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

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February-March 2017

Whoever Has Two Coats

The Black Jesus Demands Reparations

By Nibs Stroupe

When the people asked John the Baptizer how they could be reconciled with God, he spoke words that helped form the Black Jesus: "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none." (Luke 3:11) It is the idea of reparations, and it is one of the hardest steps in this journey toward healing in regard to racism. It is so hard because it requires us to understand who the god of the white Christ is: not the God of ancient Israel, but rather the god of materialism, of money. To talk about reparations in regard to the history and power of race in American history is to run squarely into the mother lode of the false idols of our cultural life: the power of money to make us feel like somebody. At the heart of the Trump victory in the presidential election was the trinity of race, money and sexism. Thus, this step of reparations receives the most resistance by far in any discussion of what is needed to overcome the power of race, no matter who is doing the discussing.

The idea of reparations is a biblical one, as the community of Israel recognized the need to have a periodic time of reparations, of repairing. One was called the Jubilee Year (Leviticus 25:1-10), and the other was an order to compensate Hebrew slaves when they were released in the seventh year (Deuteronomy 15:12-18). This idea is based on the concept of things being broken and in need of repair. There was recognition that the necessity of reparations is a spiritual issue, and that is where we must begin our discussion.

It is so difficult to discuss economic compensation to descendants of people who were held in American slavery because in order to do that, we as white



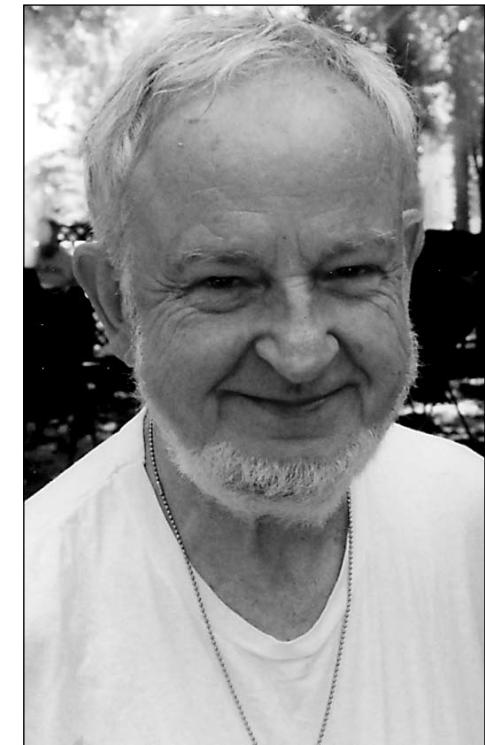
No person of color will be surprised to learn that we who are classified as white are eaten up by the power of race; they are well aware of it.

people would have to acknowledge how much profit we made from slavery between the years 1619-1965. (No, slavery didn't end in 1865, but rather in 1965, though it still exists in some forms.) The profit is incalculable because so many American institutions and families were built on it. Yet we must engage this discussion because, at its heart, slavery (and the racism that undergirded it) was an economic system, building wealth for the rest of the country. The only way to

special field order #15 in January 1865, confiscating 400,000 acres of coastal land in Georgia, South Carolina and Florida, giving it out in 40-acre plots to former slaves who were now free. It held for a while, until new President Andrew Johnson rescinded it in the fall of 1865.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed into law

Whoever Has Two Coats *continued on page 8*



Calvin Kimbrough

Ed Weir ¡Presente! 1942 - 2017

By Murphy Davis

Our dear friend and long-time co-worker Ed Weir slipped away at the Abundant Hope Hospice on January 7 — just two weeks before his 75th birthday. For the last several days of his life he was surrounded by his beloved wife Lora Shain Weir, his four children and his nine grandchildren.

After Ed graduated from Vanderbilt University in the late 1960s, he and his bride MaryRuth went to work in Washington — Ed as a code breaker at the National Security Agency and MaryRuth at the CIA (no, I'm not making this up). It was an unlikely beginning for these two committed folks who soon decided to put their faith into action. They gave away much of what they owned, packed up their three children, and moved to Koinonia Farm in South Georgia to follow the Radical Gospel as taught by Clarence Jordan. In short order they found their place in the movement against the death penalty and the work of welcoming refugees fleeing violence in Central America. They moved with two other families in 1979 to start the Jubilee Community in Northeast Georgia where they helped hundreds of Central Americans to safe homes in Canada. And on a regular basis, Ed visited his friend Henry Willis on death row and found many ways to work for the abolition of the death penalty.

But in the late 1980s Ed and MaryRuth began to hear the call to make another big move. They moved with their fourth child, Sabrina, to a home in the woods near the prison that holds the men on Georgia's death row and the state's

Ed Weir ¡Presente! *continued on page 5*

Changed by Unlikely Angels

By Catherine Meeks

In 1968, when I arrived on the campus of Pepperdine College after attending Compton Junior College, I had no idea that my time there would be the most transformative of my entire life. I met Jennings and Vera Davis, Lucile Todd and Ann King, who were unlikely angels put on my path to teach me that it was possible to love white people and to really be loved by them as well. I am thankful for that very liberating lesson.

Until I arrived at Pepperdine, I had never had a relationship with a white person. All of the white people that I had dealt with in Arkansas were not the least bit interested in seeing me or my family as human beings. My father worked as a sharecropper, my mother was a teacher in the all-African American school across the highway from where we lived in an all-Black neighborhood. All of the white people in our lives were folks who had some kind of power over us and who did not see African American adults as people to be respected and treated as equal fellow human beings.

But shortly after I arrived on the campus at Pepperdine, I became involved with the Student Affairs Office and I met Jennings, Lucile and Ann. They were kind and accepting. They were my first experience with loving and accepting white people. They respected me as a person, though at the time I was not really very aware of that fact. I was a student assistant in their offices and I went about doing my work as quietly as possible and basically kept to myself. My sense of self was very fragile and I was doing the best I could to protect myself in what felt like a very alien space.

However, that effort was to be totally undermined by the events that were to occur while I was a student. A fifteen-year-old



Claudia Nietsch-Ochs

African American male was shot and killed by our elderly and unqualified security guard. He was a person who should never have had that role in the turbulent 60s, and he never should have been given a shotgun.

The college administration did the predictable. They offered their condolences to the family and tried to move on with business as usual. But many of us were outraged by their behavior. The Black Students Association took the matter up and a long series of protests and endless meetings began. It took several weeks to get the administration to realize that their behavior was not going to be accepted because the day had come and gone when a young African American could be shot and killed without any consequences. We were deeply offended that the security

guard had not been charged with anything, but had been asked to pay a fine of \$500, which made no sense to us. We were not interested in his being punished, we were more interested in respect being given to the value of Larry Kimmons' life, and for his family to be treated as if they had lost a valued person instead of someone whose life did not matter. I don't think that the president and others of his cabinet ever really understood. They simply were looking for a way to restore the status quo on the campus.

But there were four people, Jennings Davis, Lucile Todd, Ann King and Vera Davis, who did get it and who felt our pain and frustration. Jennings was the Dean of Students and he stood with us. It was costly to him, but he was neither fearful nor deterred by the fact that those

above him did not agree with him. He stood between the Administration and us and worked night and day to find a way to move us all forward.

Jennings died in November. Lucile and Ann died quite a while ago. Thank God that Vera is still living, and I will get to visit her again before too long. My life was changed forever for the better by all of them. However, I did not realize until a few days ago that Jennings was actually my spiritual father. He accepted me just as I was. He was willing to stand up for me and folks who looked like me without any stipulations attached to his gift of support. He was not motivated by externals. His faith and commitment to the call to work for justice in the world propelled him forward. I miss him deeply. For the past

forty-eight years I talked to him frequently and he always ended the conversation by telling me that he loved me, appreciated my work and prayed for me daily. His wife, Vera, prays for me each day now.

These unlikely angels taught me that white people were indeed human and made in the image of God and that some of them were capable of loving, understanding and accepting me as well as other African Americans without trying to remake us into white people. What gifts they gave to me and the gifts that I have today to use in the work of dismantling racism are shaped by their unconditional love. ♦

Catherine Meeks is the Chair of the Beloved Community: Commission for Dismantling Racism for the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta and the retired Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-cultural Studies and Sociology from Wesleyan College.

Catherine has published six books, and is editor of the 2016 book, Living Into God's Dream: Dismantling Racism in America, which focuses on racial healing and reconciliation. She writes for the Huffington Post and is a regular contributor to Hospitality, published monthly by the Open Door Community. She is involved with prison work, visits regularly on death row and works for the abolition of the death penalty.



HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published by the Open Door Community, Inc., a Baltimore 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.

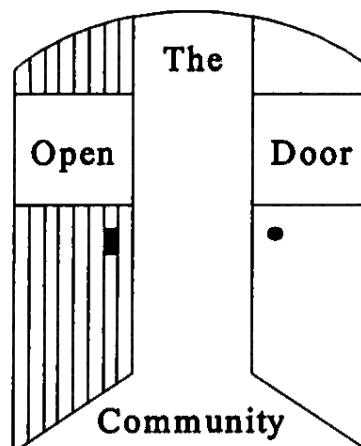
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Please address your communications to the ODC to our new Community Address:

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Thank you, Murphy, David, Robert and Ed

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Open Door Community

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Sarah Humphrey: Coordinator for Administration and the Hardwick Prison Trip

Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry

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ODC/B

Dear Friends and Supporters,
Dear Readers of Hospitality,
Dear Advocates/Allies for our Prisoners and the Oppressed,

The Open Door Community has moved to Baltimore, Maryland. Without younger members to give up incomes and professions to live and work in our interracial, culturally diverse household here at 910 we were not able to carry on the work as it has gone on there for 35 years. It has been easier by far to find volunteers to come and work with us than to find those who want to live *with* the poor in season and out. Our wonderful old building on Ponce de Leon is under contract for a sale likely to be closed within the coming weeks.

Three of us from ODC/A (Open Door Community Atlanta) have moved and are continuing a portion of our work named Open Door Community Baltimore (ODC/B). Murphy Davis and Ed Loring, founding partners 36 years ago, are leading the way. Robert Lee and David Payne are joining the move and are a part of our Leadership Team. David is also on our Board of Directors. They are faithful, gifted, called and ready for the new life with the Spirit of Fire in Baltimore. We four folks share a home in the city with two apartments. We will work, worship, meet together and share some meals.

Our Aims and Purposes will include several of the works we do now. We shall work to be formed and to practice a shared life of radical/progressive discipleship: Bible Study, Culture Critique, worship with Eucharist and foot washing. We will have a new focus on involvement with Democratic Socialism and non-violent movements to disrupt the violence and domination of the American Empire.

Murphy Davis will continue to lead us and others in our Georgia Prison Ministry. The monthly Hardwick Prison Trip will continue with coordination by Sarah Humphrey. Death Row letters, support and occasional visits are a part of our Works of Mercy as well as our Journey for Justice. The Christmas traditions with our prison family will continue. We will go back to Atlanta quarterly to continue with this work and share the love and preparation with beloved friends from New Hope House, First Presbyterian Church Milledgeville, and Central Presbyterian Church Atlanta.

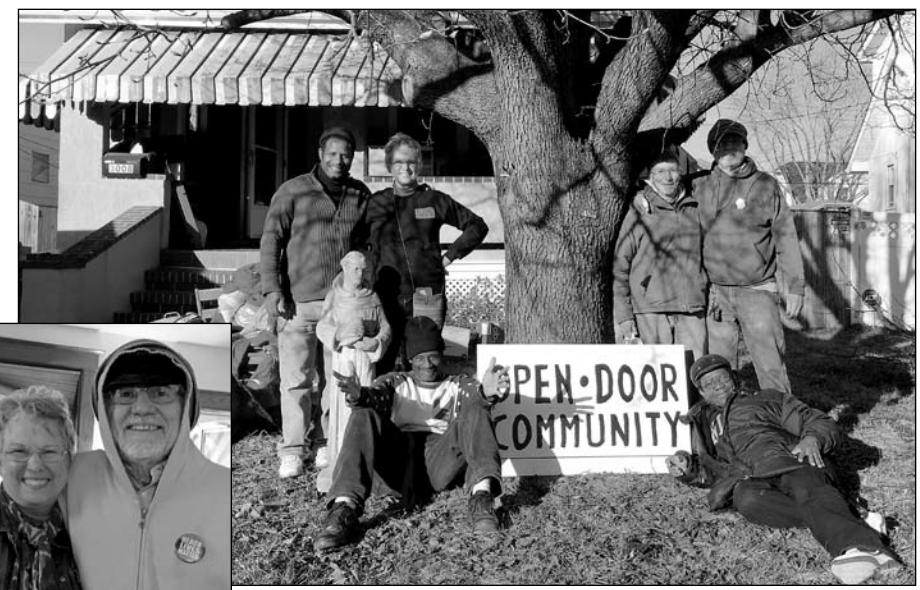
Murphy's other work will be to write her book about the journey of her illness and healing. She has accomplished much already, but now is the time for more quiet and fewer interruptions. Her work will be a major contribution to our movement as we battle mass incarceration, the death penalty, war, the scourge of cancer and the struggle for health care made available to all.

In addition, Murphy and Ed will be present to Hannah and Jason Murphy Buc and our delightful granddaughter, Michaela. Michaela is named for the radical, powerful, wild peacemaker Mike Vosburg-Casey. Mike lived for two years at the Open Door Community and then fell head over heels in love with Amy Vosburg. Hannah, Mike and Amy were very close friends. As Mike was dying with cancer, Hannah and Jason decided to name their first child for Mike, so our granddaughter is Michaela!

Hospitality newspaper will continue. We have an excellent group of writers who reflect a life of feisty experiences out of which their writings are born. We will continue to ask you for support in each issue of the paper. If you are not receiving the paper, or if (God forbid) you want to be taken off the mailing list, please let me know at eduardloring@opendoorcommunity.org.

The ODC/B will find a way and a place to feed the hungry. As yet, we do not know what the work will be. We want to tabernacle on the streets. We shall see how the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of the Black Jesus bring light to this journey.

David Payne and Robert T. Lee will be part-time staff of the community. They will receive a stipend. They will also have part-time jobs in the city to supplement what the ODC/B can share with them. Murphy and Ed will receive no income from any donation given to the ODC/B, but will have an income adequate for their life in Baltimore. We are preparing an annual budget for 2017 that we will be pleased to share with donors and friends.



Robert Lee / ODC Baltimore

Back: Robert Lee, Murphy Davis, Nibs Stroupe, Eduard Loring
Front: Kevin and Simon, who helped unload in Baltimore.



Please support us as we make this move. We will need several months to rest and learn who we are and what to do in this new location. As has been true for the past 35 years, we need you. We cannot live our lives without your helping hand, compassionate heart and supporting gifts.

Open Door Community
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Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all,
Ed Loring
For us all: Murphy Davis, Robert T. Lee, David Payne

P.S. As we left Atlanta, Murphy was diagnosed at Emory with a rapidly growing squamous cell cancer on her head. She is in consultation with Head and Neck Surgeons at Johns Hopkins Hospital and will have surgery by mid-March. Your prayers have carried us through these 22 years of battling cancer and we pray that you will continue to pray for us as she faces this her sixth surgery for a third type of cancer. ♣

Receivers of Mercy

Each Other's Angels

Practicing Personalism as a Catholic Worker Tradition

by Toni Flynn

Resource Publications

2016



Reviewed by Dick Rustay

There we were, members of the Open Door Community, gathered together, mourning over the closing of our building at 910 Ponce de Leon, Atlanta. In the midst of our sorrow, Ed Loring spoke up and shared a conversation he had with Freddie, one of our friends from the streets. We have had a very conflictual relationship with Freddie. When he was sober, it was a joy to give him services and talk with him. But when he was drinking he was a different person, yelling and threatening bodily harm to everyone around him. We would then ask Freddie to leave and stay away for a period of time. Each time, after his time was served, we would welcome him back. Sorry to say he spent more time away than receiving our services. Ed had recently seen him down our alley after a long break from the Open Door. He cautiously approached Freddie, not knowing what kind of reception to expect. Freddie saw Ed, rushed up to him, threw his arms around him and proceeded to say how sorry he was to hear we were closing our doors and how thankful he was for all the help we had been to him.

When Ed shared this encounter with us we were all astounded. Never in our wildest thoughts would we imagine that Freddie had those feelings about us. Our sharing suddenly changed. Instead of being givers of mercy we were receivers of mercy. Freddie was an "angel unaware."

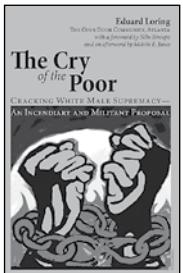
This story gets to the heart of Toni Flynn's book, *Each Other's Angels: Practicing Personalism as a Catholic Worker Tradition*. Her book mainly consists of accounts of her encounters with homeless folk — some mentally ill, some in prison and some on the edge of homelessness. She interprets

these encounters in the framework of the Catholic Worker and Benedictine traditions, giving an excellent description in her Overview of the Catholic Worker tradition at work. "The aim of the Catholic Worker is to live in accordance with the justice and the love of Christ." When one does this, they find themselves reaching out to the homeless, those in prison, many mentally ill, to those folks who have been pushed aside and forgotten by mainstream society. In so doing, they become the receivers as well as givers. For so often, in the marginalized, "Christ comes in the stranger's guise," a deep, deep mystery!

Toni's struggle to live in accordance with the justice and love of Christ took her from Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo and then far East to Columbus, Georgia, where she was arrested for protesting the School of the Americas, an Army training program for Latin American soldiers that resulted in terrible killings in Central America. She spent six months in a Georgia jail and encountered the presence of Christ in her sister inmates. The server becomes served, each other's angels! When Toni was released from jail in Georgia, her first stop was at the Open Door Community and I was privileged to serve her with pizza, which she had requested as her favorite meal and something she hadn't had for six months. It was an honor to serve her and hear her story.

Receivers of Mercy *continued on page 6*

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
paperback
\$10.00 suggested donation

The Festival of Shelters

A Celebration for Love and Justice



By Eduard Loring
with Heather Bargeron
preface by Dick Rustay

66 pages
19 color photographs
Paperback
Free for the asking

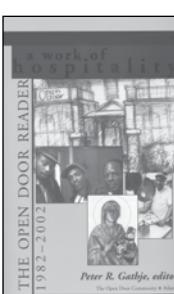


Sharing the Bread of Life
Hospitality and Resistance
at the Open Door Community

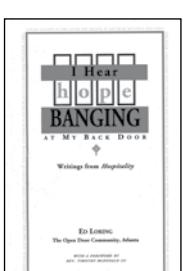
By Peter R. Gathje
272 pages
45 photographs
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\$10.00 suggested donation

A Work of Hospitality

The Open Door Reader
1982 - 2002



Peter R. Gathje, editor
384 pages
Bibliography and Index
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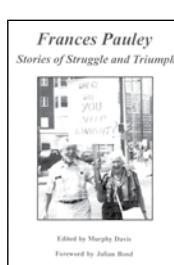


**I Hear Hope Banging
at My Back Door**
Writings from *Hospitality*

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
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The Imperial Hotel Takeover

A Reporter's Recollection

By Ben Smith

The call came early, much earlier than this night owl could stand. At 5 a.m., Atlanta Journal assignment desk editor Herb Steely sent me to 355 Peachtree Street. There, a group of protesters had taken over the Imperial Hotel to demand housing for homeless people.

As a young reporter who'd just recently graduated from suburban coverage in Gwinnett County, I'd never heard of the Imperial Hotel or its history as a single-room-occupancy (SRO) building. I was also largely uneducated about Atlanta's homeless problem. And just about all I knew about the Open Door Community, whose founders co-led the protest, was that it was a non-profit located a few doors down from my apartment complex on Ponce de Leon Avenue in a building that at the time had a large display in the front yard of a crucified vagrant in effigy.

Without the Imperial takeover, June 18, 1990 would have been another typical pre-dawn early summer morning in Atlanta. Temperatures hovered in the mid-70s and there was very little wind when I arrived to find that eight advocates for the homeless had broken into the dilapidated hotel. Among them were the Open Door's Ed Loring, Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede and John Flournoy, as well as Sister Carol Schlicksup and Sister JoAnn Geary of the Order of St. Joseph.

I would remain at the Imperial nearly all day, watching an action by a handful swell into a major protest.

Within a few hours, the heat swelled into the 90s, as did the crowd and the noise. By 11 a.m., 30 protesters marched in front of the building carrying placards while the original eight squatters unfurled a banner that read: "House the Homeless Here."

"We ask right now for [Mayor] Maynard Jackson to come up here with us," Ed Loring called out on a bullhorn to a growing crowd of law enforcement officers, reporters and onlookers. From time to time, I watched him call out to homeless passersby in the street. I was struck that he knew them by name.

The AJC had only six column inches in the old Journal blue streak edition for my first story on the Imperial takeover. However, the ongoing story would grow in length and placement over the following 15 days, eventually reaching page one. The squatters, as they were called by law enforcement and the media, turned that crumbling old building into a shelter they called Welcome House. They cleared space for as many as 50 homeless people, a number that multiplied to as many as 300 during the takeover. The group served breakfast for hundreds in the mornings. With the aid of media coverage, they educated us all about the city's failure to provide for its homeless population and the loss of existing SROs to redevelopment. Most importantly, they refused to leave until something was done, thus forcing the city and representatives of developer and building owner John Portman into negotiations.

For that reason, the takeover of the Imperial Hotel stands out among all the protests I covered during my 22 years at the AJC as the most significant, except for perhaps the inmate takeover of the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary. It was more than waving placards and shouting slogans, though there was plenty of that.

The city's chief negotiator, Shirley Franklin, actually spent a night with the protesters at the Imperial. "[Homelessness] has been a crisis for a long time, but their demonstration

has made us sit up and take notice," said Franklin after her visit, as if looking outside the window or passing a homeless person sleeping on a concrete sidewalk wasn't enough.

On July 3, the day before an annual Independence Day parade was scheduled to march right past the Imperial, the protesters announced that an agreement had been reached with the city. The agreement enabled the city to clear out the homeless squatters and arrest the handful of original protesters who started the takeover. Franklin promised jobs. Mayor Jackson promised to build thousands of single-room-occupancy housing units for the homeless before leaving office in 1994. The Imperial would be redeveloped to provide SRO housing again.

We can debate the short-term accomplishments vs. the long-term disappointments that followed this event. After all, Franklin's promised jobs never materialized and Mayor Jackson fell way short in the number of SROs he actually delivered. However, the abandoned hotel was transformed and thrives today.

The Imperial Hotel takeover reminds us that without the work of people who are willing to go to the mat, take to the



ODC Photograph
Eduard Loring and Elizabeth Dede interviewed by Ben Smith June 18, 1990

streets and rock the boat, including risking serious jail time to bring justice to the poor and marginalized, this work simply will not get done. The homeless and poor are not a courted constituency. They have no leverage, no power, no money. Those who would take up their cause face a daunting and lonely task, especially in a city where there has historically been little support for boat-rockers.

That's probably why there are so few people like Ed Loring and Murphy Davis who are willing to take up this kind of work. The challenges of this daunting and lonely task are overwhelming, especially when there are so few to back you up. This city desperately needs more people like them, people who are willing to remind us that a city's greatness might not be measured by the size of its roads, the number of conventions it attracts, the quality of its sports teams and its stadiums and whether it can attract high profile international sporting events such as the Olympic Games. Instead, a city's greatness must surely be measured by how well it takes care of its most vulnerable citizens.

Perhaps that's the kind of greatness Katharine Lee Bates was talking about when she wrote the fourth stanza of "America the Beautiful," the verse in which she described future cities made of gleaming alabaster, "undimmed by human tears."

America is an unfinished project; so is Atlanta. Politicians and developers would likely agree with that statement but not in the sense that Bates meant. Until those tears are dried, until the problem of homelessness is solved, this can

Imperial Hotel *continued next page*

Radical Oral History

Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain

The Imperial Hotel Occupation as Prophetic Politics

by Terry Easton

The Open Door Press

Reviewed by Todd Moye

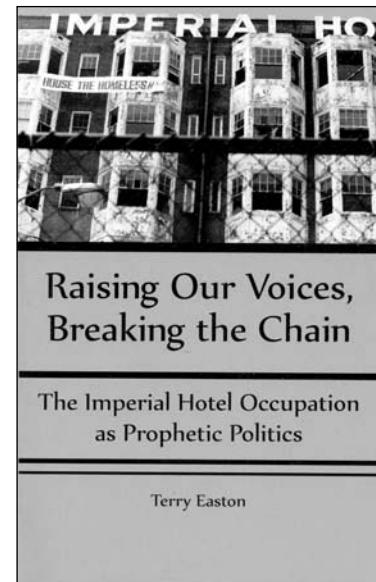
Terry Easton's *Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain: The Imperial Hotel Occupation as Prophetic Politics* tells the story of one of the most fascinating and important chapters in Atlanta's recent history.

In 1990, People for Urban Justice (PUJ), the political arm of the Open Door Community, planned a one-day event at the shuttered Imperial Hotel to focus city leaders' attention on the dire need for affordable housing. They intended to break into the hotel and hang a "House the Homeless Here" banner from a high window, get arrested and hold a press conference. They did take over the hotel, but to their surprise property owner John Portman — arguably the most important developer in Atlanta history — refused to press trespassing charges, so Atlanta police could make no arrests. Almost on a whim and without any advance planning, PUJ invited homeless friends into the hotel that afternoon. They cleaned up the property and ended up staying for sixteen days, raising hell the whole time.

The action was galvanizing, in part because it caused a public relations nightmare for city leaders like Mayor Maynard Jackson who were preparing bids to host the Olympics and a Super Bowl. Jackson had no choice but to take the activists' concerns seriously and enter negotiations to develop affordable housing solutions for Atlanta's homeless and working poor. Some of those negotiations bore fruit; others exposed the activists' inexperience. But by the end of the saga the city had committed to providing housing that would accommodate hundreds more poor Atlantans than it had before the takeover. Direct action worked.

Easton's narrative is built around oral history interviews with PUJ activists. He mixes edited excerpts of the interviews with his own analysis and context, but the voices and ideas of the activists who led the occupation drive the book. *Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain* is therefore an addition to a body of work by scholar-activists and popular educators that is as deep as it is long.

Dan Kerr's recent article in the *Oral History Review*, "Allan Nevins is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical



Oral History Practice in the United States," got me thinking about the place Terry's book occupies in the larger world of radical oral history-based scholarship and education practices. Kerr's title refers to the commonly held belief that Dr. Allan Nevins, the Columbia University historian who founded Columbia's Oral History Research Office, was the (or at least a) founding father of the oral history movement in the U.S. Kerr pushes back against this idea and identifies another set of founding mothers and fathers — radical scholars and popular educators like Alice and Staughton Lynd, Septima Clark, Ella Baker and Myles Horton, who used oral history and related techniques not to document so much as to empower.

Nevins and those who identified with his approach interviewed titans of industry, members of presidential administrations, and other elites to document one kind of history. In contrast, the radical oral historians who built on the popular education techniques that Horton pioneered at the Highlander Folk Center embraced oral history as a "powerful tool for initiating change," as Kerr puts it. Nevins documented the powerful; the radicals empowered the undocumented. The former camp tended to work in universities. Several of those in the latter camp worked in academia at one time or another, too, but they tended to be free agents. Easton is an English professor at the University of North Georgia, but his goals for *Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain* clearly mark him as a member of the radical camp.

The best oral history, as the great Italian practitioner Alessandro Portelli has written, tells us less about the events

that interviewees lived through than the meanings that interviewees ascribe to them. An oral history is a co-creation of a trained, prepared interviewer and someone who participated in something worth remembering. It begins with the interviewer's respectful approach to a would-be interviewee and the words (be they spoken or unspoken), "I think you're important. I would like to learn from you." When practiced by people like Easton, this kind of knowledge generation and sharing can document the stories of those who challenge power, which in turn leads to social change.

Easton could have written a perfectly fine book about the Imperial takeover using only other historians' writings, newspaper archives and official statements from the mayor's office. He did consult those sources, but his project really started from the moment he approached PUJ activists and told them he wanted to learn from them. Their voices, their insights, jump off the page. Critically, Easton was able to get them talking openly and honestly and in good humor about PUJ's successes and the group's missteps.

When Alice and Staughton Lynd published their pioneering book *Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working-Class Organizers* in 1973 they meant it to be an organizing tool for workers and organizers, not a "voices from below" document for academics to exploit. In that same vein, I suspect that Easton's book will prove most useful for organizers — who need to know what hasn't worked in situations similar to their own as well as what has, what pitfalls they need to look out for, what goals are unrealistic but worth fighting for anyway. They — and the scholars who will read and learn from this book — can also learn a lot from Easton's methods of co-creation.

Staughton Lynd considered oral history "history from the bottom up carried a step further because it's people at the bottom doing their own history," and he recommended it to radicals for that reason. The members of PUJ were no one's idea of an elite, but many of them were quite eloquent and some (including the editors of *Hospitality*) are accustomed to putting their thoughts into print. Several members of PUJ might not be used to writing things down, but to Easton's great credit they all come across as something like co-authors of *Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain*.

There's an elegance to this, because it is consistent with PUJ's approach to the takeover. The members of PUJ invited their homeless brothers and sisters into the Imperial, but they also invited them into their decision-making. They were all co-creators of the action, and now they are co-creators of a great book. ♦

Todd Moye teaches U.S. history and is head of the Oral History Program at the University of North Texas in Denton.

Imperial Hotel *continued*

never be a land of the free or a home of the brave. ♦

Ben Smith has recently completed 2 1/2 years as an investigator and paralegal at Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta. A veteran reporter, he worked for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution for 22 years, covering primarily politics and government.

Available Now!

Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain

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

Ed Weir ;Presente! *continued from page 1*

execution chamber. There they established a home — New Hope House — to provide welcome and hospitality to the families of those at Jackson who were condemned to death by the state of Georgia. The Weirs also began to spend many weeks of every year as steadfast witnesses in death penalty trials across the state. Time and time again they sat with family members or at times with an isolated defendant as the state performed its deadly deeds; seeking revenge and retribution in response to an act of murder; responding to violence with the hope for more violence. They sat behind defense lawyers who felt the strength of their support and prayers for life, hope and the mending of brokenness. They encouraged and affirmed the legal battle against this barbaric practice that step by step deepens the loss of community solidarity and widens the circle of grief and pain. They gave themselves to suffer with those who were forced into a process they often did not understand; to suffer through a drama carefully choreographed to extract a toll of daily humiliation and shame; to suffer the pretense of a legal charade that promised to give

something that would help those who had been victimized by crime — something that the state cannot give and which can only sharpen the bitter sword of the thirst for revenge. They suffered. There were many tears and deep sorrow in this work. But their suffering was also redemptive: in the friendships that were formed, in the lives that were redeemed, in the choice to help bear a nearly unbearable burden.

MaryRuth died in 2006 of brain cancer. Ed suffered the loss but continued. Then came the gift of renewed life, love and partnership. Ed had lost his MaryRuth and Lora Shain had lost her Bill. Out of the loneliness and loss Ed and Lora formed a new family and a new partnership in the ministry of New Hope House. It was a blessing to all who knew them.

Recent years have brought gradual diminishment for Ed. Dementia began to take him away to a distant land. A heart attack weakened his body and his body began to let go. It was not easy, but his final days in hospice care were a time

*Ed Weir ;Presente! *continued on page 8**

Just Peace and Voices of War

By Weldon D. Nisly

On October 1, in Berlin's public square, we held a funeral procession for victims of war. Our Christian Peacemaker Teams training group led a public action to memorialize the lives and mourn the deaths of bombing victims in Iraqi Kurdistan. A banner proclaimed our message of solidarity and sorrow: "Voices from Kurdistan: Stop the Bombing!"

It was the last afternoon of our month-long CPT training that began and ended in Berlin, bracketing three weeks in the Czech Republic. With a few Germans and Kurds, we gave voice to Kurdish people killed by bombs dropped on their mountain villages and farms. Processing across the public square carrying a "dead body" wrapped in a white sheet, we chanted a Kurdish funeral dirge. The "body" we carried was one of our CPT members, but the deaths we commemorated were all too real. Still chanting, we laid the "body" reverently on the cold wet plaza and gathered around it while our Kurdish CPT member proclaimed stories of bombing victims to all who dared to listen.

On December 19, in this Berlin public square, a man ploughed a truck through outdoor cafes, killing 12 and injuring scores of people enjoying food and Christmas shopping. They, like bombing victims, experienced ordinary life becoming deadly terror in an instant. A truck was turned into a weapon of terror in retaliation for the terror of war.

The news was saturated with the story of terror by truck, while remaining silent on terror by bombs. Our hearts anguish for victims of terror by truck. Where is our anguish for terror by bombs? Especially the terror of bombs paid for by our tax dollars.

We are confronted with the terror of war. Will we seek nonviolent Just Peace and break the cycle of violence? Or will we continue the downward spiral of violence that is the terror of just war?

The CPT team regularly visits Kurdish farmers and families in the mountains of northeastern Iraqi Kurdistan who know the terror of bombs and are forced to live as innocent pawns in endless war. CPT

part-time roles. Training provides formational grounding in nonviolent spiritual disciplines and transformational vision for undoing all oppressions, especially the oppressions of racism, sexism, classism and materialism that intersect with and are inherent in militarism.

CPT serves at the invitation of and in collaboration with local people committed to nonviolent peacemaking and human rights, with ongoing teams in Palestine, Iraqi Kurdistan, Colombia, Canada with Indigenous Peoples and the Greek island of Lesbos with refugees. CPT also responds to short term invitations such as Standing Rock in North Dakota, or Nogales on the Arizona-Mexico border.

CPT's vision has evolved since being founded in 1986. An early CPT mantra was "getting in the way," meaning getting in *The Way* with Jesus by *getting in the way of war*. Over time, people caught in war and oppression helped CPT see that "getting in the way" was a response of power and privilege: white North American Christians presuming to bring heroic action and answers into conflicts of war and



The CPT protest in Berlin October 1, 2016.

Our voices cry out to the United States and allies and enemies who blindly believe the lie that bombing promotes peace and settles scores.

seeks to amplify their voices, crying out in sorrow and solidarity, "Stop the bombing!" for all the world to hear and heed.

It is not a cry to Turkey or Iran alone, even though they are dropping bombs on Kurdish people. It is not a cry to Germany alone, even though we were in the center of Germany's capital. It is a cry to all warring nations to cease their wicked ways.

Our voices cry out to the United States and allies and enemies who blindly believe the lie that bombing promotes peace and settles scores. Waging war depends on training to believe violent lies and kill innocent people.

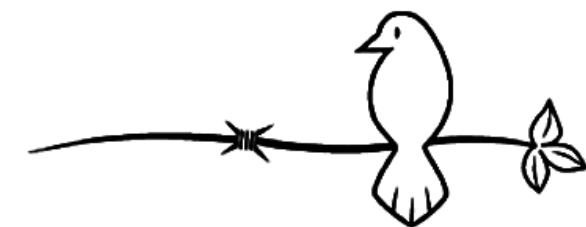
Waging peace depends on disciplined nonviolent truth-seeking training. Gandhi's word was *satyagraha*, a genuine search for truth. The peace movement often neglects the formative power of nonviolent training. The church often denies that nonviolent love is *The Way* of Jesus. The white Jesus is the way of violent dominance and just war. The Black Jesus is *The Way* of nonviolent love and Just Peace.

Committed to a nonviolent search for truth, CPT requires a month-long training for those serving full or

oppression. Partners have communicated that they don't need privileged people imposing heroic solutions. They welcome collaborative partners to undo oppression, end war, uphold human rights and envision Just Peace. Now CPT's vision is "building partnerships to transform violence and oppression."

CPT is becoming more spiritually contemplative and comprehensive. The rigors of nonviolent peacemaking are sustained by diverse contemplative spiritual traditions. Partnerships nurture a spiritually comprehensive peacebuilding network. CPT continues to be rooted in the Christian tradition, particularly *The Way* of Jesus, while embracing people of other spiritual traditions committed to nonviolent Just Peacebuilding.

Two-week delegations are the way most people serve with CPT. In March 2003, I was on the CPT delegation in Baghdad during the U.S.-led "shock and awe" bombing invasion of Iraq. We were intentionally "getting in the way" of war. The Bush administration was predisposed to wage war on Iraq based on deception about weapons of mass destruction. We were called to stand with victims of bomb-



christian peacemaker teams

ing by living our "no" to war being waged in our name. In September-October 2014, I served on a CPT delegation in Iraqi Kurdistan during the ISIS crisis. "Building partnerships to transform violence and oppression" meant working with Kurdish human rights groups documenting women and girls missing from families displaced by ISIS' occupation within Iraq and Syria.

In late 2013, I retired from pastoral ministry to live more fully into what I am calling Contemplative Just Peacebuilding. My CJP vision includes a commitment to CPT, serving several months each year on a team in Iraqi Kurdistan and Palestine as well as on short-term teams where CPT is invited to collaborate for Just Peace.

South African Archbishop Tutu confronted us with

truth: "To be neutral in a situation of injustice is to have chosen sides already." The Black Jesus confronts us with the same truth: What we do (or don't do) to the least of these, we do (or don't do) to Jesus. We choose nonviolent solidarity with victims of violence. Or we choose to side with those who inflict violence. Memorializing and mourning those harmed by lethal bombs or lethal trucks means following the Black Jesus on *The Way* of Just Peace. ♦

After 40 years of Mennonite Church ministry that included community, pastoral and peace ministries, Weldon Nisly currently devotes himself in "retirement" to Contemplative Just Peacebuilding and his work with Christian Peacemaker Teams. He is a Benedictine Oblate. His life is devoted to the abolition of war.

Receivers of Mercy *continued from page 3*

Toni writes from the heart. Each essay reveals this truth. You find Toni struggling to be helpful among the marginalized, those folks ignored by society, and, most of the time, she fails. But she is convinced that God has called her to be faithful, not necessarily successful, and so she struggles and in the struggle she often becomes aware of the presence of God. She invites the reader to join in the struggle to serve the least of these, to seek justice in an unjust society. She invites us to serve the least and discover that even in failure — as in all probability the Open Door will see Freddie die on the streets or in prison — we will also meet the presence of God. ♦

After living at the Open Door Community for over 27 years, Dick and Gladys Rustay moved to Vancouver, Washington to live with Dick's brother and sister-in-law. Their hearts will still be at the Open Door and with all their friends on the streets and the prisoners on Georgia's Death Row.

The Only Solution is Love

Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved By Beauty
An Intimate Portrait of My Grandmother

By Kate Hennessy
Simon & Schuster

Reviewed by Rosalie G. Riegle

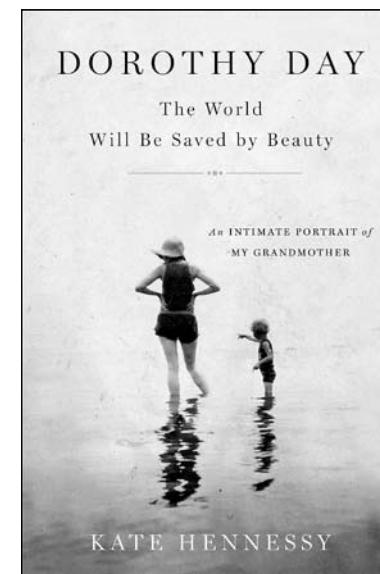
"We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community."

Dorothy Day concluded her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, with this paean to love in community, words that remain a touchstone to all who attempt to live in the ethos of the Catholic Worker movement, as does the Open Door Community.

Now Dorothy's youngest granddaughter, Kate Hennessy, has written her own book about Dorothy Day and love. In *Dorothy Day: The World Will Be Saved By Beauty*, Kate writes about the love Dorothy had for her only child, Tamar, for Tamar's father, Forster Batterham, and for Tamar's children, of which Kate is the youngest. It's a book that will resonate with readers of *Hospitality*, especially those who were lucky to experience the love which flowed from the Open Door on Ponce de Leon.

Dorothy Day (1897-1980) changed America by giving us a new way to serve the poor as Christians, a personalist way that listens to people's stories of oppression and also works to change the conditions that caused their hardship. Dorothy was a writer, a social activist and a war resister, steeped in American socialism when she was a young writer, living the gay life in Greenwich Village in the '20s. She was also a lover, a lover of life and a lover of a particular man, Forster Batterham, with whom she lived for several years. Pained by an earlier abortion, Dorothy was overjoyed when she found she and Forster were to have a child. When that child, Tamar Teresa, was born, Dorothy had her baptized, and in 1927 she herself became a Catholic, eventually joining with Peter Maurin to begin the Catholic Worker movement, which now comprises more than 240 communities. The Open Door proudly lists itself in the Catholic Worker directory at catholicworker.org.

Several books about Dorothy and the Catholic Worker have been written, including my oral biography, *Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her*. Kate's book, an "intimate memoir," tells of a Dorothy few knew outside of her family. It gives us a woman whose laughter and love of life gladdened all who were with her, even though she



sometimes battled depression. It gives us a woman who loved Forster until the day she died, even though she was celibate after beginning the Catholic Worker. It gives us a mother who loved her daughter passionately, but sometimes criticized her in ways that hurt. It gives us a grandmother who was pulled in different directions by love, but who helped to raise her nine grandchildren whenever she could find time away from the demanding life of the Catholic Worker. It also gives us some of Kate, who inherited both her grandmother's talent and love of writing.

I couldn't put the book down. First I read it for "the facts," and both those new to Dorothy's life and those familiar with its outlines will find much here that's not in other books, including details about her pre-conversion life and answers to questions about Tamar's relationship with her mother.

Then I read it again for the beauty of its prose. Kate has spent many years in Ireland and is living there now, on its wild Western edge. At the risk of romanticizing a style that needs no gloss, I hear Kate's looping cadences reflecting both the sea she sees and the complex loves of which she writes. The tender words of description, especially of the people and places important to her, delighted my second reading when I noticed even more memorable details.

Kate shows how her famous grandmother's love of her family both complicated and complemented the devotion to the Catholic Worker she founded in 1933 when her daughter was seven. I learned some surprising things about Dorothy's early life and loves in Part One, "The Mystery of Grace." For instance, she learned from her friend Eugene O'Neill to take people and their stories seriously. Thus, even as a young writer, she showed love in action by giving a deserved dignity

to the people she wrote about. She brought this dignity to the Catholic Worker and its work of hospitality to those on the margins.

Dorothy's decision to become a Roman Catholic severed her relationship with Tamar's father, although Kate shows that the break was not complete, and gives a thoughtful picture of the ties between the three of them through the years of Dorothy's life. Some of those years were hard for all, especially Tamar's teen years, when Dorothy's Catholicism was colored by a religiosity not suitable to a young girl.

Tamar married David Hennessy when she was only eighteen, and the marriage was not a happy one. But Dorothy so thoroughly believed Dostoevsky's line that "the world will be saved by beauty" that sometimes her words colored the physical and psychological deprivation of her daughter's life in ways Tamar could not understand. These and other frictions are explored with loving care by Kate in Part Two, "The Mystery of Love."

In Part Three, "The Mystery of Freedom," we learn how Tamar and her children and Dorothy as she aged were able to grow into the freedom to be the people God meant them to be. For Dorothy, that meant accepting that her daughter and most of the children would not be Catholic; for Tamar it meant accepting her mother's Catholicism. For Kate, it meant living for a time at the Worker in New York but realizing that life there wasn't for her.

Part Four, "The Art of Human Contact," is shorter and chronicles Dorothy's quiet final days at Maryhouse Catholic Worker in New York, with Tamar at her side as she died. The book ends with Kate again visiting her grandmother's room, still grieving but united with her through the years of conversations with Tamar. In the final page, Kate joins the women at the Worker for lunch, thus ending her story with the human contact Dorothy so relished on her long journey to God. Truly, the only solution is love and love comes in community.

The World Will Be Saved By Beauty was published by Simon and Schuster in January, and is available in both hardcover and ebook. It's sure to take a starring role as people continue their fascination with an American radical now being considered for official canonization by the Roman Catholic Church; it gives a compelling portrait of a Dorothy Day who saw the necessity of God's mysterious grace, love and freedom in all human lives. ♦

Rosalie Riegle is a grandmother, an oral historian and emerita in English from Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan. Now living in Evanston, Illinois and active with Su Casa Catholic Worker on the South Side of Chicago, Rosalie's latest books are Doing Time for Peace: Resistance, Family, and Community, and Crossing the Line: Nonviolent Resisters Speak Out for Peace.

Apocalyptic Angela and the Fall of Babylon.

By Peter Gathje

She had not been to Manna House in months. I could not remember her name. She came into the quiet of a slow Tuesday morning, loudly going on about the anti-Christ and an accompanying gleeful anticipation of, as she put it over and over again, "The fall, the fall of Babylon." Finally, a guest irritated by the commotion asked, "Who is that?"

Her name, we learned, was Angela. Angela — that is, "angel, messenger of God." Suddenly John's vision recorded in the Book of Revelation rushed into the living room of Manna House:

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with the angel's splendor. The angel called out

with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxury." (Revelation 18:1-3)

"Babylon is going down, and I couldn't be happier," Angela said. "It deserves nothing but destruction."

"Is Trump the anti-Christ?" a guest asked.

"His first name does have six letters," I responded, knowing this way of seeking connection between biblical text and contemporary character. We were aiming for 666, but

with "Trump" we were one short. And none of us knew his middle name. I looked it up later; it's John. No doubt someone will come up with a way to figure that Trump translates into 666. But this was missing Angela's point and the seriousness of the next question.

"Is this really the end?" a guest asked. "Things out here look bad." Angela responded, "Babylon is falling, the falling of Babylon will be great. Great will be Babylon's fall."

It is an interesting fact that neither Luther nor Calvin thought highly of the Book of Revelation. Luther thought it should be excluded from the Scripture. He wrote, "My spirit cannot accommodate itself to this book. For me this is reason enough not to think highly of it: Christ is neither taught nor known in it." Calvin wrote commentaries on all the books of

Apocalyptic Angela *continued on page 8*

Poem

Beyond the wooden pulpits of
Ancient brown brick buildings
Built by broken black backs.
Let us walk beyond the valley
Of the Shadow of death, beyond
The fear of evil. Let us go
To time past, now in time
Present that cunningly leads
to Time future.

The afternoon nimbly naps against
The azure arena of the World.
Why talk to me of old men dying
In useless urban urinals? For
You have seen them sadly slip
The shroud across the body of
Your Saul. Wipe your tiny tears
That tear — you are now the
King. King of the Jews! Oh,
Great David.

We walk beyond the limits of
The world, but is there not
Time? Time for you and time
For me to stand and stare.
The silent stalking dread of death,
You have known them all. The
Blue-black curl of hate upon your sword:
The Amalekite, Philistines by the hundreds,
Rechab and Baanah — Yes, you know
The cry of the valley of death.

But let us weep no more for
Violent victory is a thing of beauty.
Beyond church dinners down dark
Halls of time the shadows cast its
Dingling formidable forms. And
You have known them all already.
Judah for a moment; Israel for
Life — A victorious King! Oh David.

poetry corner

Julie Lonneman

Jerusalem you home, its shade no
Rest for the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites
And Syrians. And it shall
Be forever — with the good grace of God.

The lonely crowd launders toward
Timeless time. Seething sin slips
And calls uncautiously to you and me.
Sin leads to sin and guilt to guilt
Adultery to murder and friend to
Foe. Bathsheba is gone
And pleasure spent.
But has the world grown calm?
A son rebels and hair among
the Twigs must die. Is Sheba
Last? Or do the Philistines cry?

A mission house, a single light
Do memories flood your sight?
Songs of Praise to your God
And mine. The World, alas, is
His. Justice must reign, The
Covenant is made — The word
has come to us.

The night finally falls, shadows
seep into dark darkness. The
countless counted, the plague
plagued, the offering offered.
God shall keep us for another day.
Let us leave.

— Eduard Loring

*Previously published in the Columbia Theological
Seminary Bulletin, Vol LVIII, July 1965.*

Apocalyptic Angela *continued from page 7*

the Bible except Revelation. Revelation makes scant appearances in the lectionary, the ordered readings of mainline churches.

Angela's cry was a reminder: Revelation is dangerous. Apocalypse rejects the reigning order. There is no compromise possible. We are to give our all to a different vision of human life, where "Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more" and where there flows the river of life with nearby trees producing abundant fruit and leaves that "are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 21:4, 22:2-3)

Revelation is a book favored by those with little or no investment in the present order, like Angela coming in from the streets. It is favored in store-front churches that have long names like "Apostolic and Spirit Anointed Church of the Holy People of God," and by wild-eyed street preachers carrying banners and handing out tracts about the end times. Such social locations for Revelation sometimes leads to a disdainful dismissal by sophisticated liberal Christians. Revelation gets safely placed within "apocalyptic literature" that dealt with the Roman Empire, a passing moment in church history before a more rational Christianity emerged reconciled to the existing order. Equally trivializing is the reduction of Revelation to a divine bus schedule in which those who do not know the proper turn of events will be "left behind."

Angela's announcement came from a deeper place, of wound and hurt and disgust known on the streets of Babylon. "This will not last. This is not God's way," as she said. I wondered as Angela wandered down the street: Where do I put my hope? Revelation repeats several times, "Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus." (Rev 14:12, see also 13:10, 1:9, 2:2, 2:10, 3:10-11) along with this call, "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not take part in her sins." (Rev 18:4) Patient persistence in faithful resistance is called for. And as another angel(a) put it not that long ago at Christmastime, "Do not be afraid." (Luke 1:30, 2:10, Matthew 1:20) ♦

Peter Gathje is a professor and Assistant Academic Dean at 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@memphis-seminary.edu)



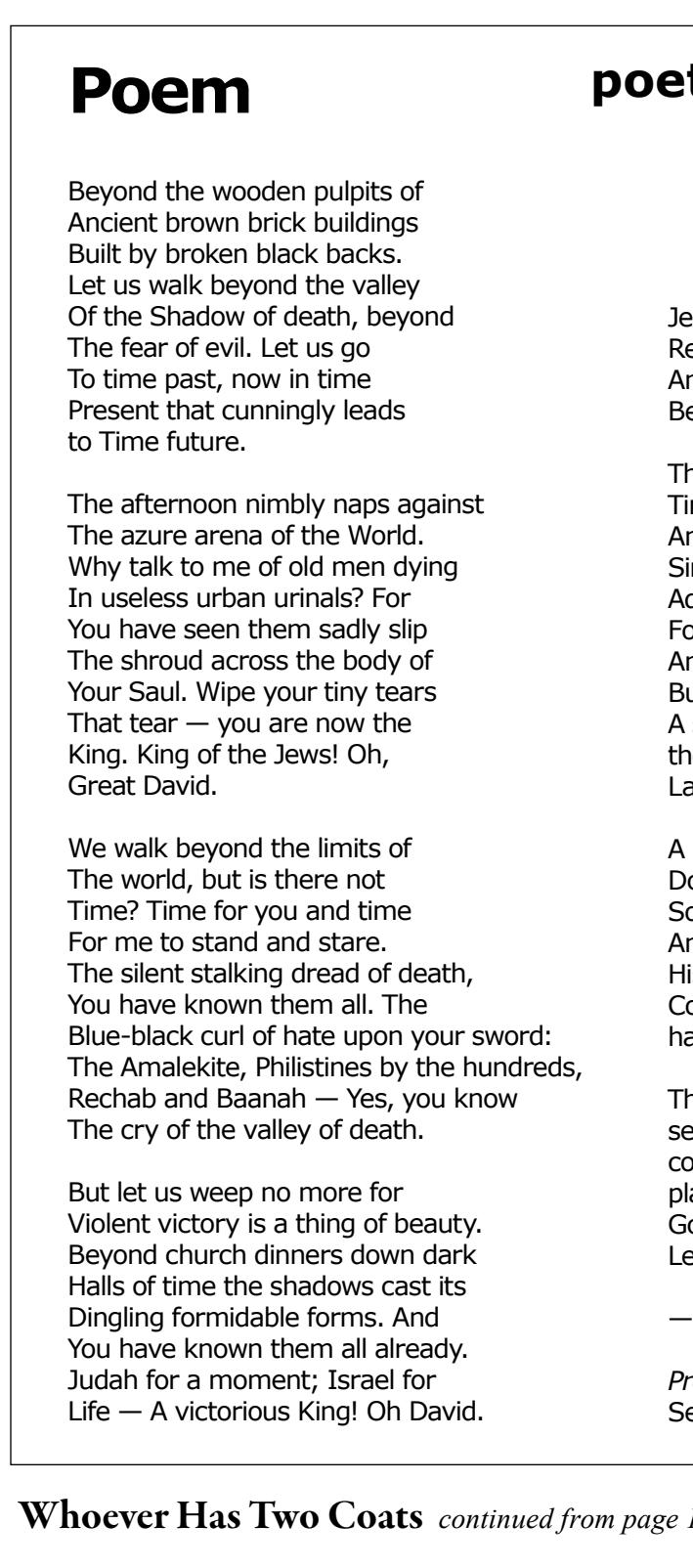
Daniel Nichols

Ed Weir ;Presente! *continued from page 5*

of deep peace and freedom from pain and confusion. His journey is over and we miss him dearly.

Ed Weir's life work is yet before us, unfinished. It is ours to take up the work and the joys of the journey. Ed's faith was simple, straightforward and unwavering: The God of Life is named Compassion, JustMercy, Forgiveness, Loving-kindness. "Gimme that old time religion: It was good enough for Ed Weir — It's good enough for me." ♦

Murphy Davis is a founding Partner of the Open Door Community (murphydavis@bellsouth.net)

**Whoever Has Two Coats** *continued from page 1*

the Civil Liberties Act, which granted reparations of about \$20,000 each to surviving Japanese-Americans who had been imprisoned in this country during World War II; 82,219 people received checks. That number is dwarfed by the numbers of African-American descendants of people held in slavery, but this example serves as a starting point. Universities like Georgetown and Yale have begun to take initial actions in relation to the profits they made from slave labor, and while they seem significant at the moment, they are only a small beginning. The depth of the problem is seen in this way: Those involved in the discussions see significant progress being made, while those whose ancestors had their labor robbed see such actions as only gestures to make white people feel better about continuing to profit from that stolen labor.

In his article, Coates reminds us that Congressman John Conyers of Michigan has for years introduced House Bill 40 to establish the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. It will be no surprise to anyone that this bill has never made it out of committee to the House floor. With the current Congress back in the hands of the slaveholders and with a new president akin to Andrew Johnson or Ulysses Grant, there is not much hope for that bill to make it to the floor any time soon.

I want to offer two solutions as beginning steps. First, there have been religious bodies in America who have enforced reparations among their membership, with the Friends Society being the most prominent. Why not require

our religious groups to designate funds to begin to offer floors of income to descendants of people held as slaves? In this sense, we would be fulfilling the biblical mandate mentioned earlier from Deuteronomy to compensate those treated as slaves. Of course, there would be many objections to this and many issues to work out, but why not start from the point that these reparations are required by the Bible and are part of the mandate of John the Baptist and the Black Jesus? We could do that in our own local places of worship, not needing any city council or state legislature or Congress to require us or suggest to us that we do it.

Speaking of those governmental bodies, my second step is to think about a movement to amend the U.S. Constitution to change its "three-fifths" designation for humans held as slaves, to restore them to 100% humanity from the beginnings of this country. This would require a discussion about why the "three-fifths" clause made it into the Constitution in the first place, and such an amendment would help us reclaim the vision that all people are created equal. Such a move may only seem symbolic, but let us remember how important symbols are. And what a powerful symbol this would be — our own Jubilee in American history! And a beginning step toward the movement back to the Black Jesus. ♦

Nibs Stroupe preached his last sermon as pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church on Sunday, January 8. He is a longtime friend of the Open Door Community. (nibs.stroupe@gmail.com)