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

Vol. 31, No. 3

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

March 2012

What Does the Lord Need? A Charge for Palm Sunday



Ade Bethune

By Chauncey Newsome

Chauncey Newsome became a good friend to our community when he served as Associate Pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church. He has worked in the office of the Georgia Secretary of State and teaches in the Clark Atlanta University School of Business. He preached this sermon at Open Door worship on Palm Sunday 2011.

And it came to pass, when [Jesus] drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that he sent two of His disciples, saying, “Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you loosing it?’ thus you shall say to him, ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’”

So those who were sent went their way and found it just as he had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, “Why are you loosing the colt?” And they said, “The Lord has need of him.” Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as he went, many spread their clothes on the road.

— Luke 19:29-36

Passion Week, also known as Holy Week, is the time from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. Also part of Passion Week are Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Passion Week is so named because of the passion with which Jesus willingly went to the cross. This is described in Matthew 21-27, Mark 11-15, Luke 19-23 and John 12-19. Passion Week begins with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a colt, as prophesied in Zechariah 9:9.

Today's text is a familiar one. It is the Palm Sunday nar-

ative: Jesus' triumphant ride and the church's encounter with the community. This text arrests our spirits and captivates our minds. It excites us because, at least on the surface, it seems that Jesus Christ is finally getting the respect that is due him. This text motivates us because all four Gospel writers paint a portrait of religion with substance, a church with a mission, a theology of the 'hood, and a people with an attitude of gratitude.

This text gives us an opportunity to see Jesus in action, riding amongst the people who declare him the Messiah. He does not come in a high, lofty fashion, hidden behind creeds, codes, purification rituals and traditions. No, he brings a tangible religion, a streetwise ministry, offering relationship in a broken and scarred world.

But my brothers and sisters, this is more than a historical account of an event. It's not just Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt. This narrative is in all four Gospels because the Gospel writers deemed it important, not merely as a historical record but as a foreshadowing of things to come. The Gospel writers allow us to eavesdrop on an intimate conversation among the Christ, the church and the community. Come with me now and let us paint the narrative of this text.

What in the world could the Lord have need of? People with a trusting heart, the love of Christ, unyielding faith and a mind to work.

What does the Lord have need of? Every time I read this text, I am baffled at the fact that God exposes God-self and becomes vulnerable enough to admit to us that God has needs. Do you get that? The Creator is telling the created thing that the Creator has needs.

What Does the Lord Need? *continued on page 8*

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Cross: Part 3

By Jim Douglass

Jim Douglass is a longtime activist for peace and justice and a friend of the Open Door Community. He and his wife, Shelley, founded the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action and the Pacific Life Community, both in Washington state, and Mary's House, a Catholic Worker house in Birmingham. In 1997, they received the *Pacem in Terris* Peace and Freedom Award.

Jim's books include "Resistance and Contemplation," "The Nonviolent Coming of God" and "JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters," which we have reviewed twice in Hospitality, in September 2008 and again in November-December 2009.

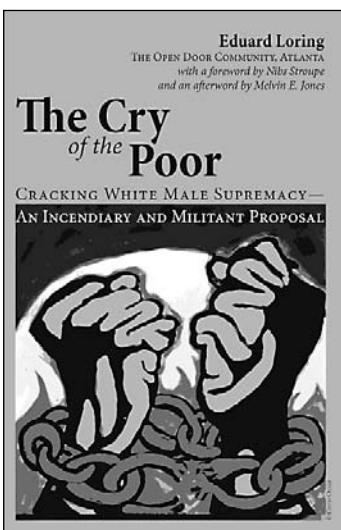
Jim delivered this reflection at the Holy Week Faith and Resistance Retreat in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 2007 — the 39th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and the 40th anniversary of his momentous "Beyond Vietnam" speech in New York City. The reflection originally appeared online at www.jonahhouse.org/archive/DouglassKingandCross.htm. This is the third of three parts.

Investigating the assassination of Martin Luther King over the past decade has been a pilgrimage into martyrdom. From that journey I have learned, first of all, how naive I was about systemic evil. While there is nothing new about prophets being murdered by the system, I had not been aware of how well our system carries out such murders, and why.

I said murders — plural. I discovered that Martin's assassination was intertwined with that of Malcolm X, who was also set up and murdered by our national security state. In his case, U.S. intelligence agencies manipulated Nation of Islam intermediaries for Malcolm's execution on February 21, 1965, at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan.

Two and one half weeks before his assassination, Malcolm was in Selma, Alabama, hoping to meet with Martin. The paths of the two prophets were converging. After leaving the Nation of Islam the year before, Malcolm had embraced a universal vision of peace at Mecca. He had also spent four months in Africa meeting with the heads of its newly liberated states to organize a human rights campaign to put the United States on trial in the United Nations for its racist policies toward its own black citizens. By moving from civil rights to human rights, Malcolm was a step ahead of Martin, who was watching his work closely. But they were unable to meet in Selma, because Martin had been arrested and jailed, and Malcolm had to leave for speaking in Europe before a jail visit

Martin Luther King Jr. *continued on page 9*



The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy —
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

By Eduard Loring

Open Door Community Press
99 pages
paperback
\$10.00 suggested donation

The genius of Loring's book is that it demonstrates the destructive lusts of greed and power that rage like a wildfire burning out of control, destroying everything in their path. Loring is crying for change — from the new world order to a new, inclusive social order with equality and justice for all.

— Marcus Wellons, #314289,
Georgia death row

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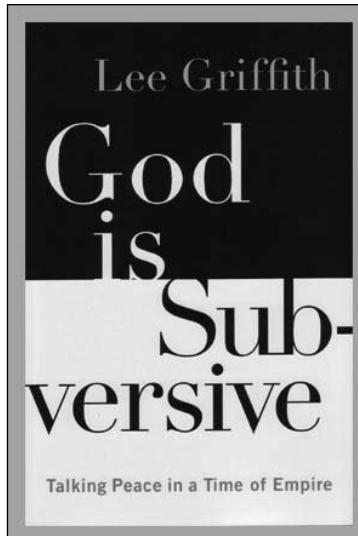
Nonviolence as a Way of Life

"God Is Subversive: Talking Peace in a Time of Empire"

By Lee Griffith
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
179 pages

Reviewed by Jason Ebinger

In "God Is Subversive: Talking Peace in a Time of Empire," a compilation of seven lectures given to students at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania in 2007, Lee Griffith covers an expansive spectrum of injustices and their relation to war and violence, all through the lens of a nonviolent God who chooses the side of the oppressed and the disinherited. He offers a poignant exposé of the American Empire. He draws attention to the ill effects of pervasive American hubris and blind nationalism. And he penetrates and debunks the myths of divine providence as justification for unbridled militarism and conquest, through military occupation and economic sanctions, securing of "freedom" through mass imprisonment, and war as a means to peace.



name of justice.

The author takes his analysis of our rampant militarism past the numerical and factual, into the less measurable qualitative effects on a nation with such a proclivity toward violence. For example, he writes that in a recent two-year period, while the overall crime rate fell, violent crimes such as assault, rape and murder increased. He cites a 1984

We have been told day after day, year after year, war after war, that violence is the only sufficient response to conflict, and not only that, we have been told that the violence is working.

Griffith, a longtime social activist who has been arrested many times, repeatedly urges the reader away from a utilitarian approach to the dilemmas of our world toward a more personal one. "Nonviolence differs from violence in its very basic insistence that people may never be used as a means to an end," he explains. We cannot kill Pakistanis and Somalis with drones in the name of peace. We cannot imprison and enslave at the highest rate in human history in the name of freedom. We cannot kill Troy Davis in the

study by Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, titled "Violence and Crime in a Cross-National Perspective," as evidence that there are "increased domestic murder rates during times of war." And he adds that, "While the pattern applied across the board for nations at war, the countries with the largest increases in domestic murder rates were those that were winning their wars." This suggests that war cannot be waged on an isolated front of society; where there is war, it is bound to reflect a larger ethos of violence in a culture.

Many of us have grown up in a world where, as Griffith puts it, "there has never been a day without war or preparation for war," and "the dominant culture persistently intrudes with proselytizing messages about the necessity, efficacy and virtue of violence." What are we supposed to think? We have been told day after day, year after year, war after war, that violence is the only sufficient response to conflict, and not only that, we have been told that the violence is working. We have been told that we are winning. We have been taught to pull the trigger for justice. But are we pulling the trigger or is the trigger pulling us?

Inseparable from Griffith's message is an urgent call to action, a call to engage the forces of oppression and domination that we encounter in our daily lives in a spirit of loving nonviolence. "Do not fear becoming a malcontent," he urges. "Fear becoming complacent."

But this call to stand against the culture of violence does not come without a warning. In an answer to a student question, he argues once again for unflinching nonviolence from

a standpoint of faith rather than of utility as he reminds us that "nonviolence can get you killed."

This call to nonviolence is not a silent call or a call that we live by only in times of civil disobedience or political action. Rather, this call is "a way of life ... and a path of discipleship." ♦

Jason Ebinger is a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community. For more about Jason, see page 11.

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.

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Calvin Kimbrough
Footwashing at Dayspring Farm, February 2012.

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Subscriptions or change of address: Anne Wheeler

Open Door Community

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Lorna Mauney-Brudek: Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic Coordinator
Eduard Loring: Street Theologian
Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough: Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators
Sarah Humphrey: Coordinator for Administration, Volunteers, Hardwick Prison Trip and Resident Volunteer Applications
Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry

In Memory of “Just Another Brother”

In January, Open Door Community Partners Eduard Loring and Murphy Davis spoke at the funeral service for Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta, longtime pan-Africanist theologian and activist, Professor Emeritus of Church and Society at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, and a longtime friend of and inspiration to the Open Door. The funeral for T’Ofori-Atta, affectionately known to many as “Dr. T,” was held at the Berean Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Atlanta. Following are the texts of Murphy’s and Ed’s remarks.

A Gift of Radiant Humility

By Murphy Davis

Many blessed years ago we met Dr. George Thomas. We were swept immediately into his gracious and welcoming friendship. Not long after we met, our friend walked through the valley in the death of the beloved Ferrel Thomas, partner and mother of his older children. He grieved deeply.

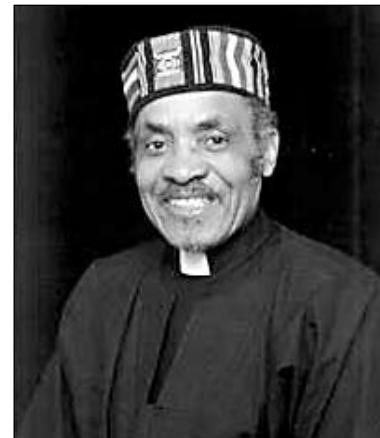
But ever more deeply did his paths lead him into the mystery and the suffering and the holiness of Africa, and all its people on the continent and in diaspora.

He told Jesus, as the old song says, that “it would be all right if you changed my name.” So he took the Swahili name Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta — “Just Another Brother.”

What was he saying to us? There is a humility in the choice of this name that we dare not ignore. But what place have I to speak of the humility of this beloved African-American elder?

This teacher — always teaching — gave us many gifts. His gift of a radiant humility was not servile in the way we often think of humility, but rather a strong solidarity with the humiliated. The word *humility* comes from the word *humus* — the deep earth. Humility is humiliation. T’Ofori-Atta’s humility was a deep, strong, intentional *solidarity* with those who are humiliated, demanding justice for the oppressed and imprisoned, demanding the simple gift of respect and human dignity for every child of God.

He sought the gift of solidarity and he was blessed to receive it.



And are we not promised that when we are becoming exactly who God created us to be, there is *radiance*? We know so well of his solidarity with the people of Africa and of African descent. He taught empowerment and dignity. But his active intentional solidarity did not end in any class or lecture room. Imagine our amazement when he, well over the age of 80, joined us on the streets for a Holy Week vigil, walking and listening for the cry of the poor and abandoned ones. Overnight, on the cold, mean streets of Atlanta, Georgia — the sparkling city — Dr. T walked the streets with a ragtag band of disciples, with little protection from a bone-chilling spring wind.

This was because he was not “just another brother” to his academic colleagues and students. He was a brother to the least among us. And we must not forget how he taught by

walking in the pathways of the humiliated, how he walked in loving, strong, demanding solidarity. And how he, like Jesus, like Martin, like Harriet before him, bids us come.

This brother — this extraordinary brother who chose to be named “Just Another Brother” — was radiant. He let his little light shine from deep within. And it shined brightly among us, did it not?

Perhaps we should all tell Jesus that it would be all right if he changed our name.

Change our name to “Those in Solidarity With the Humiliated” — the desperately poor and hungry, the imprisoned in the hateful New Jim Crow system, those sentenced to death by a cruel system of apartheid in the land of the free.

Change our name to “Those Seeking Justice.”

Change our name to “Just Another Sister” and “Just Another Brother.”

Change our name to “Those Who Keep Our Hearts Set on the Beloved Community of God on Earth as It Is in Heaven.”

Thank you, dear brother, radiant with the grace and power of God’s spirit of love and justice.

Thank you, dear brother, who loved your family with a matchless delight.

Thank you, dear brother, for making family of us all — the One Great Family of the God of the Oppressed.

Thank you, dear God, for this radiant brother, Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta. ♣

A Teacher Who Brought New Life

By Eduard Loring

Yesterday, Rev. Murphy Davis and I were in Milledgeville, Georgia, on our monthly prison trip. We transport families, lovers and friends to visit those locked away.

Through the center of the city, the old Confederate capital of slaveholding Georgia, marched a band of deformed white people. They were celebrating the birthday of one of their gods, General Robert E. Lee. Young and old were attired in Confederate uniforms, carrying rifles or flags, smirking at those of us who raised our voices in protest.

Yet this display of twisted logic and hateful history is my heritage. I carry the blood of slaveholding families and Confederate military officers. By the grace of God, I heard the cry of the oppressed 50 years ago. I prayed, “There must be some way outta’ here.” And a door was opened for me and my deformed life.

Thirty years ago, Dr. Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta blossomed into my life. Grace abounds. He came to a soil already being plowed, and still being plowed today, by Martin Luther King Jr., the Concerned Black Clergy, Vincent Harding, Rev. Timothy McDonald III, my pastor, and First Iconium Baptist Church, among many, several of whom are in this holy gathering today.



Murphy Davis

In August 2010, Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta, Aljosie Knight and Vincent Harding (left to right) spent an evening visiting with friends at the Open Door Community.

Today I remember in thanksgiving and testify in this congregation of thanksgiving and mourning to Dr. T’Ofori-Atta’s life-giving gift from the waters of Africa to the rivers of America. This “Just Another Brother” said quietly and profoundly to me and Murphy Davis and the Open Door Community, “Yes, yes. You can come to a new life in Jesus

Christ.” We brought his Christ Kwanza into our Advent lives.

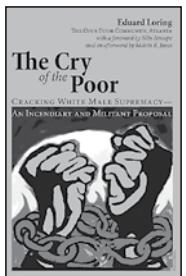
Dr. T’Ofori-Atta instructed me in gentle loving ways and profound teachings that empowered me to climb up the rough side of the mountain beyond myself. Me, Jim Crow born and bred, white privilege oozing from my pores, racist by political policies, prejudiced by cultural formation. He, “Just Another Brother,” said, “Yes, yes, climb up, you can, you are better than your white deformation.” Through him I was given new life, new vision, and a mouthful of the Beloved Community.

He lives in my life, our lives. He lives in the welcome to the stranger and outcast, Black and white, at the Open Door Community’s front door. He lives when we sit down visiting on death row waiting with a brother for the lynching tree to kill another child of God. Through him, with him, for him, this brother of mine, I say — and do we not all say? — “Yes, yes, God almighty, yes!” African, African-American, Jesus Christ, Black and white together, Yes we say to the everlasting vision of the Beloved Community, which lives in you and me in the everlasting life of our beloved Ndugu T’Ofori-Atta.

Yes, yes.

Thank you. ♣

The Open Door Community Press Books



The Cry of the Poor
Cracking White Male Supremacy —
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

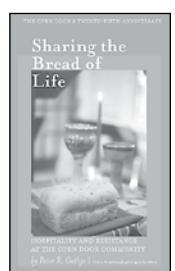
By Eduard Loring
foreword by Nibs Stroupe
afterword by Melvin Jones
99 pages
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The Festival of Shelters

A Celebration for Love and Justice



By Eduard Loring
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preface by Dick Rustay
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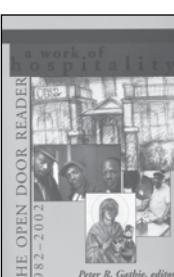


Sharing the Bread of Life
Hospitality and Resistance
at the Open Door Community

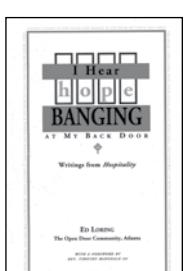
By Peter R. Gathje
272 pages
45 photographs
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\$10.00 suggested donation

A Work of Hospitality

The Open Door Reader
1982 - 2002



Peter R. Gathje, editor
384 pages
Bibliography and Index
Paperback
\$15.00 suggested donation



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

By Eduard Loring
Foreword by Rev. Timothy McDonald III
82 pages
21 photographs
available only online at
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Frances Pauley

Stories of Struggle and Triumph



Edited by Murphy Davis
Foreword by Julian Bond
89 pages
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Moving Toward Abolition After Troy Davis, No More Turning Away



By Mary Catherine Johnson

*No more turning away
From the weak and the weary
No more turning away
From the coldness inside
Just a world that we all must share
It's not enough just to stand and stare
Is it only a dream that there'll be
No more turning away?*

— From “On the Turning Away” by Pink Floyd

I'll never forget my first execution vigil after I moved back to Georgia in 2009. I drove to the prison in Jackson, where death row is located, negotiating intense traffic leaving Atlanta. I assumed that the execution was the cause for the traffic — that my fellow citizens were headed in my same direction to protest the state's murder of Mark McClain.

I could not have been more wrong. On the prison grounds, I was shocked and dismayed to find only 10 people at the protest. It was some comfort that many others gathered throughout Georgia that night in protest (still a tiny number relative to the state's population), but I could not get past how few actually showed up at the prison when a fellow human being was scheduled to be murdered there that night. Why had so many Georgians turned away from Mark McClain?

As I became more involved in the death penalty abolition movement, I noticed a pattern: most people had not so much intentionally turned away from the death penalty as they had turned away from the plight of the poor and marginalized as a whole, whose stories can be a tough sell when competing for the public's attention amidst the latest Apple gadget or celebrity gossip.

Then came Troy Davis.

The brilliance of the “I Am Troy Davis” campaign was its effectiveness in awakening people to the applicability of Troy's case to their own lives — this could happen to any of us — and its building on widespread public unwillingness to accept the execution of an innocent man. Since Troy was executed in September, more people than ever before are speaking out against the death penalty. More than 200 people attended the Death Penalty Summit in Atlanta in January. This is real change.

So how can we, people of conscience, sustain this momentum and encourage others to turn away from the death penalty and toward abolition at this watershed moment? Here are some things you can do right now:

Join your local abolitionist group. These groups have listservs to keep you informed, with many actions, such as signing petitions, easily performed from your computer. In Georgia, it's Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (www.gfadp.org). Locate other organizations on the Death Penalty Information Center Web site at www.deathpenaltyinfo.org, or write to me for guidance. If your state does not practice capital punishment, join a national group such as the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (www.ncadp.org) or People of Faith Against the Death Penalty (www.pfadp.org).

Talk about it in your spiritual community. Ask your spiritual leader to speak about the atrocities surrounding capital punishment, or organize your own film screening or discussion group (you can contact me at the email address below for suggestions and resources). Most religious denominations

have an official policy condemning the death penalty, which many congregation members are unaware of or uninterested in. Let's change that!

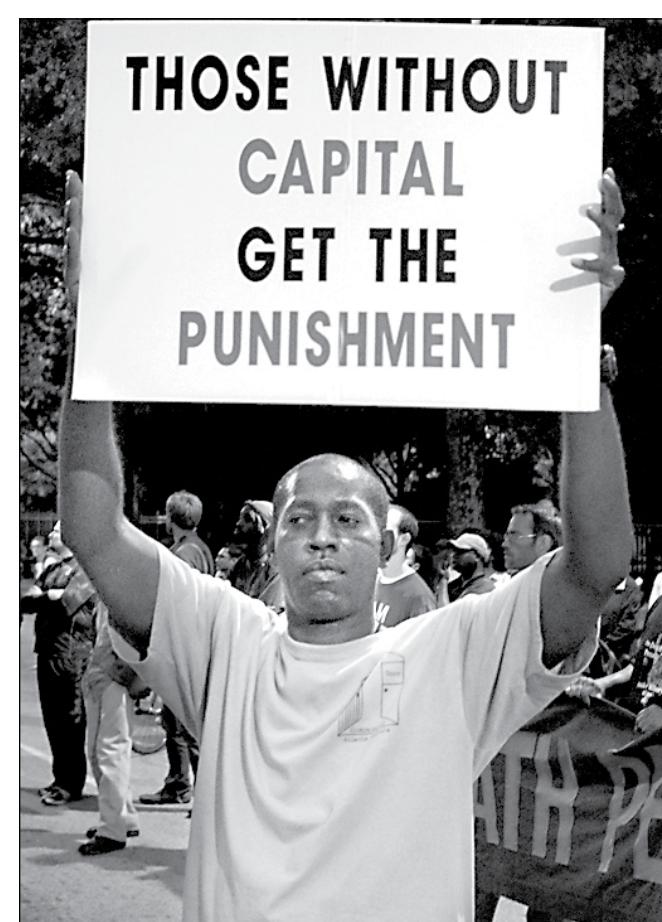
Wear an anti-death penalty button. You'll be surprised by how many people will comment on the button, presenting you with opportunities to change minds or at least raise awareness. If you don't have a button you can order one online, or ask me to send you one.

Support anti-death penalty legislation and the politicians who sponsor it. Bills to repeal capital punishment have been introduced in at least nine states in 2012: California, Washington, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, Pennsylvania and Georgia. As I write this, Georgia state Sen. Vincent Fort is gearing up to introduce five resolutions dealing with the death penalty and prisoners' rights. Let's make sure he has our full support!

Write to someone on death row. This is perhaps the most powerful tool in our abolitionist toolbox. My death row pen pal, Marcus Wellons, cannot physically be at my social interactions, but he is ever present in my stories and conversations. Slowly but surely, those around me have not only accepted him but have embraced his humanity. This is a way out of the madness of the death penalty, one person at a time. Contact me to get started on a transformative friendship.

The tide is turning in Georgia and across the United States, and a mighty flood of justice is ready to burst forward to drown the death penalty. Won't you help open the floodgates? ♦

“Moving Toward Abolition” is a monthly column that tracks the fight to end capital punishment. Mary Catherine Johnson is on the Boards of Directors of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty and of New Hope House and is a volunteer at the Open Door Community. She can be emailed at mcjohnson78@yahoo.com.



Jason Francisco

Jay Ashmear, September 20, 2011

Last Things vs. Least Things: Rejecting the Sacrificial Jesus

“Broken and Shared: Food, Dignity, and the Poor on Los Angeles’ Skid Row”

By Jeff Dietrich
Foreword by Martin Sheen
Marymount Institute Press
450 pages

Reviewed by Joseph Walsh

Maybe your life doesn't really begin until God calls your bluff.

For Jeff Dietrich, that day seems to have come on or about Saturday, November 3, 1979, in Tank D of California's Orange County Jail. It is here that Dietrich — who professes, in the words of Father Daniel Berrigan, that “all we have are these stories, and each other” — chooses to begin his own story:

If we ever have illusions that love and nonviolence will carry the day, then all we need to do is go to jail to have those illusions shattered. The world is based on power, coercion, force. It is hard to see this on the outside, because we think that men's lives are directed by reason. But here most pretensions of civilization are stripped away and the fist and the club rule. I do not believe we can change it. The human heart is corrupt and deceitful. Only by God's grace will the world be transformed.

These words, originally written by Dietrich to his wife Catherine as he began a six-month *sentence* in consequence of a civil disobedience action, show where he stood as he approached the end of his first decade at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker. Three more decades of work in the tradition of radical hospitality were to follow. And now we have been blessed by a stunning collection of Dietrich's best writing from the L.A. Catholic Worker's “Catholic Agitator” newspaper, published as “Broken and Shared: Food, Dignity, and the Poor on Los Angeles’ Skid Row.”

Go back to that quote above and allow your mind to settle for a moment on that extraordinary first sentence: “If we ever have illusions...” This, it seems, is the bluff that

**Death is what we produce and consume.
Death is the Pentagon, of course —
but also the mall and the megachurch.**

God called for Dietrich. Many Christians are accustomed to talk of the “Last Things,” of death, judgment, Heaven and Hell. What Dietrich brings instead is talk of the *least* things, those things that make life possible at society's invisible bottom, once all illusions are shattered for good and all goodness seems banished as well. Seek the bottom if you will,

God may seem to say. Once you reach Tank D, which way will be up? Will you know?

One of these least things is our stories. Dietrich writes:

I believe the Gospels are the best story we have. They are the singular counternarrative to our consumerist, warmongering, media-saturated, technologized, dehumanized, death-oriented culture. The story of the Gospels — the triumph of goodness and mercy over the powers of death and domination — cannot be proven, and we cannot accept the story on faith alone, but we love the story so much that we want it to be true. To will the story into existence by our own living testimony to its veracity, thus giving witness to our deepest hopes for humanity — that is what attracted me as a young person to the Catholic Worker, and that is what attracts young people still to this day.

Stop again and linger. Don't miss what is utterly extraordinary here: *we love the story so much that we want it to be true*. It *deserves* to be true. But where is its confirmation? Dietrich shows us.

He offers a theology that strikes as a sigh of relief wrapped in a gasp of realization. His writing equips me with a narrative expressive of the most nagging and restless misgivings standing in the way of growth in faith, not least those that arise from observing the behavior of many who call themselves Christians.

Death as a Way of Life

Like Dietrich, I have never for a moment fallen for the mendacious veneer of theocratic destiny, honed especially in the George W. Bush years, that cloaks the widening enfranchisement of social and state violence. Neither do I quibble with his observation that “social conformity is extracted through the coercive sanctions of death in all its forms: genocide, war, jail, taxes, capital punishment, social and economic discrimination.” What is new, astonishing and powerfully explanatory for me is the insistence that our society has *not* lost its way. Instead, death is what our

society *does*. Death is what we produce and consume. Death is the Pentagon, of course — but also the mall and the megachurch. Consumer spending is the very lifeblood of our economy, which is to say, of lethal violence as our stimulus package. Dietrich quotes William Stringfellow: “Death as a moral power means death as a social pur-

pose.” This is entirely persuasive.

As a *moral power*, death is the real American Idol. Simple ritual murder was sanctified by our remote ancestors as human sacrifice, and by our Christianizing forebears as “sacred” violence upholding a *sacrificial consciousness*. Dietrich writes:

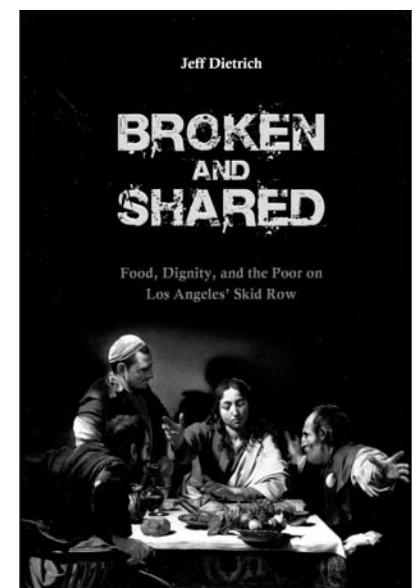
Central to this perverse transformation was the image of the cross, which under [the Roman Emperor] Constantine became both the static instrument of Christian self-affirmation and the idolatrous symbol of deadly state power that murdered all who would not accept its salvific efficacy.... [This] recast Rome as a benign policeman and the cross as a symbol of salvific power rather than empowerment for martyrdom. This abstract, idealized cross became a symbol of a victorious Church and the sacred foundation of a divinely mandated state, emblematic of veneration rather than the dynamic of discipleship, emphasizing idolatry rather than self-sacrifice.

In other words, fetishism of death and judgment — of Last Things — trampled and trumped the loving promise of least things. And the historical consequences of this demonic contract redound to Tank D, to Skid Row, to death row, to every zone of exception to the pretense of civilized life into which we disappear the poor in our own day.

Here is the second half of Stringfellow's formulation, “death as a social purpose”:

This Constantinian cross is the direct antecedent to the American Evangelical theology which claims that Christ *had* to die, that he was not a *victim* of the Roman death penalty, but rather a victim of Divine wrath. Christ had to die to heal the ontological rift between an angry God and a sinful humanity, thus saving all sinners and opening the gates of heaven. While this theology may justify sinners who are saved by its passive cross, it also justifies Constantine and Hitler and George W. Bush. And it further justifies just wars and unjust wars, crusades and inquisitions, death camps and death penalties. It justifies and sanctifies the making of victims by the divinely sanctioned state. It falls here to the temptation of Satan. It is a pact with the devil.

Dietrich demands that his reader summon a willingness to follow this trail still further, onto turf that we typically concede without a fight to those who refuse altogether a discourse of faith. I know atheists and agnostics who mobilize these very arguments to support their perspectives. As unjust wars,



Broken and Shared
Food, Dignity, and the Poor
on Los Angeles’ Skid Row

By Jeff Dietrich

Foreword by Martin Sheen
Marymount Institute Press

Jeff's life-giving text held me enchanted, page after page, hours on end. I was at the mercy of magister ... a verbal magician, who is also, gift beyond price, a friend.
— Daniel Berrigan, S.J.,
Activist and Poet

crusades, inquisitions, death camps and death penalties proliferate with renewed vigor, can there be any product whose market share has grown more in lockstep than Brand Jesus? Isn't religion itself the reason that so much awful, violent stuff goes on? As Dietrich writes:

[A]ll religion continues to maintain an unconscious connection to its roots in “sacred violence” through the perpetuation of “sacrificial consciousness,” which projects human violence onto the false image of an angry, violent, vengeful god who demands sacrifice. This sacrificial mentality is most clearly seen in the Christian theology of “Blood Redemption,” which asserts that “Jesus had to die for our sins” in order to appease a petulant God still angry at the sin of Adam.

This sacrificial mentality, shared by all religious leaders, not just the Scribes and Pharisees, provides the basis for the theological justification of the strong man's murder and plunder, or George Bush's liberation of Iraqi oil.

It is just this blindness that Jesus addresses....

Brand Jesus is no hypostasis whose grace we implore. It's a Word From Our Sponsor, a Dominion in a domain name, a halftime show worth tweeting about.

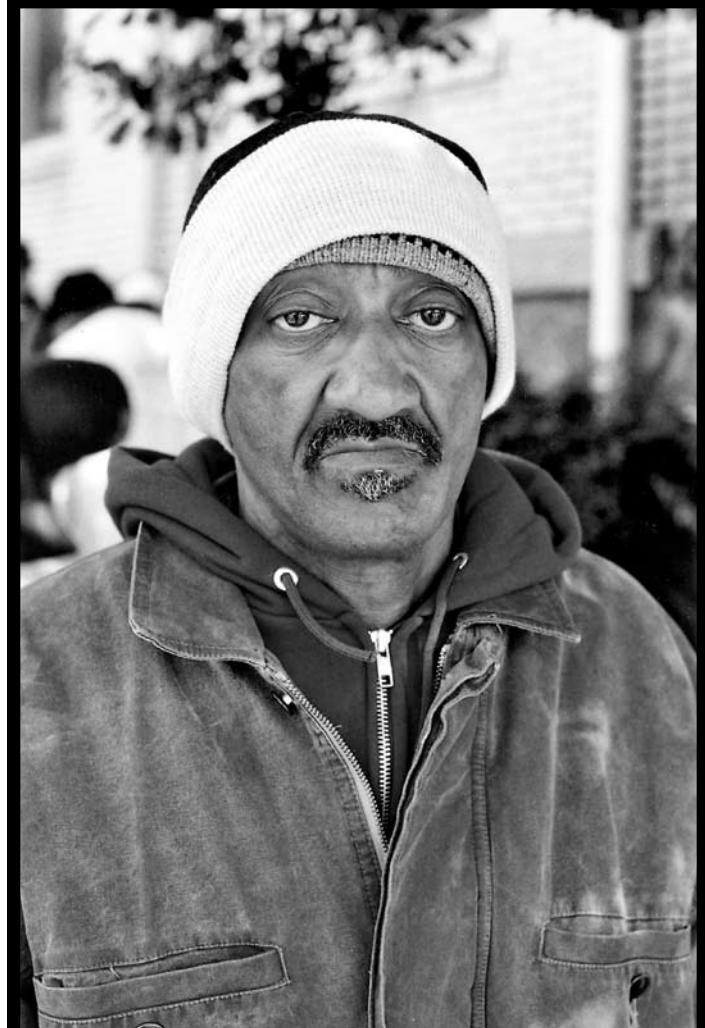
Last Things *continued on page 10*



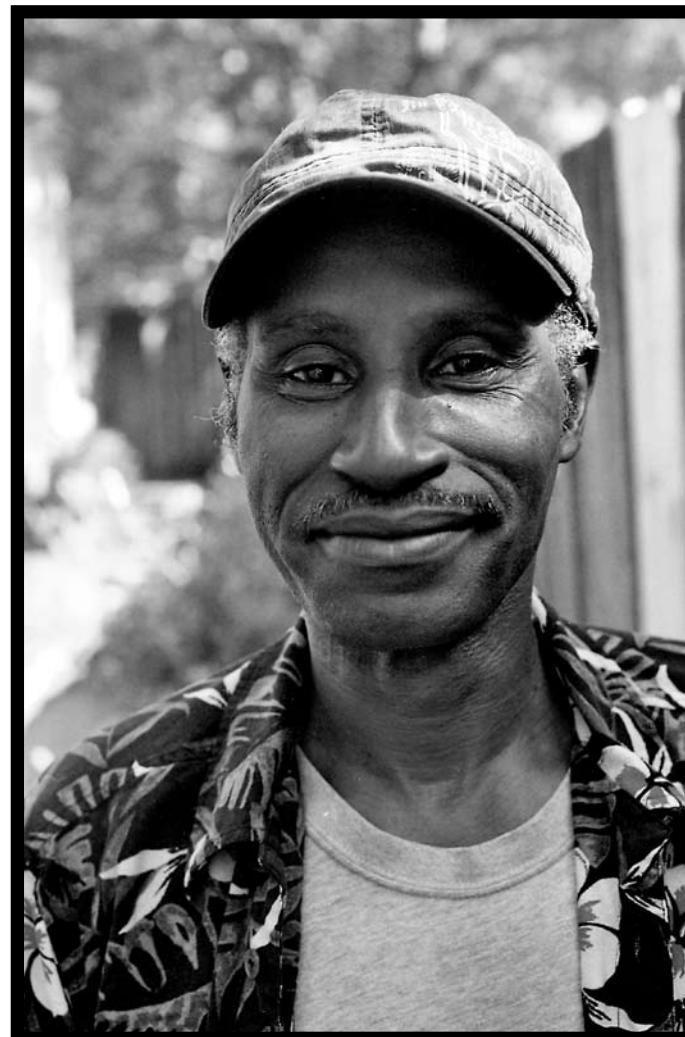
David 11/11



Frank 11/11



Joey 11/11



Joe 4/11

At Our Home

Created in the image of God,
we are created in the image of God.
Human beings all over God's earth,
created in the image of God.

As a photographer I make images with cameras, lenses, film, light, my eye, my vision, another's visage, their eyes. This work, inspired by God's spirit, sometimes opens a door into the soul, revealing God's image.

I began making portrait photographs at the Open Door Community in 1992. In 2004 I moved into 910 Ponce de Leon to live, work, sing, play and pray. These images of our friends from the streets come from our home. They flow from the works of mercy and justice which are the work of our household. Created in the image of God, these men and women open doors into God's soul. All are deserving of housing, food, health care and a living wage. What is so difficult about sharing God's given abundance for the building of the Beloved Community among us?

— Calvin Kimbrough 2/12



Cherree 11/11

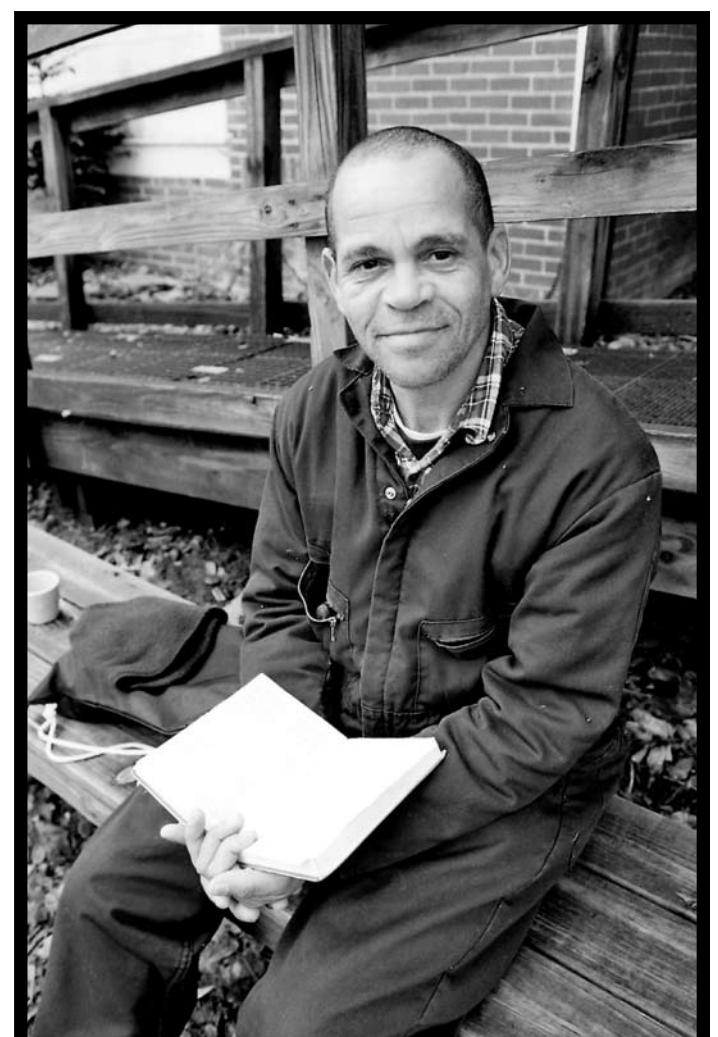
photographs by **Calvin Kimbrough**



Reginal 11/11



Archie 11/11



Terry 12/11

What Does the Lord Need? A Charge for Palm Sunday *continued from page 1*

Jesus says for the disciples to tell the owner of the colt that I need it. This just blows me away. I mean, how can the Lord have need of anything? God simply could have spoken a colt into existence. After all, Jesus is God and like God has all power.

I want to stay here for a moment. Is there a hermeneutic of suspicion here? Mathew, Mark and Luke all record the same words: if anyone asks you why you are loosing the colt, tell him that *the Lord has need of it.*

How can the Lord have need? The One who looked down through the nebulae, matter, dark matter and into the deepest, coldest regions of space and decided, "I'll make me a world." The One who reached out into the chaos and created the cosmos. The One who created a raging ball of fire and gave it such luminous intensity that it brings light to planets billions of miles away. The One who hurled the planets into motion, each tilted on its axis at varying degrees and each rotating in a specific way and at its own speed. The One who took this planet of raging rivers and seas, carved out seven continents of various shapes and sizes, pushed down valleys, raised up mountains and crowned them with a diadem of snow. The One who laid out the lush green carpet of grass and tacked it down with daffodils, tulips, chrysanthemums and periwinkles. The One who created tropical rain forests, dry deserts, murky swamplands and frozen tundra, and took a finger and drew on the canvas of creation babbling brooks, meandering meadows, luscious lakes and tentacled tributaries. The One who created lions, tigers, bears, leopards, gazelles, giraffes, elephants, rhinoceroses, flamingos, baboons, monkeys, cows, sheep, goats, turkeys, ducks, horses, coyotes, dogs, pigs, chickens, snakes, birds, cats, turtles, frogs, lizards, insects, pesky mosquitoes and nag-

case we needed to rent the colt. But they had a relationship with Jesus now and believed that if he said it, it must be true, so it didn't matter who was sent.

These two disciples went forth in love. They went not knowing, but believing. They stepped out on nothing, believing that God would create something. They went into the village. They found the colt tied up, just as Jesus had said.

Second, Jesus needs disciples who speak with authority, like those who spoke with authority to the owner of the colt and said to give up this resource in order for justice to do its work.

How many of you know that there are a lot of tied-up resources in our community? On the cover of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution today, there is an article about how much money corporations spend on their executives for security and their private use of company jets. This is on their personal travel, not business:

- ◆ Muhtar Kent, CEO of Coca Cola: \$165,000
- ◆ John Brock, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises: \$144,000
- ◆ Frank Black, CEO of Home Depot: \$77,000
- ◆ Alan Mulally, CEO of Ford Motor Company: \$167,000
- ◆ Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsico: \$182,000
- ◆ Robert McDonald, CEO of Procter and Gamble: \$223,000
- ◆ Robert Iger, CEO of Walt Disney Company: \$192,000
- ◆ Louis Camilleri, CEO of Philip Morris International: \$198,000
- ◆ Kenneth Chenault, COO of American Express: \$200,000

Combined, that's more than \$1.5 million. Can you imagine how much justice

smartphone or computer. They are good only if you use them.

And fourth, Jesus needs disciples who witness for justice and faith. The faith of the disciples in our story was contagious. As they laid down palm branches and clothes, they cried out, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" It compelled others to sacrifice and to praise. It compelled others to join the justice parade. It compelled others to connect with the justice movement.

Our People Are in Danger

In closing, I want to tell you a story that appeared in the Chicago Sun-Times a while back. A woman had left a shopping mall late one night, and as she was driving away, a man in a big truck behind her kept blowing his horn and flicking his lights. She moved from one lane to another, but he kept blowing his horn and flicking his lights. No matter where she moved on the highway, the truck driver stayed behind her and kept blowing his horn and flicking his lights. A string of rapes had recently occurred in the Chicago area, so she was naturally scared. She called a girlfriend on her cell phone, and they decided that she should drive to the nearest police station.

She drove to the station and ran inside, only to discover that she had indeed been in danger all along. The driver of the truck had seen a man get into the back seat of the woman's car. He crouched down where she couldn't see him. When the truck driver couldn't get to her in time to tell her, he followed her and wouldn't stop blowing his horn and flicking his lights. At first this was an irritation, then it began to make the woman afraid, and her anxiety continued to rise. But he did not stop. He continued to

Holy Week and Easter with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship with our friends on the street during Holy Week.



Mark Harper
from
Fritz Eichenburg

Palm Sunday
April 1
Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue
4:00 pm

Monday
April 2
Grady Hospital
Jesse Hill Jr. Drive
5:00 pm

Tuesday
April 3
City Jail
Peachtree Street SW
5:00 pm

Wednesday
April 4
Woodruff Park,
Five Points
5:00 pm

Maundy Thursday
April 5
City Hall
Trinity Avenue
5:00 pm
with celebration of the Eucharist

Good Friday
April 6
State Capitol
Washington Street
5:00 pm

Holy Saturday
April 7
Pine Street Shelter
Peachtree and Pine Streets
5:00 pm

Easter Morning
April 8
Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue
8:00 am
Breakfast with our homeless friends followed by Worship and Celebration of Life Over Death and Oppression

take a bath and get a warm meal.

When you go to City Hall, blow your horn and flick your lights for the fair and equitable treatment of people, for adequate resources to fund shelters and feeding programs for the least of these, for housing for the homeless and affordable housing for every child of God.

And at the state Capitol, blow your horn and flick your lights for the treatment of budgets as moral documents, for the elimination of tax cuts for the rich and famous, for the creation of jobs and a liveable wage, for the eradication of an immigration bill that is rooted in fear.

Go out of here to the streets, Open Door Community! Blow your horns and flick your lights. Our people, our brothers and sisters, are in danger. They are hurting and humiliated, harassed and hounded. The Lord has need of you and me: disciples with faith and trust and the love of Christ, disciples who speak with authority and lead by example, disciples who act, witnessing for justice and faith.

Blow your horn and flick your lights! ♦

We need to be the people who are in dialogue with the dispossessed, in fellowship with the forsaken, in communion with the cast out and ministering to those who live on the periphery of society.

ging gnats. The One who said, "I am lonely. I'll make me a man and a woman to rule over these creatures."

But the text says the Lord has needs.

What in the world could the Lord have need of?

People with a trusting heart, the love of Christ, unyielding faith and a mind to work. Now does that sound like you?

Four Needs We Can Fill

There were four things the Lord needed from the disciples.

First, Jesus needs disciples who have a trusting heart and the love of Christ, like those who in our text were obedient to the master's words, who didn't question his command. The text gives us no clue as to which two disciples Jesus sent for the colt. Personally, I would have sent the biggest, brawniet one, in case things got out of hand, and Judas, because he was the treasurer, in

work could be done with \$1.5 million? Oh, for CEOs who would identify with the owner of the colt who willingly gave up what he had for the sake of justice!

Third, Jesus needs disciples who lead by example, like those who laid their own clothes on the colt for him to ride on. They put their own agenda aside for the greater good. They gave up what they had. They went before Jesus as ambassadors of justice.

Now we know some of the kind of people who lead by example, doing the work of justice every day, on the front lines, building relationship, building community, standing in the gap for the homeless, the imprisoned, the physically and mentally challenged. We need to be the people who are in dialogue with the dispossessed, in fellowship with the forsaken, in communion with the cast out and ministering to those who live on the periphery of society. We need to not just talk justice but do justice. It's like the applications on your

blow his horn and flick his lights until he saw her out of danger.

Now the Open Door Community goes out into the streets of Atlanta this week, blowing its horn and flicking its lights. So when you go to Grady Hospital, blow your horn and flick your lights for affordable health care for all people, for preventive health care, for adequate resources for the mentally ill.

When you go to the City Jail, blow your horn and flick your lights for elimination of the death penalty, for the humane treatment of the jailed and imprisoned, for resources that reconnect families with captive relatives, for programs that help folks coming out of prison.

When you go to Woodruff Park, blow your horn and flick your lights for public toilets and benches for the homeless, for places for the homeless to lay their heads, for public wash houses where a homeless person can

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Cross: Part 3 *continued from page 1*

with Martin could be arranged.

It is well documented that both Malcolm and Martin had been placed under exhaustive government surveillance. The FBI and CIA were monitoring their every move. The government knew it was only a matter of time before they would get together. That would not be allowed to happen. The long-simmering plot to kill Malcolm was heated up, resulting in his murder shortly after his return from Europe.

That truth of the cross, absorbed by us in widening circles of nonviolent commitment, would drive our evil system out of this country and the world.

A key to the untold history of our domestic assassinations is the fact that our government was the first to develop and use nuclear weapons. The democratic principles that this country professes were, from the beginning, in conflict with such weapons and our refusal to submit them to international control. Nuclear weapons and civil liberties don't go together. Nuclear weapons and life don't go together. The rise of our national security state after World War II, as justified by the Cold War that our nuclear weapons created, was the effective end of democracy in the United States of America. That process of a national security state replacing a democracy was climaxed by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which foreshadowed the martyrdoms of Malcolm and Martin.

A nuclear weapons state that maintains the myth of being a democracy requires what our newspeak language calls "intelligence agencies," which specialize in covert action, assassinations, and propaganda whose targets include U.S. citizens. The CIA and its related covert action and propaganda agencies have evolved into what we today, with more newspeak (and a verbal surrender to our former World War II enemies), call "Homeland Security." I believe the reason why Malcolm's and Martin's assassinations by our own government can still shock many of us is that we are in denial of the fact that our government, by embracing nuclear weapons, became a national security state.

Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, each in his own unique way, challenged that system to be true to its democratic origins, as did John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert. The four of them offered a combined witness to a process of justice, peace and nuclear disarmament through which the people of this country could achieve a truly democratic government. Until we turn in that direction, I believe that what Martin said remains true in a more terrible sense than ever: the greatest purveyor of terrorism in the world today is my own government.

Jesus as "the Human Being"

I want to conclude by sharing an exchange of letters with Walter Wink on the question of why Jesus identified himself as the Human Being. Before he chose the way of the cross, he chose to call himself the Human Being. Why?

If one wants to know more about Jesus as the Human Being, Walter Wink is the person to ask. Walter's book "The Human Being" is the classic work on the subject. I have been asking him questions about Jesus as the Human Being since the 1980s. He keeps taking me to new perspectives.

In 2000, after I read his draft manuscript of "The Human Being," I wrote Walter the following question: "I know some Greek but no Hebrew, so I ask you (who know both well): Do you think Jesus/Yeshua was named after Joshua? Though nobody I know of says so (except a late friend Ben Edmonson in an unpublished manuscript), I have assumed that Joshua was Jesus' given namesake. Is that just plain wrong?"

"If it is possible or likely (in spite of the huge silence on the issue) that Jesus was named after Joshua, then the whole 'son of man' question takes on new meaning. His choice of

'the human being' as his name is a choice of humanity over war. It is a refusal to be identified with a much-admired warrior who thought — with his followers, scribes and violent imitators — that God commanded genocide as his will."

Walter wrote back to me:

"The linguistic issue is strong for your argument. In the only two places in the New Testament that refer to Joshua, *Iesous* is used. Apparently it was a very popular name, since

That truth of the cross, absorbed by us in widening circles of nonviolent commitment, would drive our evil system out of this country and the world.

Joshua was a great hero. However, I am puzzled that the Septuagint [a pre-Christian Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures] — has *Iesous* [for Joshua]. So no question about it — Jesus is Joshua in Hebrew. Your theory is, of course, more speculative, and can't be settled either way, though I naturally like it."

So with some linguistic support from Walter Wink, who likes the idea, here is a little meditation on Jesus' real name:

Humanity.

A word lying like a skull in the desert of our understanding.

Humanity.

It was Jesus' name for himself.

Humanity. To be literal, "the son of the man," in Greek *ho huios tou anthropou*. But, as John McKenzie points out, the excessively literal translation "the son of the man" for Jesus' Aramaic phrase was as meaningless in Greek as it is in English. The Aramaic idiom that Jesus uses 82 times in the Gospels to identify himself, *bar nasha*, means humanity, personally and collectively.

Humanity.

Gaze at that 2,000-year-old skull of Jesus' real name, lying in the desert of our comprehension of the Gospels. Finger that human skull. Turn over slowly its implications. Hold it up as a question in our minds, sensing the sun of meaning behind it.

Humanity.

Why don't you call yourself by your own name, Jesus? Not once in all four Gospels. Instead you insist again and again that you're the human being, humanity.

Why not just say you're Jesus? Yeshua? Named after the one we know as Joshua? But no.

Humanity.

The skull of that word gazes back, blocking out the sun. Suddenly the sun breaks through.

No, I am not Jesus. I do not identify myself with Joshua, a warrior who committed genocide in the name of God.

I am humanity.

I am all of you.

Gaze through the skull into the sun.

For about 12 years now, I have known with constantly increasing detail how Martin Luther King was killed. I keep learning more all the time. However, I am also aware that what I know about this systemic murder is very little, compared to what there *is* to know.

I have met extraordinary people on this pilgrimage into darkness, witnesses to the truth who have great courage, like Dr. King's. The witnesses who have seen the unspeakable truth of his martyrdom, and who have dared to speak its truth, are themselves martyrs — witnesses who have been threatened, persecuted, committed by the government to mental institutions and killed.

The truth of the assassination of Martin Luther King is one issue on which the system will never retreat, any more than it would retreat from its lies about the interrelated assassinations of Malcolm X and the Kennedys.

Just as Jesus says in John, that truth of the cross would

destroy it. That truth of the cross, absorbed by us in widening circles of nonviolent commitment, would drive our evil system out of this country and the world. The transforming truth of King's martyrdom is the truth of our cross and resurrection as a people. It is not beyond our reach, but the system would be driven out if we did reach it.

Cutting the Chains of Hate

My hardest task in learning the beginning truth about King's cross has to do with what Jesus, and Martin as his disciple, have taught us to do to be truly human: love the enemy. I have had to realize how profoundly naive I have been about evil, even when living with Shelley and our son Tom for years in a house where our extended Agape Community would regularly block trains carrying enough nuclear weapons to destroy whole continents, perhaps all life on earth. But as terrible as that concrete realization of evil was and is, it was less overwhelming for me than what I feel now from Dr. King's murder. The systemic way in which this prophet of compassion and transformation for our world was stalked, set up and executed by our government takes my breath away. The cover-up to this day is no less elaborate.

So I have a hard time loving the enemies who are most responsible for this crime against us all, this attempt to assassinate hope that has succeeded to the extent that we as a people have allowed it to do so. Our scene has become more desperate in many ways since April 4, 1968, or that previous April 4 at Riverside Church. The terrible widening of evil that King envisioned "beyond Vietnam" 40 years ago tonight, we have seen happen. So it is hard to love the unseen enemies who work so feverishly and systematically to murder voices of hope, as they continue to do, covering their tracks all the way.

In the summer of 1961, a white student from Union Theological Seminary named Gurdon Brewster worked with King and his father, Martin Luther King Sr., at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. Brewster was forced to confront a racist system made flesh for him in a group of white men who, in a parking lot one night, almost took his life for working with the Kings.

The morning after that encounter, Brewster marched into King's office and demanded of the prophet of nonviolence, "How do you love those people, anyway? How do you love the enemy, when all those people do such violent things to you? How do you still love them?"

Martin Luther King Jr. looked at him, sat still and thought. His phone was ringing and his secretary was rapping on the door, calling out that the Justice Department wanted to talk to him. Brewster waited for an answer to his question.

Finally King said softly, "You've got to reach deeper until you are transformed by your suffering. With your suffering and your love, you must cut the chains of hate. You've got to reach down deeper until your suffering and your love draw you closer to God." (Gurdon Brewster, "No Turning Back")

At the Memphis trial for King's assassination, one of the assassins was present in the courtroom as a defendant: Loyd Jowers. Jowers was old and feeble at that point. He was hardly a major player in the conspiracy. Those men of great power would never be defendants in any earthly courtroom. But the King family knew well from Jowers' confession that he had passed the rifle to the man who fired it from the bushes. Or perhaps more likely, though he denied it, Loyd Jowers *had himself been the man* who pulled the trigger of the gun that killed King.

I sat and watched a few feet away from Jowers when Coretta Scott King entered the courtroom to be a witness at the trial. She walked up to Loyd Jowers, who in a state of confusion rose from his chair. She looked into his eyes and shook his hand.

Yes, we can cut the chains of hate.

But we must reach down deeper until our suffering and our love draw us closer to God. ♦

Last Things vs. Least Things: Rejecting the Sacrificial Jesus *continued from page 5*

The Way Back From Death

The way back from all this is marked first by a refusal of death, then by the cultivation of our powers of seeing our victims, and finally by the embrace of Jesus the *way*, not the identity or symbol or brand.

The refusal of death ought to be axiomatic for any person of sound common sense. We of course know that it's not, let alone taken to the extent that Dietrich urges: "[W]e as Christians must come to know the meaning of eternal life, which is nothing other than the refusal to use the means of death, the tools of death, the forces of death for mere survival."

We may not fully realize how much we rely upon death to sustain mere lifestyles, nor how fully we are supported in this by the forces of public order. On this point, the story of Martin Russell is instructive. A young black man, Martin served his year in prison, quit dealing and using drugs, attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings, stayed clean for 16 months, lived in a group home, excelled in an honest job and took classes. The LACW was with him every step of the way. He did, in other words, what we say we want the law-abiding to do. He kept his end of the social bargain. Not good enough. A judge refused to forgive Martin his \$4,000 fine. In despair, he relapsed, reoffended, lost it all and got a five-year prison sentence.

Speaking as a middle-class white male, I need to get my mind around the lesson of this, and it is a horrifying one. Simply put, the story of Martin Russell is a specimen of *the system working*. And it's working for *me*. Used as directed, the domination system cranks out sacrificial victims like the widgets of Economics 101 or the famous pins of Adam Smith. The system does this to Martin not as error or aberration, but because *this is what the system does*.

Finding the way back from this place depends upon *seeing our victims*. "The essential Gospel value," Dietrich writes, "is the cultivation of the ability to see." Compassion is, in this light, an act of seeing: "[I]t is a question of eyes. If we do not read Scripture, history and the world in front of us with the eyes of the victim, then our 'whole bodies will be full of

It is first and foremost the women among the disciples of Jesus who fathom that the essential thing, the least thing to do in genuine belief, is to *practice* Jesus, not to worship him.

darkness" (Matthew 6:23), and we will continue to give divine sanction to war, violence and the continuing cycle of producing more and more victims."

Dietrich has an exceptional ability to place us in the right context and frame of mind to read Scripture this way. At the bottom, among the least things, he belongs to "a movement founded by a woman that concerns itself with women's work." Here he refers to Blessed Dorothy Day and to the Works of Mercy, among them feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, offering hospitality to the homeless, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned and burying the dead. The proof that these are the least things we can do is that it is women, too often the least among us, who typically do them. Blessed Dorothy writes of seeing the victims:

If we hadn't got Christ's own words for it, it would seem raving lunacy to believe that if I offer a bed and food and hospitality to some man or woman or child, I am replaying the part of Martha or Mary, and that my guest is Christ. For He said that a glass of water given to a beggar was given to Him. He made heaven hinge on the way we act toward Him in His disguise of commonplace, frail, ordinary humanity.

It is no coincidence that Blessed Dorothy invokes Mar-

tha and Mary here. It is first and foremost the women among the disciples of Jesus who fathom that the essential thing, the least thing to do in genuine belief, is to *practice* Jesus, not to worship him. As Dietrich writes, "From incarnation and birth to Crucifixion and Resurrection, the women disciples already knew what the kingdom was about because they were already doing it."

Overcoming "Brand Jesus"

Consider, for instance, the story of the Canaanite woman of Matthew 15, who comes to Jesus demanding that he exorcise a demon from her daughter. As Dietrich would have it, Jesus is not without his own moments of male obliviousness, snapping impatiently at this grieving mother until she sets him straight:

She has exorcised Jesus and transformed the entire Kingdom Project. If it had not been for the Canaanite woman, there would have been no second wilderness feeding of the Gentiles. Because of her, the liberating message of the Kingdom would include not just the lost sheep of the House of Israel, but all the lost sheep, all of the expendable victims of empire who have no food, all of the victims of empire whose children are consigned to starvation. Henceforth there would be no unclean people, no expendables, no "dogs," no excuse for treating anyone as less than human.

The legacy of the Canaanite woman continues to this day. Her faith, which is to say her courage, was born of desperation, poverty and love of her child, and is lifted up by Jesus. It is all about food and faith. The Liberation Project of Jesus, now extended to the Gentiles, has frightened the authorities. And they will respond as empire always responds to those who terrorize them.

So it is all the more egregious that the blind and coercive impulses of patriarchy should be the ones institutionalized,

joined to the power of worldly empire. This is what allows us to hide our victims from ourselves, disposing of them in our prison-industrial complex or casting them out into the streets just as the lepers were cast out in the time of Jesus.

The final step on the way back from Brand Jesus is, as the women disciples exemplify, the embrace of Jesus the *way*. There is no further question of contesting the identity of Jesus within the political economy of the Last Things. As Dietrich says, Jesus is not meant to become yet one more object "whose consumption is, in fact, a form of religious observance that gives expression to both a contemporary moral code and a social hierarchy." The moral code would have us see the poor as moral failures, as drunks and addicts and sinners and hookers. The social hierarchy in the service of white male supremacy tags them, then relegates them to obscurity.

This is not the way of prophetic Christianity. Instead, the bodies of the poor, broken by us or for us by others, are not to be seen as anything. The victims are victims, to be seen for what they are, as they are. This is the Jesus who breaks the spell of blind idolatry, of the fetishism of consumption, of the totemism of Brand Jesus. Here is unadorned seeing, feeding the throwaway people of Skid Row. As Dietrich writes:

While we know that what we have is manifestly meager, it comes without restrictions. We do not demand repentance or job readiness or clean streets.

Along with the meager gifts of bread and coffee, we offer a few brief moments of an authentic human contact that neither judges nor condemns, but recognizes the improbable connectedness of our human brokenness.

Naturally, this call to a prophetic commitment in the Catholic Worker tradition places in the foreground the many points of overlap between transforming the self and challenging the system of domination:

To be a Catholic Worker does not mean that we believe we can transform the poor or the domination system itself, but rather that we believe we can transform ourselves. The most important thing for us is to live our lives as if the Gospels were true, calling us back to a more sustainable vision of community, simplicity and resource.

People, Not Categories

The reader who is not philosophically inclined should quit here, as what follows are some last remarks prompted by Dietrich's book but not attributable to him. "Broken and Shared" is very fertile ground. Here's where it finally took me.

Hospitality as Jeff Dietrich understands and practices it is a radical critique of representation. It abolishes predication. And it closes, at long last, the bitter, issueless contest over the identity of Jesus.

Ours is a world where a marketplace of representation seems to be all that's left, independently of any actual objects to represent. Think of mass media, which appear to do nothing any more except comment upon mass media. Fundamentally, the media refer to nothing *real*, nothing outside the scope of the production of images. Their survival and propagation have no further need of us, except incidentally as target demographics. Think of tabloid celebrities, the Iowa caucuses, NBA salaries, homeland security, NASCAR, NASDAQ, Sarah Palin, Facebook — all of them, fundamentally, not about anything, which is to say, about precisely *nothing*. Dietrich calls such representations "simulacra," a term he borrows from philosopher Jean Baudrillard. Simulacra stand for nothing but themselves and refer only to other simulacra.

How is it that the spectacle of simulacra has become our surrogate for (if you'll pardon the expression) reality? If I read Dietrich right, the answer can only be *violence*. Baudrillard says that the violence of our world is principally that of "forced consensus ... like the plastic surgery of the social." The categories that we attach to the poor — that they are, for instance, the disposable and morally corrupt inevitabilities of their own indolence — are imposed by coercion. Simulacra are the enforcers of Empire.

And hospitality will have none of it. It is, as Blessed Dorothy Day would have it, scandalous and ineffectual. People are not what we attribute to them; they are not simulacra. Not reproductions of categories in the mind. They are *singularities*. Hospitality turns none away; none must present credentials, none show the proper qualifications. No more seeing the poor as anything.

And likewise for Jesus. "Sacrificial consciousness" is nothing if not a simulacral mind, the mind of Jesus-as, of the beguiled fetishism of Brand Jesus. Its spell is hard to break, as hard as our hearts. The title "Broken and Shared" may well invoke the Body of Christ. But I believe that it also points us, in the Catholic Worker way, toward the long trajectory to be taken by our hearts. ♦

Joseph Walsh is a special education teacher in Atlanta and a regular volunteer at the Open Door Community.

this year give
HOSPITALITY

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

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

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

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

I would like to explore a six- to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please contact me. (Also see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://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.-2:00 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 opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
 or 770.246.7618**

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Ed,

I turned on my phone this morning to find a text from our daughter Valerie in Tucson: "Ed Loring — the cry of the poor! Makes cath agitator front page — I love it :)"

Me too. My copy of the *Catholic Agitator* arrived yesterday. Toni Flynn wrote a fine review of the book. Thank you for gifting me with my own copy a few weeks ago. Thank you for reminding us again of who we are, where we've been, and who we should aspire to be — yet beyond aspiration to *agitation*. To resurrection not in some distant digital Bible dream, but today.

Eliot is subjunctive: "Let us go then, you and I ... and make our visit." Ferlinghetti is subversive: "Let us arise and go now to the Isle of Manisfree. Let loose the hogs of peace.... Turn it off. Confound the system. Cancel all our leases. Lose the war without killing anybody." ("Junkman's Obligato")

The agitator on the washer is still. I'm glad you are not. But I must hang up the wash and get this in the mail and keep another postal worker employed (awful email!!). Bless you, my brother.

Barry Burnside
 Kalamazoo, Michigan



Becca Conrad

Dear Mary Catherine Johnson,

A few days ago I received a recent issue of *Hospitality*. When I flipped to page 4, I sat up in my bunk. I read your inaugural "Moving Toward Abolition" column with extreme interest.

In 1977, on November 29, I was convicted of murder in Putnam County, Georgia. I was also sentenced to death on that date. On January 4, 1980, I was transported to Jackson and placed on death row. I stayed on death row until December 1990. That's when I received a life sentence.

I lost all of my appeals along the way. Prior to my scheduled execution, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to give me a stay. A lot of prayer was answered. The U.S. Supreme Court gave me a unanimous ruling reversing my death sentence.

I was transferred from Jackson to Phillips Correctional Institution. There I was blessed to receive a four-year college degree from Mercer University. Also I attended a vocational trade school in cabinetmaking and woodworking. Later on I attended an advanced cabinetmaking course. Also I was blessed to take a program through Middle Georgia Technical College in cabinetry.

Unfortunately, in early November 2009 my kidneys failed. I was transported to ASMP and put on dialysis. On June 1, 2011, I was paroled to a detainer in Alabama's prison system, where I now sit.

The argument against capital punishment is close to my heart. This is why I thoroughly applaud your energy and your efforts with your new column. Anything I can do to assist you — provide feedback, answer questions, offer insight — just ask. My views may surprise you.

Do take care of yourself and keep in touch. Keep up the good fight.

Warmly,
 Tony
 In an Alabama prison

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Murphy Davis

Jason Ebinger went out on a limb. After he graduated from Marist High School in Atlanta, he deferred his acceptance to St. Louis University to spend a year as a Catholic Worker. After six months with us at the Open Door Community, he has gone to New Zealand to pursue justice work in a different setting.

This picture from one of our community wilderness hikes reminds us of how much we look forward to his return to Atlanta this summer. Go out on a limb!

Join us as a Resident Volunteer:

Live in a residential Christian community.

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

*Join street actions and loudandloving
 nonviolent demonstrations.*

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

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

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

Contact: Sarah Humphrey

at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
 or 770.246.7618

For information and application forms visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Please Help!

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!



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.

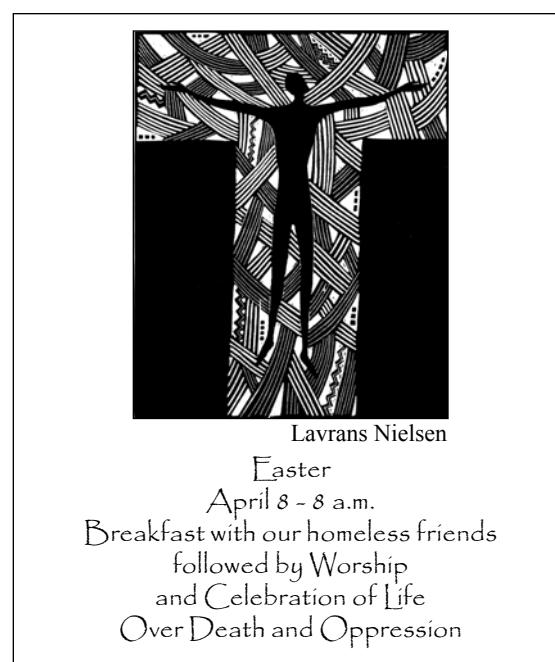
Join Us for Worship!

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.

March 4	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service music with Elise Witt
Lent 2	
March 11	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Nelia Kimbrough preaching
Lent 3	
March 18	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Seder Meal
Lent 4	
March 25	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Calvin Kimbrough On a Friday Noon: a meditation in song
Lent 5	
April 1	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Palm Sunday
April 8	8 a.m. Easter Breakfast and Worship at 910 no worship at 4 p.m.
April 15	No Worship at 910 Dayspring care week
April 22	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
April 29	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service



Needs of the Community



we need blankets!

Living Needs

- jeans
- work shirts
- short & long sleeve shirts with collars
- belts (34" & up)
- men's underwear
- women's underwear
- socks
- reading glasses
- walking shoes (especially sizes 11-15)
- T-shirts (L, XL, 2XL-5XL)
- baseball caps
- trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

Personal Needs

- shampoo (all sizes)
- lotion (all sizes)
- toothpaste (all sizes)
- lip balm
- soap (small sizes)
- disposable razors
- Food Needs**
- fresh fruits & vegetables
- turkeys/chickens
- hams
- Sandwiches:**
- meat with cheese on whole wheat bread**

Special Needs

- backpacks
- MARTA cards
- postage stamps
- futon sofa
- a scale for our medical clinic
- queen size mattress & box springs or futon
- prayers for the **Abolition of the Death Penalty**

Pill containers: Your generosity has supplied us with enough pill containers for the next several months. We ask that you **NOT** send any more until we again request them. **Thank You!**

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 salts
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.!