a place of hospitality in Memphis. He wrote Sharing the Bread of Life: Hospitality and Resistance at the Open Door Community (2006) and edited A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader 1982–2002. (pgathje@memphisseminary.edu)

ODC/Needs:

- ☐ Coffee
- ☐ Granola bars
- ☐ Extra Large Socks (especially)
- ☐ Belts
- ☐ 2% milk: gallon size for coffee, pint size for children. Please send in the boxes that do not need refrigeration before opening.
- ☐ The Hardwick Prison Trip: hosts, drivers, cars and vans in Atlanta area.
- ☐ See our Amazon link on page 6.

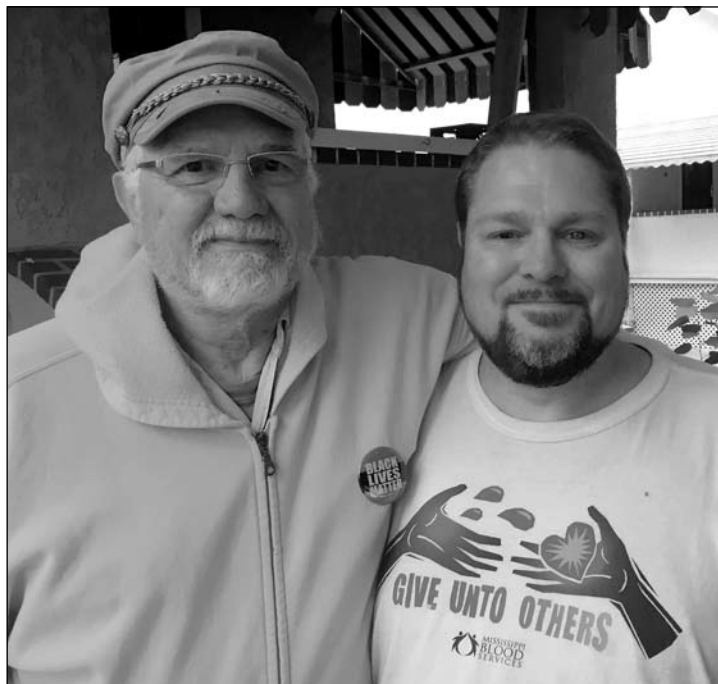
HOSPITALITY

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Eduard Loring and David Payne,
back from serving at the Welcome Table.

Bruce Bishop

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Please join us on **Facebook** for the continuing journey of the **Open Door Community in Baltimore.** Thank you. David, Eduard and Murphy.

God’s Terrible Mistake and Palestinian Suffering

By Eduard Loring

Recently, Murphy and I had the honor to speak at the Open Door Metropolitan Community Church near Germantown, Maryland. The sermon scripture for the day was very disturbing.

Exodus 6:1-13 (NRSV)

¹ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh: Indeed, by a mighty hand he will let them go; by a mighty hand he will drive them out of his land.” ² God also spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am the Lord. ³ I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name ‘The Lord’ I did not make myself known to them. ⁴ **“I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens.** ⁵ “I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶ “Say therefore to the Israelites, ‘I am the Lord, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ **I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.”** ⁹ Moses told this to the Israelites; but they would not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and their cruel slavery. ¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, ¹¹ “Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his land.” ¹² But Moses spoke to the Lord, “The Israelites have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh listen to me, poor speaker that I am?” ¹³ Thus the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them orders regarding the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, charging them to free the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

Recently six young Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers. Since the beginning of the March of Return (Nakba, or Catastrophe — a reference to the forced removal of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and villages to clear the way for Israel’s establishment in 1948), 18,000 Palestinians have been wounded. Israel, a client state for the United States of America, is becoming the beast of horror that thrust forward for the Zionist Movement established in 1897: The Nazi State 1933-1945. Different means. Same ends. Wipe out the Palestinians.

Now Yahweh, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah got it wrong. Though the poet sings, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” Yahweh made the mistake of our SCOTUS and corporations believing property to be more important than people. We whites of the White Christian colonies and Christian America made the same error when we killed and pushed Native Americans onto reservations like Gaza and then we put settlements on the American Indians’ land when we found gold, oil and grazing land. When Adolph Hitler took Sudetenland, Neville Chamberlain said to Hitler, as Yahweh said to Moses about Canaan, go ahead; take it. A turning point in the history of the Jews and the Palestinians. A turning point in my life and the life of all who care for others.

And Yahweh said, verse 4 **“I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens.**

The promise of the land of the Canaanites was unjust and only admissible because the Israelite armies by Holy War of scorched earth policy destroyed many, decimated thousands and under King Solomon built an Empire that enslaved its own citizens to build the temple which Jesus

came to tear down. For the Temple was/is the antithesis of the God revealed in the United States of America by the Black Jesus or in Israel/Palestine as the Palestinian Jesus. Today Israel should be taken to the World Court and tried for crimes against God and Humanity.

Those who read the Hebrew Scriptures with care and scholarly resources know that reiteration is a method of teaching and memory used by the human biblical writers. So, verses later, we read:

8 **“I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.”**

Such expropriation of the land of others, territorial expansion, is a root cause of war. The Zionists going into Palestine are motivated by similar perceived needs as European Christian Americans wiping out the Pequot Nation or Hitler going into Sudetenland. No wonder Thomas Merton and James Forrest say that fear is the cause of war. Hell, I’m getting the creeps just writing this article!

(Our battle against corporate takeover of land and water rights from American Indians in order to pipe dirty oil through their land is an example of God-insured Imperial expansion. We are at war with Corporate America and the taking of our lands and the lands of others for their short-term profits and our longer-term death). The Peace Movement inside Israel and inside Palestine and among the Christian Peacemaker Teams (like Open Door Community folk JoAnne Lingle and Weldon Nisly) are at war with the Evil One who has come to possess the right in Israel.

That God is on “our side” is a violent doctrine. Hebrew history is based on this doctrine. So, too, White Christian America. Murder, theft, forced conversions, land grabs, war and war and war are defended by Yahweh’s supposed gift of Canaan land to the liberated slaves. American Exceptionalism gave divine sanction to the Puritans’ destruction of people in the name of the New Israel that America was to be. If Israel’s vocation was to be a “light to all nations,” America’s was to be a “light upon a hill.” Both myths are false. Both ideologies have led to the United States of America and Israel’s need to

build nuclear arsenals to protect their lies.
Time to name it. Time to unmask it. Time to engage it.
Like Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, a model for today.

From Bob Dylan’s “With God on Our Side”

The First World War boys
It came and it went
The reason for fightin’
I never did get
But I learned to accept it
Accept it with pride
For you don’t count the dead
When God’s on your side

The Second World War
Came to an end
We forgave the Germans
And then we were friends
Though they murdered six million
In the ovens they fried
The Germans now too
Have God on their side

I’ve learned to hate the Russians
All through my whole life
If another war comes
It’s them we must fight
To hate them and fear them
To run and to hide
And accept it all bravely
With God on my side.

Next month: A new vision for the Palestinians and Israelis. ✚

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Fragments From a Fractured Beggar’s Bowl: October



Fragment One

“Flannery O’Connor put it well when she said that ‘people don’t realize how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket, when of course it is the cross. It is much harder to believe than it is not to believe.’ Blessing carries with it not the promise of a trouble-free life, but the promise of God’s active presence among the people who seek to do God’s work in the world — even in the face of the worst the world can give.”

Kimberly Long, *The Worshipping Body*, p. 64

Fragment Two The F word for trump: Fascism

You’re being too nice! Is this what it was like in Nazi Germany before WWII?

Absolutely not like Germany except for the Latino/a immigrants, African Americans, Labor Unions, Feminists, Queers and Leftists whom Trump uses as Hitler did the Communists, Jewish people and disabled during The Third Reich. No, the United States of America Fascism is different from Hitler’s and Mussolini’s. There are many fine articles coming out these days that name our state as pre-fascist. I truly believe it is. I believe that to think of Fascism in terms of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s is blinding. We have the

opposite of what Germany went through after the Treaty of Versailles. The United States of America is an Empire. We are the wealthiest nation in history. We have the most powerful military in history. We have the beginning of Brown Shirts/SS Guards with white hoodlums running on the streets and ICE and the Border Patrol acting above the law.

Some folk have written that fascism begins with separating families, which we have been doing since 1640 with Black slavery and the rise of public housing. Where do you think all these homeless people come from?

Eduard Loring

Shard

Phillip Weiss, co-editor of *Mondoweiss*, reminds us that within a few years of Jews being driven out of Europe and exterminated during WWII, they were driving Palestinians off their own land and exterminating them in Palestine. Unfortunately, this has been going on for 70 years with American support — now to the tune of \$3.8 billion a year! Of course, America has been exterminating minorities here on their own land for centuries. Pete Seeger never stopped singing his 1955 song *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, lamenting, “When will they ever learn?” Let’s sing on!

Ed Crouch

Black Jesus and Freedom to the Prisoners

By Nibs Stroupe

When we moved from Norfolk to Nashville late in 1980, I began working for the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons (SCJP), whose purpose it was to work on prison reform. I also wanted to transfer my ministerial membership from Norfolk Presbytery to Middle Tennessee Presbytery. Middle Tennessee Presbytery was deeply divided at that time, much like the country is now, with only a few votes making a difference in each important issue. This was also prior to reunion with the former UPCUSA (1983), so I expected and got an extensive grilling on the floor of the Presbytery meeting. One of the opponents to my being received into the Presbytery read a quote at the meeting from the brochures of the SCJP to the effect that our ultimate goal was the abolition of prisons in the U.S.

He asked me if SCJP really believed that prisons should be abolished, and if I believed it. I wanted to keep my answer simple and persuasive at the same time, so I said that it was biblical, that Jesus had said in his first sermon in Luke 4 that he had come to free the prisoners. So, yes, I believed in the Bible, and I believed that Jesus was being literal when he said that he had come to free the prisoners. There was a fair amount of murmuring in response, but I did squeak into the Presbytery by a few votes.

Would I abolish prisons if I could? Absolutely.

I was reminded of that episode this summer when a multiracial (African/Hispanic) friend of mine wrote me to ask about the mass incarceration rate in the U.S. Specifically, he was wondering about Jesus and prisons. He had noticed that Jesus talked a lot about prisoners, and he remembered Jesus' sermon from Luke 4 about bringing liberty to the captives. In that first sermon of Black Jesus that the Gospel of Luke records, Jesus comes back to his home synagogue in Nazareth. (Luke 4:16+) The lectionary reading for that day is from the beginning of Isaiah 61. Black Jesus reads that Scripture lesson and then preaches on it. He indicates that the divine energy in Isaiah to bring liberation is now being incarnated in him and in his ministry. One area of liberation that he proclaims is release to the prisoners. Jesus is so strong on liberation to the captives that the congregation tries to lynch him by the end of his sermon. If you are a Biblical scholar, this is evidence that Black Jesus must have been preaching in a white, Southern church, as lynching has been our response of choice to liberating words for several centuries.

My friend was noting that most people believe that the purpose of prisons is a response to crime. "Did Jesus want to abolish prisons?" He was wondering why Jesus and the Bible itself looked at prisons and the judicial system in such a different way, ending with the comment, "They seemed to have no trust in the judicial system." He also wondered why the church was not stronger on either the charity or justice areas of prison ministry.

My response was that we must remember that Black Jesus was an oppressed and marginalized person, born into imperial Rome. He had no rights as a citizen and from Rome's point of view, he was merely a commodity to be used by Rome. As I have written in this *Hospitality* series, Jesus is Black, not because of the color of his skin or even his racial classification, but because of his socio-economic status at the margins of Roman society. It is no accident that the historian of the four Gospel writers, Luke, places the birth of Jesus squarely in the shadow of the Roman Empire. He begins the birth story of Black Jesus in this way in chapter 2: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered." Black Jesus would understand

that the Roman prisons did not exist as a response to crime but as a tool of social control. Jesus' view of prisons was similar to the views of those people held as slaves: They would have no trust in the judicial systems of the masters.

It is in this context that we must reflect on the imprisonment of the children of immigrants, separating them from their families no matter what their age. Even the proponents of this horrid doctrine defend it not as a response to crime but as a deterrent to certain behaviors. Multiply this by a thousand times and you will get a sense of the mass incarceration of millions of African Americans and Hispanic Americans. Pris-



Brian Kavanaugh

ons are not a response to crime in the United States; if they were, there would be many more people classified as "white" held in our jails and prisons. If they were, there would be many fewer people of color held in our jails and prisons.

I grew up with Jesus as a white, middle-class man in neo-slavery, and because of that context, it was easy for my forbears to take a passage like Isaiah 61:1-4 and spiritualize it and individualize it. They made it into a passage about becoming free from sin and getting into heaven when I died, and I believed that teaching. The church did no prison ministry except to make sure that individual souls accepted "white"

Jesus and thus would get into heaven. If church members went to jails and prisons at all, it was only to win the souls for Jesus of those held captive. This is still the case in American society.

Seeing the Black Jesus, however, has helped me understand that the Bible and Jesus did not mean for this idea of liberation to be spiritualized. They meant for Roman (and Babylonian and Egyptian and American) prisons to be emptied of their brothers and sisters so that justice could be done. Throughout our history as a nation, we who are classified as "white" have used the law enforcement and criminal injustice and prison systems to seek to control people of color. Mass incarceration (see Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* and Ta-Nehisi Coates' "The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration" in *The Atlantic*) has been our response to the Civil Rights movement. Because of the depth of our racism and our fear of Black Jesus, we now incarcerate more of our population than any other nation. This is nothing new for us — it has been our pattern throughout our national history. As I write this, there are strikes by prisoners all over the country, and I am hoping that they send us, especially the congregations who claim to have God as their center, into a powerful time of correcting our "corrections and prison" systems.

Would I abolish prisons if I could? Absolutely. What would I put in their place? A system where those who have been oppressed and marginalized could be brought into the center of life and society, a system involving recognition and repentance and reparations and recovery. Would there be any prisons left? Yes, likely, for those rich and others whose core beliefs seem to involve robbing and hurting others; but even the goal for them would be rehabilitation and redemption. To quote the Apostle Paul from the beginning of the 5th chapter of his famous letter to the Galatians: "Freedom is what we have. Christ Jesus has set us free — stand then as free people, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again." As long as we have mass imprisonment, we will have slaves, and all of us will be slaves. ✠

Nibs Stroupe is a longtime friend of The Open Door, retired pastor and author of the recently published Deeper Waters: Sermons for a New Vision. He also writes a weekly blog at www.nibsnotes.blogspot.com. (nibs.stroupe@gmail.com)

Border Control *continued from page 1*

explains that a bombing range is nearby. Sometimes migrants mistake the targets for shelters and walk toward them through land littered with live mines and bombs. We offer prayers. Someone voices an indigenous proverb: "They tried to bury us; but they didn't know that we are seeds."

The air temperature rises above 100 degrees. On the walk back under a blazing sun, I count it a miracle that anyone at all survives the suffocating heat and crushing harshness of this alien landscape. I place an angel crocheted by my friend Wiley, a resident of Georgia's death row for more than 40 years, on a mesquite shrub along a migrant path and hope that someone who needs some encouragement to carry on will find it.

Three hundred volunteers calling themselves the Green Valley-Sahuarita Samaritans regularly conduct compassionate searches and place large drums of drinking water throughout this desolate wilderness. Increasingly, U.S. Border Patrol agents and members of militia and hate groups slash the drums or shoot them full of holes. Mike Wilson of the native Tohono O'odham people tells us that the Border Patrol is an "occupying army" of his tribal land, which spans both

sides of the border. "The militarization of Indian country is a prototype of a military state," he says. "What's happening to us will happen to you."

We spread out in front of the Nogales Border Patrol Station, the largest gate on the Arizona side of the border. We hold signs of protest as we chant, pray, sing and read a litany of names of migrants who have recently died in the Arizona desert. Border Patrol agents spread out across the street. One systematically takes pictures of us. Rev. Traci Blackmon of the United Church of Christ justice ministries national staff shouts through the bullhorn: "Many have come out to document our presence. . . . Many have recorded our pictures. I'm sure that many of us will be matched with our names. Oh, if only so much attention could have been given to the children who are now left here without their parents." ✠

Joyce Hollyday is an author and pastor serving undocumented immigrant women in the mountains of western North Carolina. She has been a friend of the Open Door for four decades. Her blog can be found at www.joycehollyday.com.

Uprising

By Murphy Davis

On August 21, prisoners in lock-ups in 17 states carried out a well-coordinated strike that included work stoppages, hunger strikes, sit-ins, prison commissary boycotts and other forms of resistance. August 21 is the anniversary of the 1971 assassination of prominent Black Panther, writer and prisoner rights activist George Jackson. The strike lasted until September 9 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the rebellion at the Attica maximum security prison in New York. This act of solidarity was planned for many months and was initiated primarily by two groups: Jailhouse Lawyers Speak and The Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee. Their planning, aided by groups on the outside, included a list of 10 demands that were at the center of their resistance.

National Demands

1. Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policies that recognize . . . the humanity of imprisoned men and women.
2. An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.
3. The Prison Litigation Reform Act must be rescinded, allowing imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.
4. The Truth in Sentencing Act and the Sentencing Reform Act must be rescinded so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No human shall be sentenced to Death by Incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.
5. An immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing, and parole denials of Black and brown humans. Black humans shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in southern states.
6. An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting Black and brown humans.
7. No imprisoned human shall be denied access to rehabilitation programs at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.
8. State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more rehabilitation services.
9. Pell grants must be reinstated in all U.S. states and territories.
10. The voting rights of all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees, and so-called “ex-felons” must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count.

These demands were along with other demands specific to various states or regions. But all demands centered around challenging the exploitation of prison labor and the lack of livable conditions, basic health care and educational programs. To make a phone call to speak with their children, parents or friends, prisoners and their families are charged the highest allowable rates, which results not in sustaining closer community ties for those locked up, but millions of dollars of profit for scurrilous corporations like Global Tel-Link or Securus.

The average pay for prisoner labor in state prisons is 20 cents an hour, according to the Marshall Project. And of course in some states like Georgia, pay for labor in prisons is 0. That is not a typo: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, South Carolina and Texas are the states of the Old Confederacy committed to zero pay for penal slave labor. In a system where prisoners are charged for disciplinary write-ups, a trip to the infirmary for an emergency or for a couple of Tylenols

or a cup of coffee, a stamp, or an extra roll of toilet paper from the prison commissary, these states pay prisoners *nothing* for their labor. While prisoners labor with little or no compensation, Corporate America has cashed in on human bondage to the tune of billions of dollars: from CoreCivic and the GEO Corporation, who build and operate prisons, to the corporate entities that profit from health care, food service, transportation and on and on. . . .

When prisoners demand an end to prison slavery, it is a literal slavery of which they speak. When Congress drafted the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, there was a pitched battle over the wording. Abolitionists wanted the text to be “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude” PERIOD.

The allies of the southern elite prevailed and inserted the clause “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” In so doing, the United States of America banned chattel slavery but instituted penal slavery. Because of this, the Southern elite were able to continue to profit from slavery with the cruel institution of the convict lease. But even the abolition of the lease continued to allow the powers to use prisoners as a slave labor force. Today, prisoners run the prisons by doing all the manual labor (kitchen work, cleaning and waxing floors, carpentry, electrical and plumbing work, auto mechanics, office work, etc.) Additionally, private corporations (Victoria’s Secret, Starbucks and many others) use prison labor to do their work for a fraction of what they would have to pay “free world” laborers.

I must add that during the strike I heard one of the support activists say, “We must abolish the 13th Amendment,” and I offer a correction: We *need* the 13th Amendment so that the Constitution abolishes slavery, but we need to complete the job and abolish the *except clause of the 13th Amendment*.

The timing of the prison strike was moved from an earlier plan to strike in 2019. Organizers saw the need to go ahead this year when there was an outbreak of serious prison violence. Six months ago a fight broke out among rival gangs in the 1,600-man Lee Correctional Institution, a prison in South Carolina, that left seven men dead and another 17 seriously injured. According to prison officials, the violent conflict between rival gangs was over “territory, contraband and cellphones.” This was on the heels of a specific decision made by staff to house rival gangs in the same cellblock. The fight on April 15 went on for seven hours, but no guard or staff entered any of the three housing units for more than four hours. Some of those who died simply bled out; they could have been saved, but when no one stopped the bleeding, they died. The first aid which was administered was offered by other prisoners.

As these things go, pressure had been building for many weeks and months. The prison was known for violence, filth, short staffing, barely edible food and lack of programming for education and job training. Prison policy had been increasingly punitive. Prisoner needs were not addressed.

Following the rebellion at Lee, the organizing prisoners decided to go ahead and use what little power they have: their own bodies. Many stopped working; others stopped eating; they spoke to anyone who would listen; and they enlisted family and friends for support and communication. They knew, of course, that they would suffer reprisals. The prisons would single out the “ringleaders” and see that they were punished. The bureaucrats would separate any prisoners known to be working together and keep them from communicating with each other. They would take what cell phones they could confiscate (most cell phones come in with guards, and prisoners pay as much as \$1,700 for a phone). But knowing that they would face punishment and additional restrictions, they stood up and stood together anyway.

The strike this time did receive notice in the mainline media, and the Independent media has gotten the word out where possible. Such a strike is “successful” when it awakens others to the need and educates those of us *not* imprisoned about the conditions at the heart of the struggle.

Every person in prison, whether rightly or wrongly, has been convicted of a crime; but most of those crimes do not involve hurting or harming another person. Most convictions are for property or drug crimes. But even those convicted of violent crimes do not leave their humanity at the door, nor do they cease to be citizens of the United States protected by our Constitution. And most of them will come out of prison again. The question must be taken seriously: What does it do for the

When prisoners demand an end to prison slavery, it is a literal slavery of which they speak.



Robert McGovern

safety and well-being of all of us to subject people to months and years of isolation, dehumanizing treatment and lack of opportunities and then expect them to be good citizens when they return to their communities?

The men and women who engaged in this strike have used enormous discipline and the principles of nonviolent direct action. They have done so at the risk of their own safety and futures. We would all do well to listen to what they are saying to us and support their cries. Langston Hughes’ poem comes to mind:

What happens to a dream deferred?

*Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode? ♦*

Murphy Davis is an Activist Pastor and writer with the Open Door Community in Baltimore. (murphydavis@bellsouth.net)

Mr. Trump: Spare Your Country: RESIGN!

By Ronald E. Santoni

How can a human being spew so much venom, speak so many untruths, violate daily so many precepts of morality, civility and common decency, yet continue to boast of his grandiose abilities? How can a boisterous president, while consistently assassinating truth, be so empty of self-awareness that he has the gall to call the most meticulously researched coverage by the world's most distinguished news outlets "fake news"? Do he or his propagandists not understand this as a technique readily employed by fascist dictators (e.g. Franco, Hitler and Kim Jong-un)?

How can an official leader of a nation, who professes to be head of the free world, be so jealous of his gracious and gifted predecessor that he would attempt to make the diminishing of the nation's first Black president a persistent project of his own erratic, racist and autocratic presidency?

These alone are enough to disqualify Trump as president of an historical democracy. But the list goes on and on. How can the president be so bereft of human compassion that, failing to comprehend the binding love between children and their mothers, he would initiate a frightening policy of separating these grieving souls at border crossings? Moreover, how can a person claiming to be a devout Christian commit repeated adultery and objectification of women, not

to mention his devious business manipulations? (Trump's "fixer" has confessed in court that the president conspired with him to pay multiple thousands of dollars to stop disclosures of two extra-marital affairs.) Finally, how can a U.S. president justify appointing to his cabinet distinctly unqualified political "twins" whose modus operandi is to destroy the concerns for which the offices were created to protect? If this isn't sickness, vengeance and a nasty, vitriolic use of presidential power — what is?

The answers to these questions are *not* far from obvious. The U.S. president is, as many have contended, a lover of himself and a lover of power; an extreme narcissist who has an insatiable will to control everybody and everything. He exercises his power to promote himself at the expense of national and world order. Psychology teaches us that narcissists respond to criticism with violence. The president is a psychological, social and intellectual misfit whose outbursts of craven untruths and emotions, as well as almost daily self-contradictions, make most thoughtful people cringe. He is a man who clearly views money and sex as ultimate concerns, (his "gods" — Tillich), and the presidency as a means for accumulating more of both. His daily preoccupations include watching Fox TV and endlessly tweeting self-defenses against well-established claims that he conspired with Russians and that he attempted to cover up his payments for couplings with

porn stars. Who should be locked up?

This is the "flamboyant" U.S. president! So, who supports this misfit in the White House? First, the cowardly self-serving Republicans who prefer Trump's support above honesty; second, a frightening number of businesspersons who shockingly make an untenable separation between "business ethics" and moral values; and finally, the unfortunate millions of Fox mis- or uninformed disciples, who, not given a fair chance in this "democratic" America, are fed the lie that they will fare better with the pittance legislation and medical program a Trump America will provide. These hard-working Americans have justifiable complaints, but have accepted a woefully self-defeating solution. They will soon learn.

For the good of the United States and the world, and for his own, too, the president needs to resign quickly. He is an insult to the office and makes a mockery of the principles of the founding fathers. We must resist Fascism. ♦

Ronald E. Santoni is Maria Theresa Barney Professor and Chair Emeritus of Philosophy at Denison University. Among his books and numerous articles are Bad Faith, Good Faith, and Authenticity, and Sartre on Violence—Curiously Ambivalent.

Upon Watching Some of McCain Funeral poetry corner

My country, 'tis of thee,
land of hypocrisy,
of thee I sing.

Land of a genocide,
racism, homicide,
look on the darker side
of thee I sing.

Yr boosterism never fades,
land of the war parades,
of thee I sing.

Don't mention sex at all,
speak real truth not at all,

A sullen mob convenes,
lynchings....trump gatherings....
of thee I sing.

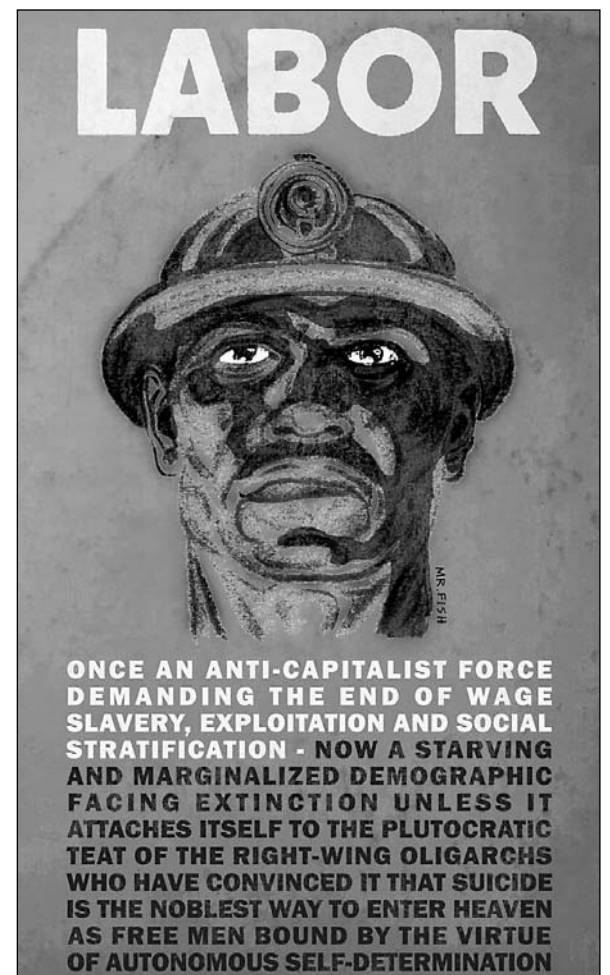
We can do better!!!!

— Dave Eberhardt

David Eberhardt works for free-range, non-violent, sand-in-gears, in-your-face, civilly disobedient, disruptive, activist, heritage resistance. He is a Dorothy Day leftist. Eberhardt was a member of the Baltimore 4, who poured blood on draft files to protest the Vietnam War in 1967. He served 21 months in Lewisburg federal prison for the protest. He and Fr. Phil Berrigan were cellmates there. He is the author of three books.



Julie Lonneman



VOTE!!

For whom shall we vote???

Read Psalm 72.

**Which candidate will
provide for the poor?**



Thank you

to our amazing friends and supporters. We have a growing collection of items that will sustain The Welcome Table ministry this fall. We are excited to continue to share soup, coffee, fruit and granola bars, and to add socks, gloves, shirts and blankets to the list of items to distribute!

We are so blessed to be able to share this abundance with our friends in Sandtown!!

If you'd like to help us gather materials, please see our Amazon wish-list: <http://www.amazon.com/registry/wishlist/1Q9TWJ0HZPJAX>.

Voices and Views from Palestine

By Weldon Nisly

“Welcome to Um al-Khair!” Tareq greeted us with a smile when we arrived. “God brought you here. Thank you for coming to be with us,” were Tareq’s parting words to the Christian Peacemaker Teams Palestine delegation. We visited Um al-Khair in the South Hebron Hills on August 19.

Tareq passionately and patiently shared stories of his Bedouin community with our delegation. Um al-Khair purchased this land decades ago for the price of 100 camels. It is home for 30 families and 150 members of all ages. Their life is communal and their livelihood is dependent on sheep and goats, raising some of their own food and baking their own delicious, hearty flat bread. But it is not a life without struggle.

Adjacent to Um al-Khair is Karmel, a large, ever-growing Israeli settler community. Settlers have encroached on Um al-Khair land with razor wire, cutting off sheep trails, as well as violently attacking Um al-Khair members and encouraging home and bread-baking oven demolition. Some years ago they attacked Tareq’s older brother, beating him so badly he suffered permanent severe brain damage. Night-time rock throwing by a settler a year ago traumatized Um al-Khair families for almost three months. A few days ago, settlers and soldiers interfered with an Um al-Khair building project. The litany of one-sided violence is endless and heart-breaking.



Um al-Khair is one of CPT’s partners in the South Hebron Hills, along with the nearby villages of Susiya and At-Tuwani. All live with the continual threat of home demolition, personal attack and threats against children. In his mid-20s, Tareq is a spokesperson for his community. He is an English major at the University of Hebron and hopes to teach English to Palestinians someday. His community responsibilities and threats from Karmel make it difficult to study, even though graduation is only a few months away. He explained matter-of-factly, “Now I am talking with you. In 30 minutes I could be arrested. This is our life.”

Nevertheless, Tareq’s welcome is genuine and Um al-Khair’s hospitality is generous. I wonder if he ever tires of sharing their stories and struggles with strangers or distrusts delegation visits? Yet he is graciously welcoming and genuinely grateful that we have brought another CPT delegation to his family village. “Go home and tell our story to your people

so they will know about us,” he encouraged the delegation.

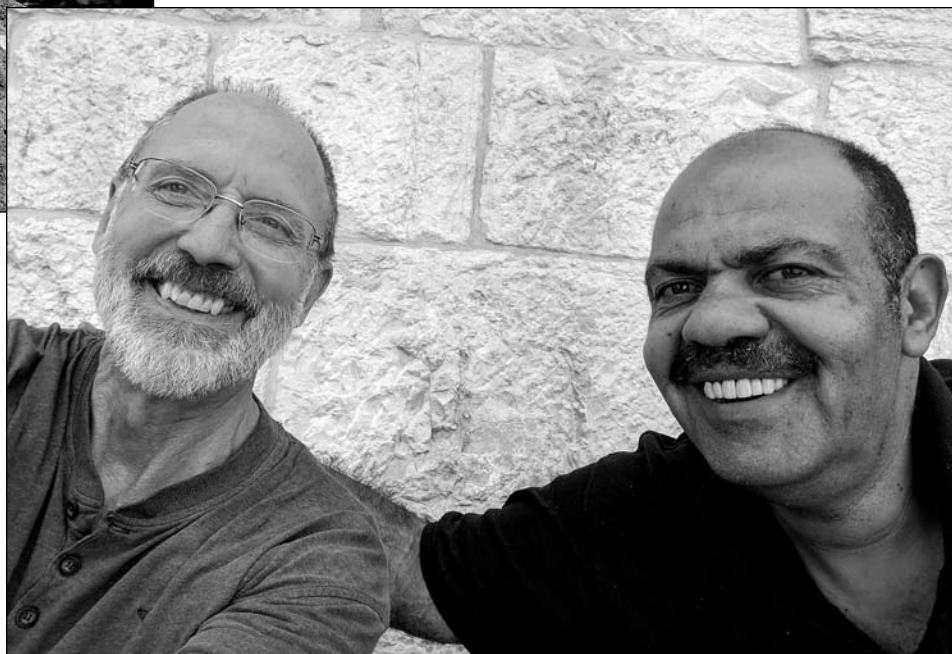
So we do. Our CPT commitment for “Building partnerships to transform violence and oppression” is a commitment to solidarity and accompaniment with Tareq and Um al-Khair as our partner in the South Hebron Hills. It is a relationship of friendship for me and our CPT Palestine team. Amplifying their voices and offering their views to the world is our desire and responsibility.

I have unexpectedly returned to the CPT Palestine team. Over the past few weeks, four CPTers were denied entry to Israel when they tried to return to the team. CPT issued an urgent call to all trained CPTers with this immediate need for team members. Marg and I heard this call and pondered whether I should go. It seemed impossible to go and impos-

sible to refuse to go. Yet “nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1) Our discernment clarified the decision. Ten days later I was on the way to Hebron. I have been here ten days already and will serve on this team until I return to the CPT Iraqi Kurdistan team from September 20 to October 30. Inshallah — God willing.

The situation is intense, as always in occupied Palestine. Palestinians are resilient and resourceful people, and an inspiration to us. I have been welcomed back by many Palestinian friends and partners.

After eight very full days of team work, I had two days off and visited Old City Bethlehem, about 40 minutes from Hebron. Walking the Old City stirred many thoughts within me. Here, Jesus was born and several thousand years of the biblical story was lived. Here, Christians from all over the world come on pilgrimage. Here, Palestinians live as they have for ages, running small shops selling products for everyday life and souvenirs for tourists. Here, I wander and wonder: What was it like for Jesus? Why is it as hard to hear and heed Jesus today as it was two millennia ago?



Top left: Tariq showing CPT delegation where Um al-Khair community’s sheep and goat paths have been blocked by Karmel settlers (seen in upper right).

Above: Weldon with friend Sami, the premier tea and coffee maker in Old City Bethlehem.

One specific desire for me upon return to Bethlehem was to visit my Palestinian friend Sami Khamis. A year ago, a teammate and I met Sami by accident — or rather by the Spirit — when we asked him for directions to a world-famous icon studio. Every time I return to Bethlehem I stop to see Sami at his back-alley tiny tea and coffee shop. I walked the crowded narrow ancient stone streets near Manger Square toward Sami’s shop. Suddenly, there he was, shouting his welcome with a hug, while carrying a tray of tea cups to deliver to waiting tea drinkers. Soon I was sipping his savory coffee in the alley outside his shop. My final stop in Old City Bethlehem before returning to Hebron was to sip Sami’s famous tea. He grew up helping his father run this tea shop. We shared family stories — he has five children, I have

I wander and wonder: What was it like for Jesus? Why is it as hard to hear and heed Jesus today as it was two millennia ago?

four grandchildren nearly the same age — and lamented the occupation of Palestine and oppression of Palestinians. Sami’s welcome and wisdom rings in my heart: God created us to care for each other and creation, not for some people to dominate others and destroy creation.

Please follow the CPT Palestine team on the www.cpt.org or www.cptpalestine.com/ websites and on Facebook and Twitter for updates on what is happening here in this “holy land” filled with history and hope, sorrow and struggle.

Let me share a few requests and an invitation.

I welcome hearing from you. Email me at nishyweldon@gmail.com. If I don’t reply it is not because I don’t cherish your communication, it is because life is full here on the team.

I send *Voices & Views* messages as bcc so your email addresses are not revealed to each other.

Please feel free to share this message with your family, friends and faith communities.

I and the CPT Palestine team welcome your support and prayers. Even more than prayers for us, please pray for all Palestinians and for our partners and friends here in occupied Palestine.

Love and peace to all who listen to the Voices & Views of our Palestinian friends! ✠

After 40 years of Mennonite Church ministry that included community, pastoral and peace ministries, Weldon Nisly currently devotes himself in “retirement” to Contemplative Just-Peace building and work with Christian Peacemaker Teams. He is a Benedictine Oblate. His life is devoted to the abolition of war. (nishyweldon@gmail.com)

Photographs by Weldon Nisly

In, Out & Around ODC/Baltimore

The Welcome Table

The table was spread at the Welcome Table at Upton Underground Railroad Station in September.

Right: **David Payne, Erica Prettyman, Michaela Murphy Buc** and **Ed Loring** are ready to serve.

Far right: **Nurse Kate**, a former Catholic Worker, who is now a Monday Volunteer at our Table.



Hannah Murphy Buc



David Payne

Visiting in Baltimore

Left: Our wonderful friend **Bruce Bishop** came and spent a week with us. He made our beautiful Open Door sign and over the years made wonderful pottery for us: the soup bowls we used at 910 and the Eucharistic tableware we still use in Baltimore.



Eduard Loring

A Visit to the Pacific Northwest!

In September Murphy and Ed traveled to Vancouver, Washington to visit Open Door Partners Dick and Gladys Rustay. Dick and Gladys have been volunteering each week at the Friends of the Carpenter. Twenty years ago, Duane Sich came to spend part of his summer at the Open Door Community in Atlanta. He had just retired as one of the pastors of First Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, and his plan, with his wife, Julie, was to start a ministry with homeless folks working with carpentry. He soaked up the practice of hospitality among the poor and went home to get started. Today, the Friends of the Carpenter ministry is situated in a large warehouse where, with wonderful equipment, homeless men and women work together with volunteers to craft beautiful woodwork. The fruit of their labors provides for skills and some income for those who need it, and for support of the ministry. It was such a joy to be able to visit the Friends, meet the volunteers and staff, and to enjoy their well-practiced hospitality and tour their beautiful facility. *Above, left to right:* At the Friends with **Gladys and Dick Rustay, Julie and Duane Sich** and **Ed Loring and Murphy Davis**. On the way to see Dick and Gladys, Murphy and Ed stopped in Seattle to visit friends Gail and Ed Crouch. *Right, left to right:* On one grand evening they gathered with the Crouches and other dear Seattle friends: **Wes Howard-Brook, Gail and Ed Crouch, Murphy, Sue Ferguson-Johnson, Margaret Nisley, and Ed**.

