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

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Mary, Whose Faith Enabled the New Creation

By Murphy Davis

Editor's note: Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community. She preached this sermon at First Iconium Baptist Church on the Sunday before Christmas, 2009.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was much perplexed by his words, and she pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.

"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob and Leah and Rachel forever, and of his reign there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; and will be called Son of God.

"And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

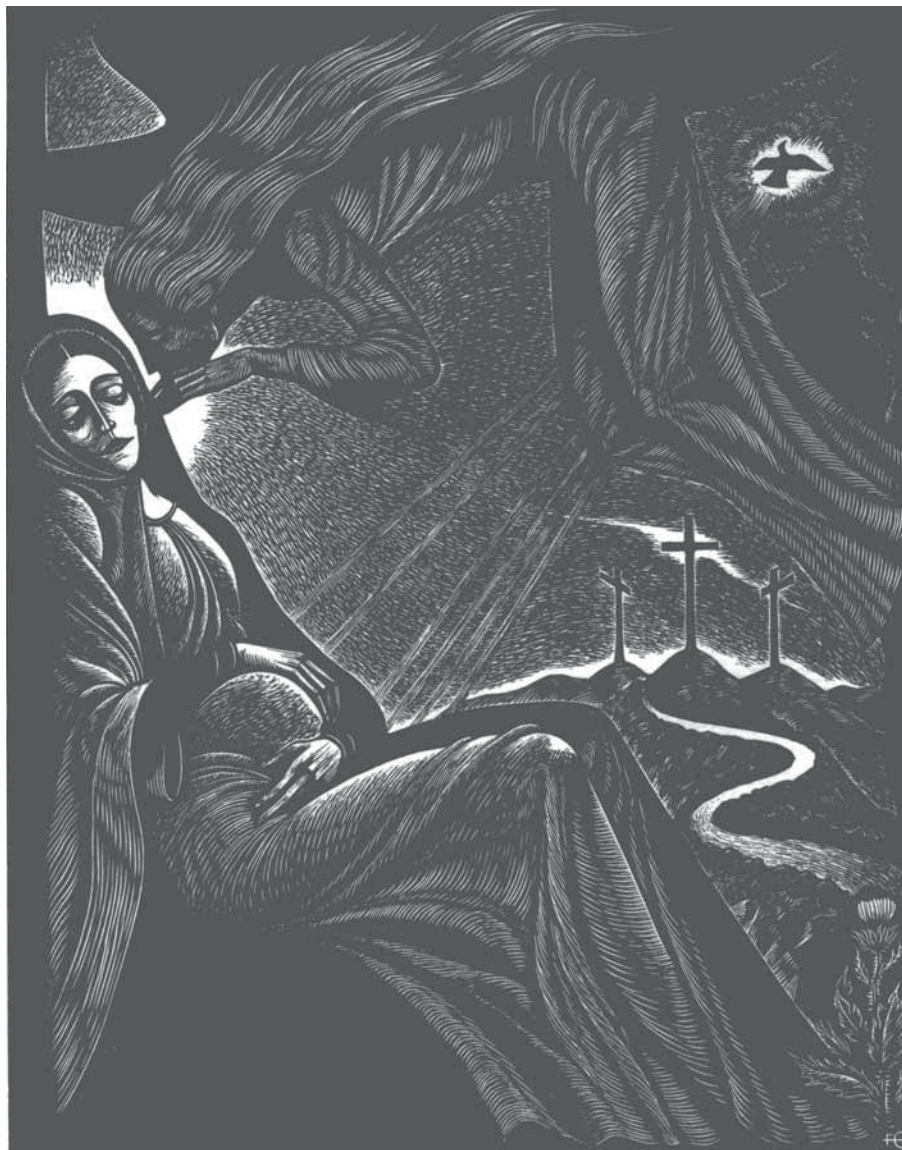
Then Mary said, "I AM the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb.

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

"And why has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by our God."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for you have remembered me your lowly servant! Surely, from now on all generations will



The Long Loneliness (1952)

Fritz Eichenberg

call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is the name of our God.

"You show mercy to those who honor you from generation to generation. You have stretched out your mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. You have brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; you have filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty-handed.

"You have kept the promise made to our ancestors and have come to the help of your servant Israel. You have remembered to show mercy to Sarah and Abraham and to all their descendants forever!"

And Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home.

— Luke 1:26-56

The celebration of Advent begins with Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus. That is to say that Advent begins nine months before it appears on our liturgical calendar. But when we begin to hear the story of Mary and the angel, we

realize that we are entering the story well after it has begun. We read "In the sixth month..." but we don't know in the sixth month of what?

To pull it all together we need to go back to Luke 1:5. This passage begins with: "During the time when Herod was King of Judea"

It is very important to note that this refers to Herod the Great, the client king of Caesar, who was himself quite a politician. In everything he did, Herod worked to increase, protect and enhance his own power. He drained the people nearly dry by confiscating their crops, their money and their labor. He kept his agents busy with surveillance and control of subversive behavior. And when he deemed it necessary, he slaughtered those who posed a threat to his power and control, like the baby boys of Bethlehem. His son, Herod Antipas, continued the tradition and some years later presented the severed head of John the Baptist to Salome and Herodias during a drunken orgy.

Our story is set during this time, under these circumstances. These were hard days for the Jewish people: days of oppression, poverty, hunger, violence, war and executions. Does anything in this story sound familiar? Oh, we could go on here... The politics of *then* inform us about the politics of *now*.

How do kings and governors and presidents behave? Oh, yes, we could go on...

But Luke hurries on with the story: "There was a priest named Zechariah and his wife was named Elizabeth." They were good folks, both from priestly families. In other words, they

were "somebodies": obedient to God, respected, upstanding, admired in their community.

Except for one thing: Elizabeth was old and barren. They had no children. And this was the ultimate shame for a woman in ancient culture.

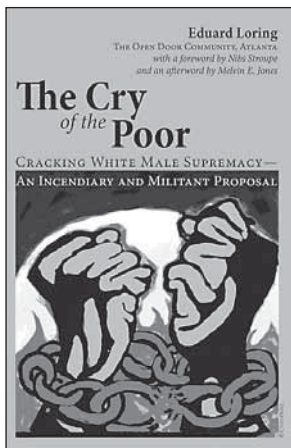
This is the setting.

So one day Zechariah was in the Holy Place doing his priestly work in the Temple when the angel appeared. Zechariah was terrified. So the angel said, "Be not afraid, Zechariah." Fear not. In the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel, the angels say this three times. It seems to be the primary thing that angels have to say to us humans: "Be not afraid."

So when Gabriel got Zechariah calmed down enough, he went on to say that Elizabeth will be pregnant, and she will bear a son. You will name him John, and he will go before the Lord to prepare the way. Like the prophet Elijah, he will be strong and mighty and get the people ready to meet the Messiah.

Mary, Whose Faith *continued on page 8*

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

By **Eduard Loring**

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Eduard Loring has been called many things — by no means all of them complimentary — during his long career as a rabble-rousing preacher, writer and street demonstrator, as well as servant of the poor and imprisoned. What absolutely no one can deny is that he not only talks the talk but walks the walk, figuratively and literally. I expect this to continue for quite some time to come, as he shows little sign of mellowing with age but rather appears likely to go out, to borrow his own inspired word, still “incendiary,” not unlike Mother Jones at age 100. “The Cry of the Poor” may be the closest Ed ever comes to writing a manifesto — the impassioned raison d’être of a Christian radical living in the American South in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. And I feel honored to have been involved, in some small way, in helping to bring it into being.

— David Mann, Editor

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poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

The Homeless Psalm

The System is my Shepherd.
I lack everything that I need.
The System makes me to lie down on the concrete.
The System tells me I am not good enough for its water.
The System slowly destroys my soul.
Yea, though daily I walk through the System's wastelands,
The System still tries to destroy me.
Their constant hounding, and no sleep, do not comfort me.
The System doesn't do anything for me.
My cup is surely dry.
Surely hatred and intolerance shall follow me
All the days of my life in the System,
And I fear I shall dwell in the house of lack forever.

— **Lynda Baker**

Lynda Baker is a close friend to the Open Door Community and especially to Ed Loring. She is a homeless activist Christian and supporter of all movements that work to dismantle the systems that condemn human beings to live without food and shelter. We welcome Lynda to our pages as we welcome her to our home.

*Hospitality welcomes poems from people in Georgia prisons
or living on the streets in Georgia.*

Send submissions to

Eduard Loring, Open Door Community,
910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
or by email to hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community, Inc., an Atlanta Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with and advocacy for the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

A \$10 donation to the Open Door Community would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality** for one year. A \$40 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

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Calvin Kimbrough

October at Dayspring Farm.

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Open Door Community

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Slaughter of Innocents Continues Under Herods of Today

By Art Laffin

Editor's note: Art Laffin is a beloved leader in our movement and a longtime member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House in Washington, D.C. He delivered the following reflection at the Holy Innocents Faith and Resistance Retreat at St. Stephen's and the Incarnation Church in Washington on December 28, 2008. Statistics he cites were current as of that time, but as the wars drag on and new wars are threatening, the truth of the text is forever frighteningly current.

In light of a new administration about to take power, the global economic collapse, the ongoing warmaking of our empire and the global climate crisis, it is good that we are gathering at this critical point in human history. As we commemorate the Massacre of the Holy Innocents, we are also mindful of the anniversary of the Wounded Knee Massacre. On Dec. 29, 1890, more than 250 Indian men, women and children were shot and killed by the U.S. 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

In the process of planning this Faith and Resistance Retreat, members of Jonah House and Dorothy Day Catholic Worker reflected on what we should address here. Our reflection led us to raise the following questions:

- ♦ Why did Herod deem the Christ child such a threat that he ordered the slaughter of the innocents in the hope that Jesus would be killed?
- ♦ How is it possible that children are deemed so expendable, under Herod and under today's Herods?
- ♦ How do war and empire impact children today?
- ♦ What kind of world do we want to create and leave for future generations? Where is our hope?

I would like to offer some initial responses to these questions.

Why did Herod deem the Christ child such a threat that he ordered the slaughter of the innocents in the hope that Jesus would be killed?

Because he was so possessed by his power, Herod could not tolerate anyone who would represent a challenge to his authority. Herod was aware of the predictions of the coming of the long-promised Messiah. And the three wise men visited Herod telling him about their intention to visit the newborn king. Herod was convinced that if the Christ child really was the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures, his own reign of power could be jeopardized and toppled. Herod did not want to take any chances. He was willing to do whatever was necessary to eliminate Jesus — so he ordered the massacre of all boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under.

Imagine for a moment the nightmare that ensued for the families of Bethlehem, the unimaginable horror. I think about how our son, Carlos, was the same age as those children massacred by Herod. I can't begin to comprehend the pain Colleen and I would feel if we were to witness the murder of our son, let alone the massacre of other boys his age.

How is it possible that children are deemed so expendable, under Herod and under today's Herods?

The rich and the powerful have become so obsessed and blinded by their power and riches that they, like Herod, will do anything necessary to ensure and maintain their power and control. Instead of worshipping God and obeying God's commands, they now worship the idols of power, greed and violence. They have been seduced into believing an illusion — that their power is sovereign over God's. They have fash-

ioned a political and economic paradigm based on domination and oppression, at the expense of everything else. Masses of people, due to their color and class, are deemed expendable. It really doesn't matter how many children die from the effects of war or from an economic system that exploits, oppresses and denies the poor the basic necessities of life.

How do war and empire impact children today?

Here are some facts about children and war from UNESCO:

Over the last decade alone, armed conflict has claimed the lives of more than 2 million children. Another 6 million have been left wounded or disabled for life. One million have become orphans. It is estimated that more than 300,000 children have been enrolled in militia groups and armies and forced to carry a gun. Half of those they kill are other children.

Here in the United States, the government reports that nearly one in every four people in homeless shelters are age 17 or younger.

And UNICEF reports that, around the world, some 26,500 children die every day from poverty — that is, from preventable causes. That is equivalent to:

- ♦ One child dying every three seconds.
- ♦ 18 children dying every minute.
- ♦ A 2004 Asian tsunami occurring every week.
- ♦ Almost 10 million children dying every year.
- ♦ 60 million children dying between 2000 and 2006.

"The silent killers are poverty, hunger, easily preventable diseases and illnesses, and other related causes," UNICEF says. "In spite of the scale of this daily/ongoing catastrophe, it rarely manages to achieve, much less sustain, prime-time, headline coverage."

The rich and the powerful have become so obsessed and blinded by their power and riches that they, like Herod, will do anything necessary to ensure and maintain their power and control.

These facts are mind-blowing to say the least. But these statistics translate into people whom many of us have met. I've had several firsthand experiences of how children are affected by war. I've witnessed children starving to death and dying from preventable diseases and the effects of war in El Salvador and Gaza, as well as in Iraq.

In 1998, when I went to Iraq with the 11th Voices in the Wilderness delegation to take medicine and medical supplies to help children dying as a result of the U.S.-U.N.-led economic sanctions, I met Zahra Ali in a Baghdad hospital pediatric ward. She was seven months old and emaciated beyond belief. She was dying of nutritional marasmus, a severe form of malnutrition. She lay listless on a bed, her eyes piercing my heart with an indescribable anguish. The doctors said there was nothing they could do for her and that she didn't have long to live.



Brian Kavanagh

Zahra's mother was sitting by her bedside traumatized and crying. She asked us, "Why does the U.S. government hate the Iraqi people so much?" We could only reply that we were doing everything we could to end the sanctions. The several of us who were present did what we could to try to offer some consolation to Zahra's mother. Several doctors then pleaded with us to make sure to tell the American people what we had witnessed.

I am forever haunted by Zahra and the other Iraqi children I've met in Iraq's hospital wards.

Due to its desire to control the oil of the Persian Gulf and dominate the Middle East, the United States has committed genocide against the Iraqi people. The number of deaths from U.S.-led sanctions, bombing and occupation is staggering.

Before the March 2003 American invasion, estimates of the number of Iraqis who had died as a result of U.S. bombing and the economic sanctions ranged from 1 to 2 million, half of whom were children. In September 2007, Opinion Research Business, a prestigious British polling agency, estimated that 1.2 million Iraqis had been killed violently since the March 2003 invasion and that between 4 and 5 million Iraqis had been displaced.

Let us also consider:

- ♦ The sanctions caused Iraqi children to experience stunted growth, meaning they will never reach their full human potential.

- ♦ Countless children have died premature deaths and many more have been born deformed due to the U.S. use of depleted uranium in the weapons we drop on the land and people of Iraq.

- ♦ The psychological damage and trauma caused by the war is permanent for every Iraqi.

We've wounded a whole generation and caused deep-seated hatred and resentment that will last for generations.

Let us also not forget the carnage and death that we have wreaked on Afghanistan. The American war in Afghanistan, which began in 2001, has resulted in the deaths of thousands of Afghan civilians directly, from insurgent and foreign military action, as well as the deaths of possibly tens of thousands of Afghan civilians indirectly, as a consequence of displacement, starvation, disease, exposure, lack of medical treatment, crime and lawlessness resulting from the war.

The deaths resulting from our military occupation of

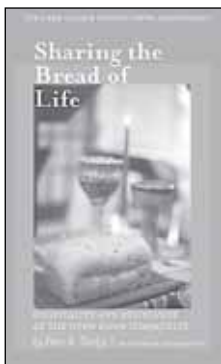
Slaughter of Innocents continued on page 9

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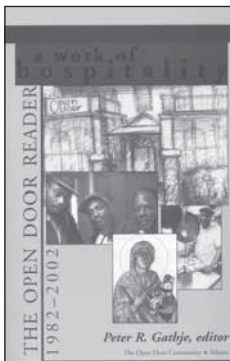
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The Shameful Killing of Brandon Rhode

By **Joseph Shippen**

Editor's note: Joseph Shippen is the rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Macon. He and Suzanne and their son Benjamin are partners at New Hope House, where they visit on Georgia's death row and provide hospitality for the families who come to visit on death row. Photographs from the Vigil for Life at the Death of Brandon Rhode at the state Capitol are on page 6.

On the morning of Tuesday, September 21, the day of his scheduled execution, Brandon Rhode was rushed to the hospital. He had made deep cuts to his neck and wrists in an effort to kill himself before the state of Georgia could do so.

Brandon had been on death watch for the previous week. Death watch is part of the execution ritual, in which the condemned man is abruptly taken from his cell, with no opportunity to say goodbye to his friends, and put into a new area of the prison where he will face his last days alone, aside from the occasional visit from his family, lawyers and pastors.

While on death watch, inmates are not supposed to be supplied with razor blades, a regulation that Brandon's guards apparently ignored. He made the cuts under a blanket to prevent the guards, who were supposed to be constantly watching him, from seeing what he was doing.

By the time prison authorities got him to the hospital, Brandon was barely alive, having lost half his blood. The doctors and nurses gave him the medical care he needed to recover, stitching up his wounds, stabilizing him and reviving him before he was taken back to the prison.

When Brian Kammer, one of Brandon's lawyers, visited him later that day, he found him in a restraint chair, or by Brian's more accurate description, a torture chair. Brian reported that Brandon was "in severe pain and discomfort," his face "haggard, pallid and jaundiced."

On that Tuesday, at New Hope House, we waited with Brandon's family, unsure exactly what was happening. We had heard that Brandon had been taken to the hospital after trying to commit suicide, but had been given no other details. Clearly an embarrassment for the prison, it was publicly describing the event only as "an incident," not a suicide attempt.

Ed Weir, Lora Shain Weir, my wife Suzanne and I sat nervously in the guesthouse with Brandon's family members

from Mississippi and Macon and with his lawyer, Rachel Chmiel. As we waited, we visited, ate fried chicken, listened to Rachel's assessment of the situation and prayed. Brandon's aunt and grandmother had made the trip from Mississippi the day before, and had planned to visit Brandon all day on



Brandon Rhode

Tuesday. They were never given a chance to touch him one last time, tell him they loved him, or tell him goodbye.

Finally, about 3 p.m., we received word that Brandon had been given a two-day stay by the Georgia Supreme Court. The exhausted family reacted with joy that Brandon would not be killed that day, and there was new hope that maybe some court would intervene over the next two days and stop the execution altogether.

Although the execution was postponed several more times, in the end the courts refused to stop it. On the evening of Monday, September 27, Brandon's body, which hospital doctors and nurses had worked so hard to care for the week before, was strapped to the gurney. This time, medical personnel intent on killing him searched for 30 minutes to find a suitable vein to administer the poison in. It then took 14 minutes to kill Brandon. Just past his 18th birthday at the time of the crime, he was only 31 at the time of his death.

Brandon Rhode's execution and the run-up to it expose how barbaric, cruel and unusual the death penalty is. What does it say about our society and its values that we would do this to a human being, a child of God?

After the execution, I was told by a well-meaning Christian that she had prayed that the devil was not still in Brandon when he died. I told her that I did not believe that the devil was in Brandon, but how terrible that, in our thirst for vengeance, we gave in to the devil in us. ✠

Soup

I saw a famous man eating soup.
I say he was lifting a fat broth
Into his mouth with a spoon.
His name was in the newspapers that day
Spelled out in tall black headlines
And thousands of people were talking about him.

When I saw him,
He sat bending his head over a plate
Putting soup in his mouth with a spoon.

— Carl Sandburg



Rita Corbin

Private Prisons: Don't Let the Fox Guard the Henhouse

Editor's note: The following is a press release issued November 9 by the Private Corrections Working Group (www.privateci.org), a Florida-based organization that works to educate the public about private prisons, and Prison Legal News (www.prisonlegalnews.org), based in Brattleboro, Vermont, which works to protect human rights in U.S. detention facilities.

Washington — A coalition of human rights and criminal justice organizations today announced their opposition to President Obama's nomination of Stacia A. Hylton to head the U.S. Marshals Service.

Hylton, a former marshal and Acting Deputy Director of the U.S. Marshals Service with a lengthy career in law enforcement, was employed from June 2004 to February 2010 as the Federal Detention Trustee, where she oversaw the detention of federal prisoners awaiting trial or immigration proceedings. Following her retirement, she was nominated by President Obama on September 20 to direct the U.S. Marshals Service.

During Hylton's tenure as Federal Detention Trustee, GEO Group, the nation's second-largest for-profit private prison company, was awarded a number of lucrative contracts to house federal prisoners.

During Hylton's tenure as Federal Detention Trustee, GEO Group, the nation's second-largest for-profit private prison company, was awarded a number of lucrative contracts to house federal prisoners. These included a sole-source 10-year contract at GEO's Western Region Detention Facility in San Diego, California, generating approximately \$34 million in annual revenue; a 20-year contract to operate the 1,500-bed Rio Grande Detention Center in Laredo, Texas, with an estimated \$34 million in annual revenue; and a 20-year sole-source contract to manage the Robert A. Deyton Detention Facility in Lovejoy, Georgia, generating \$16 to 20 million in annual revenue.

As reported by The Washington Times in an October 25 article, after retiring as Federal Detention Trustee earlier this year, Hylton quickly accepted a consulting job with GEO Group through her Virginia-based company, Hylton Kirk & Associates, of which she is the president and sole owner. In her financial disclosure statement, Hylton reported income of \$112,500 for "consulting services for detention matters, federal relations, and acquisitions and mergers." GEO Group is the only company listed in her disclosure statement in connection with such consulting services.



According to the Virginia State Corporation Commission, Hylton's consulting company was formed on January 13, 2010, more than a month before she retired from her position as Federal Detention Trustee. However, in her questionnaire submitted to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, she stated that she began working for her consulting company in March 2010, the month after her retirement.

"This is a prime example of the revolving door between the public and for-profit private sectors turning full circle," said Alex Friedmann, associate editor of Prison Legal News, a project of the Human Rights Defense Center that reports on criminal justice issues. "After cashing in on her experience in public law enforcement by taking a consulting job with GEO Group, Ms. Hylton has now been nominated for a high-level federal position where she will oversee detention services for the U.S. Marshals — including services provided by private prison firms such as GEO."

"The U.S. Marshals preside over one of the nation's largest privatized federal detention systems," added Bob Libal, with Grassroots Leadership. "Policies that have driven the private prison expansion, such as Operation Streamline, are carried out by the U.S. Marshals. Ms. Hylton's consulting work with the GEO Group, a troubled company that benefits handsomely from such policies, is a cause for major concern."

Also while Hylton served as Federal Detention Trustee, Corrections Corporation of America, the nation's largest private prison company, was awarded a 20-year contract to design, build and operate the \$80 million, 1,072-bed Nevada Southern Detention Center. Further, under Hylton's direction, the Office of the Federal Detention Trustee granted a sole-source 20-year contract to CCA to hold U.S. Marshals' prisoners at the company's Leavenworth Detention Center in Kansas, and approved a sole-source contract for CCA to house U.S. Marshals' detainees at a prison in Pinal County, Arizona. Approximately 40 percent

of CCA's business comes from the federal government.

According to a February 26, 2010, post on a Web site for CCA employees, current CCA President Damon Hininger attended Hylton's retirement party in Washington. Hininger noted that it "was a nice event and while there, I got the opportunity to speak with various USMS and ICE officials."

No Limit on Profits

Additionally, in her response to a 2007 draft audit report by the Inspector General's Office on oversight of intergovernmental agreements by the U.S. Marshals Service and the Office of the Federal Detention Trustee (OIG report 07-26), Hylton objected to the OIG's recommendation that the Office of the Federal Detention Trustee "limit the amount of profit a state or local jail can earn for housing federal prisoners." Since some jails that house federal detainees are privately operated, Hylton's objections apparently encompassed limitations on profit earned by private jail contractors.

"The primary goal of private prison companies is financial," stated Charlie Sullivan, director of International CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants), a non-profit criminal justice reform organization. "This profit motive overrides decisions on whether to release a prisoner and whether to provide rehabilitative programs."

In 2006, Hylton gave a presentation to the Association of Private Correctional and Treatment Organizations, an industry organization that advocates for private companies that provide correctional services, including prison privatization. APCTO's membership includes Management & Training Corporation, a private prison contractor that houses thousands of federal detainees for the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, ICE and the U.S. Marshals Service.

"It is extremely worrisome that Ms. Hylton is nominated for a position where she would be directly involved with overseeing contracts with private prison companies to house federal detainees, given her cozy rela-

tionship with the private prison industry and her acceptance of more than \$100,000 from GEO through her consulting work," said Ken Kopczynski, director of the Private Corrections Working Group, a non-profit citizen watchdog organization that opposes prison privatization.

Despite repeated requests to both the White House and GEO Group, neither responded to questions regarding Hylton's consulting relationship with GEO.

The Alliance for Justice, Human Rights Defense Center, Private Corrections Working Group, Grassroots Leadership, National Lawyers Guild, International CURE, Detention Watch Network and Justice Policy Institute joined in opposing Hylton's nomination, based on her close ties to the private prison industry and the conflict those ties would create should she be appointed to direct the U.S. Marshals Service.

"While Ms. Hylton indicated she had spoken with the Office of Governmental Ethics to resolve any potential conflicts, the fact remains that she formed a consulting firm before retiring as Federal Detention Trustee, and apparently the only company she has consulted for is GEO Group — which has received multimillion-dollar contracts from the federal government, including the U.S. Marshals," Kopczynski noted. "Given that she accepted money from the very industry she was overseeing as Detention Trustee, and will be overseeing again if appointed to head the Marshals, this is a conflict that cannot simply be waived. It ill serves the public for the Obama administration to nominate Ms. Hylton in light of such an obvious conflict of interest."

The administration should not be appointing someone working for the industry that most stands to gain by further increasing our country's incarceration rate.

"Last year, while states saw their prison populations decline for the first time in years, the federal population continued to rise," added Tracy Velázquez, executive director of the Justice Policy Institute. "As taxpayers, we can't afford increasing rates of incarceration, which we know is a failed public safety strategy that has terrible consequences for communities. The administration should not be appointing someone working for the industry that most stands to gain by further increasing our country's incarceration rate."

The coalition of organizations opposing Hylton's nomination will be contacting the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and the White House to voice their concerns. ♦

A Union of Activists

Former Open Door Novice **Lauren Cogswell**, who lived with us from 2003 to 2008, married **Doug Ramseur** with a number of community members participating in the service and attending the celebration. Lauren and Doug have settled in Norfolk, Virginia, where Doug is Director of the Virginia Capital Defender Office there. Lauren, a Presbyterian minister, has accepted a call as Interim Pastor of Lynnhaven Colony United Church of Christ in Virginia Beach. We pray for many blessings to be showered on this marriage of two wonderful activists for justice and human dignity.



In, Out & Around 910 Compiled by Murphy Davis & Calvin Kimbrough



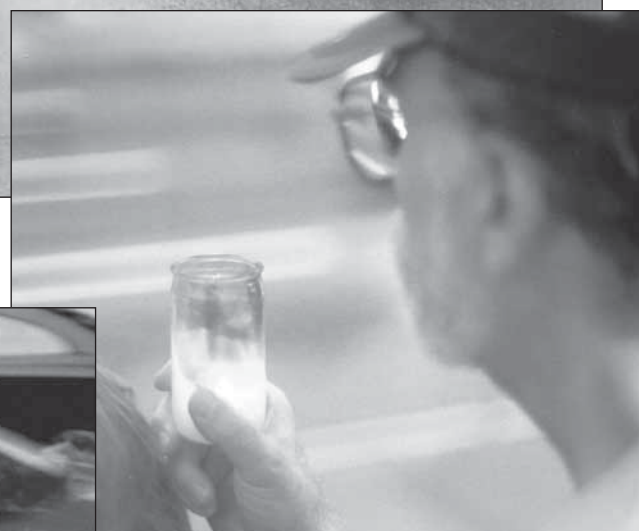
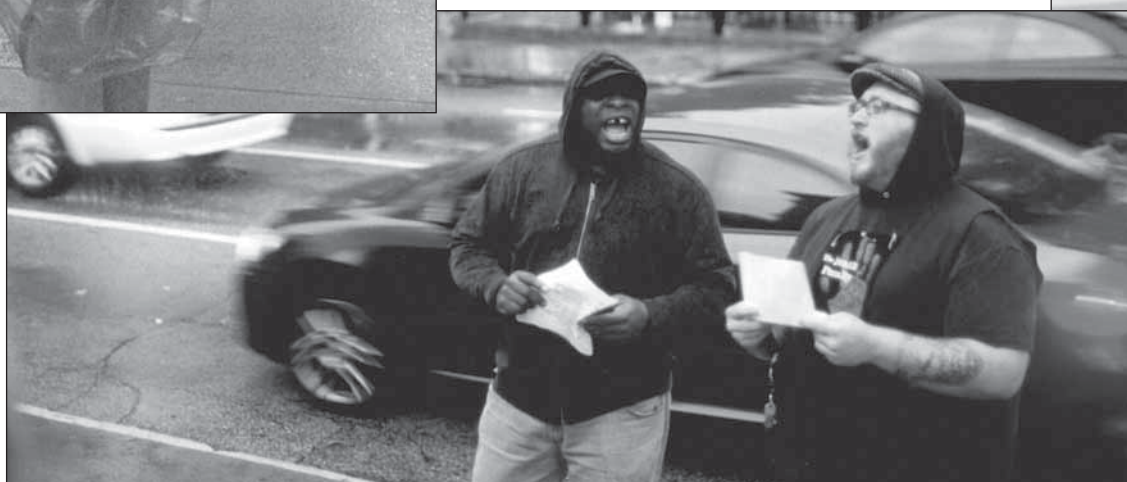
Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

Vigil for Life at the Death of Brandon Rhode

Brandon Rhode was executed by the state of Georgia on September 27 (please see "The Shameful Killing of Brandon Rhode" on page 4), and the Open Door Community hosted a vigil at the Capitol to call for the abolition of the death penalty. *Below left:* **Caroline Kelly**, Associate Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, offers a prayer. *Below:* **Eduard Loring** speaks about the abolition of legalized murder by the state. *Bottom:* **John McRae** and **Brando Hall** read Psalm 146 as the traffic rushes by in the falling rain.



Johnny Devlin



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

Sing Out!

Elise Witt comes often to sing with and direct the Open Door Choir (*right*). On Sunday, October 24, she brought **Joyce Brookshire** with her (*far right*). Joyce sang several of her Open Door favorites, including “God Bless the Homeless,” “Poor People” and Ira Terrell’s favorite, “Fishing Fever.” Elise brings us music from her soul and her travels around her musical world. You may find her tour schedule and recordings at www.elisewitt.com.



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

A Concert Against Death

On November 16 and 17, People of Faith Against the Death Penalty held its “Kairos Conference: Discerning Justice and Taking Action on America’s Death Penalty” at the Emory Conference Center in Atlanta. During the conference, Sweet Honey in the Rock, a Grammy Award-winning a capella ensemble, gave a concert at Ebenezer Baptist Church to benefit People of Faith Against the Death Penalty. At intermission, People of Faith presented



Martina Correia and Murphy Davis with the Rev. Robert E. Seymour Award recognizing their years of devoted efforts to end the death penalty. Martina Correia, the sister of Troy Davis, who has fearlessly challenged Troy’s murder conviction and death sentence for nearly 20 years, was unable to be present because she too is fighting cancer. *Top photo: Sweet Honey sings. Above: Abe Bonowitz* of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty speaks to **Murphy Davis**. Listening are (*from left*) **Ed Loring**; **Stacy Rector**, Director of Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty; **Laura Moye** of Amnesty International; Rev. **Raphael Warnock**, Pastor of Ebenezer; **Mamie Dayan**, who read a statement from her brother Marshall Dayan, a longtime capital defender; **Steve Dear**, Director of People of Faith Against the Death Penalty; **Ron Tabak**, pro bono counsel for death penalty defendants and leader in the American Bar Association; and **Kathryn Hamoudah** and **Sam Gonzalez** of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.



Our Youngest Partner?

What a special event for our community! On October 31, **Benjamin McCager Shippen** was baptized during our worship service. His parents, **Joseph** and **Suzanne Hobby Shippen**, are a regular part of our worship community and leadership and are Partners at New Hope House. Benjamin delights us every time he runs up and down our halls and jumps into the arms of people who love him. It was our joy to baptize him with our community surrounding him, his parents and **Lora** and **Ed Weir**, their partners at New Hope House.

Mary, Whose Faith Enabled the New Creation *continued from page 1*

Then Zechariah made a big mistake. He said, more or less, “Prove it, man! I’ll have to *see* this to believe it.” Or maybe “Look, dude, my wife is really *old!*” For this disbelief, Zechariah was struck dumb. He was punished. Or was he perhaps blessed to have a sort of pregnancy, a gestation period, of his own? He could not speak again until after John was born and Elizabeth had named him. Could it be that he was a bit wiser when he opened his mouth again?

So just as the angel said, Elizabeth, this aged postmenopausal sister, got pregnant. (Watch out here, mothers!) She was so happy that she sang, “God has taken away my shame and given me a child!”

This is where our story begins: in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy.

A Calling to a Nobody

Gabriel the angel didn’t do so well with Zechariah, so next the angel goes to Sister Mary.

In contrast with Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary is not from a priestly family. In contrast to her fiancé, she is not of the house and lineage of David, or, for that matter, of anybody important.

In fact, the text tells us only that she is a young woman — a girl really — named Mary from Nazareth in Galilee. You know what? That’s sort of like saying that the angel came to a young woman named Tamika Smith in Hahira, Georgia. She was, my friends, a Nobody from Nowheresville.

But guess what! This youngster from the sticks was the very one chosen by God. Did you hear what the angel said? “Peace— Greetings — Shalom be with you, Favored One! God is with you, and has greatly blessed you!”

Well, up to this point Mary’s not doing much better than Zechariah. She is shaking in her sandals. So Gabriel backs up and says, “Mary, be not afraid.” The angel helps her to calm down enough to listen, but there is something else here. Mary was not *just* afraid. We read, “She was much perplexed by his words *and she pondered* what sort of greeting this might be.”

Does that word ring a bell? Do you remember in the next chapter after the shepherds left the newborn Jesus, Luke writes, “But Mary kept all these things and *pondered* them in her heart.” This is another indication of the kind of woman Mary is.

To ponder is to think about things seriously. The word is related to wisdom: you become wise by pondering life’s mysteries, as in Proverbs 4:26: “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.”

To ponder is to consider something with intentionality, to think about something carefully over a period of time. It’s related in Latin to the word for “weight” — you think about things in a way that gives weight to the things that are important, to life’s essentials. Mary, this young woman of great faith, is a wise woman. She is no superficial babe, no Valley Girl. This is one serious woman, the kind of woman whom God seeks to do the

most important work of the Beloved Community of God.

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.”



The Open Door Magnificat

Nelia Kimbrough

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob and Leah and Rachel forever; and of this reign there will be no end.”

That was a mouthful from Gabriel. But Mary needed to explore the first part: did he say you will *conceive* and bear a son? So she said to the angel, “Let’s get this straight. How can this be, since I’m a virgin?”

This was very different from Zechariah’s response. Mary did not say, “Prove it.” Or “Seeing is believing.” She just said, “You’re going to need to work with me here. How can I be pregnant when I’ve never had sex with a man?” Seems like a reasonable question.

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” Ah, the Ruach — the holy, creative Spirit of God, the Wind, the Breath of God. Ruach — Spirit — is a feminine Hebrew word: the Ruach will brood over the waters of your womb just as she brooded over the waters of creation to separate the land from the water, the darkness from the light. This mothering Spirit will make you a mother in a way no other mother has been *and yet a*

mother like every mother.

As if this were not enough, “*Your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. FOR NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD.*”

Do you believe that? *Can* we believe that? Mary, this youngster from Nowheresville, had the faith and the wisdom to believe it. She said, “*‘I AM the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her.*”

I AM? Do you hear this? Can we understand? Who says I AM? When Moses stood before the burning bush and said, “Who shall I say sent me?,” he heard the voice of God. “I AM. YHWH.”

Jesus says, “I AM the way, the truth, the life. I AM the Bread of Life. I AM the Vine (and you are the branches). I AM the Resurrection and the Life.”

I AM, says Mary, whose name in Hebrew is “Miriam” and means “rebellion.” I AM, says Mary, the servant of God. She accepts this ponderous holy calling from God: “*Let it be unto me according to thy Word.*” And the angel, knowing that it was accomplished, departed from her.

Gabriel’s work was complete, but Mary’s was just beginning. She was pregnant and unmarried, and this was a crime punishable by death. After the angel departed, she was left alone to ponder. She must have wondered, “What will they all say? What will Joseph do? Will I be stoned to death in the narrow streets of my little town?”

This was no easy thing she had been asked to do, and it must have looked even worse now that the glow of the angel’s presence was gone.

Mary the Theologian

So Mary took off. Her cousin Elizabeth would need help with her pregnancy and delivery. But perhaps Mary also knew that she needed to get out of town and lie low for a while. Elizabeth and Zechariah would surely provide a “safe house” and let her remain underground for a time. Besides, it might be that Elizabeth was the only one who would believe her unlikely story, this preposterous tale of an angel and a virgin birth, this giving birth to the Holy One of God. And so it was. Elizabeth, the old sister, was having a baby. She knew — deep in her bones and deep in her womb — that nothing is impossible with God.

So when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth too was filled with the Holy Spirit, the Ruach, and she cried out her prophetic utterance, “*Blessed are you among women,*

and blessed is the fruit of your womb.... And blessed is she who believed....”

Blessed are you. As in “Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the peacemakers.” Blessed are you among women. Blessed is she who believed. Elizabeth recognized and validated and affirmed Mary’s truth. She understood, as only another Blessed woman could have, that the Incarnation had begun here and now. And the Incarnation began with Mary. The real difference in this pregnancy, this birth, is that the conception began in Mary’s heart and spilled over to her womb. Because it began with her response of faith in the terrifying presence of the angel. Mary reached deep into her heart of faith and managed not to flee, though she was deeply troubled. *Peace?* Did the angel say *Peace?* It was surely not what Mary was feeling! She was troubled and confused. What does this mean?

As a matter of fact, Mary has just asked the kind of question that we, as disciples, need to ask. Mary was an astute theologian, and she began from the start to model the intentional practices of a disciple: What is going on? What does this mean? Where is God in all of this? What is God doing here? What is God saying to us? And what is God asking us to do?

She wondered what the angel’s words meant. And so too are we to wonder what the words of angels mean.

And the Spirit gave her a response through the angel’s voice: “Don’t be afraid. God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant without a man. You will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus, Yeshua [which means “our God deliverers”]. Yes, you will name him Jesus, not Joseph as the patriarchal tradition dictates. You the mother will name your child, just as Elizabeth will name her child.”

But Why a Virgin?

We have a wonderful friend who taught several of us at the Open Door Community when we were in seminary and graduate school, as well as both of the pastors of First Iconium Baptist Church when they were studying at Candler Seminary. Bill Mallard is a church historian, but he has spent most of his retirement energies in the study of Scripture.

In a Bible study he led at the Open Door, Bill said that there are two important reasons Jesus had to be born of a virgin. First, this baby was to be a “Son of David,” the great warrior king of Israel. But remember that David’s descendant in this story was Joseph. Mary was the one touched by the Holy Spirit to bear the child, not Joseph. So in this miraculous birth, *the Davidic line is broken!* The direct line from David, the line from the military Messiah, is over in this birth. There will be no bringing of the Kingdom by military might or any kind of violence. Yeshua — Jesus — will bring the Reign of God by peace. “And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.”

This birth, this virgin birth, breaks the expectations as it breaks the Davidic line. Joseph, the descendant of David, is not the father. God is doing a *new* thing here in bringing to birth the New Covenant, which will be a Covenant of Peace with a Transformed Messiah, a transformed “son of David.”

Mallard’s second point is that in the announcement of this birth, “the power of the Most High comes over Mary.” This is just as the Ruach brooded over the waters of the earth, separating land from water, darkness from light. This time, the Spirit moves over the waters of the womb of a woman. *God is doing the creation over again — a new creation!* In II Corinthians 5:17 and Revelation 21, we read that Christ is a *new* creation who will bring a new heaven and a new earth. In Romans, Paul writes of the creation being freed from bondage to corruption.

Mary was the agent of this new creation because of her faith. There is great depth in Mallard’s teaching that we have yet to discover.

What is clear is that the Incarnation began in Mary’s heart of faith and spilled over into her womb where the Ruach was to brood over the waters of her amniotic waters.

When Jesus healed folks, he often said, “Your faith has made you well.” The angel might well have said to Mary, “Your faith has made you pregnant.”

Our good friend Ched Myers, a renowned biblical scholar and activist, once pointed out at the Open Door, “In this story it’s interesting to note that it’s only the women who ‘get it.’ When the angel of the Lord visits, the first thing that happens is the silencing of the male clergy and the springing forth of the voice and the songs of women!”

Can We Also Say YES?

Zechariah the priest cannot believe it. Joseph is perplexed. Elizabeth and Mary, empowered by the feminine Ruach, understand and ponder, *and their faith is fruitful* in the birth of their children who changed everything.

In her song of the Great Reversal, Mary says YES to her blessing, her particular calling, and sings to the God who shows mercy and “scatters the proud with all their plans.” She sees God taking the generals and scrambling their codes, taking the bankers and making them lose their accounts! “You have brought down the powerful . . . and lifted up the lowly!” What a beautiful vision, but oh, do you see the shadow of the cross? The powerful are not brought low without their ensuing rage, and someone will pay! But oh, she goes on: in spite of the warmongers, the Money Boys, the CEOs and the generals, God “fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed.” Those who need help, those who need mercy, shall be satisfied.

Mary believed and the Christ child was born. Can we believe it? Can we have the faith of Mary? Can we believe this God for whom and in whom *nothing* is impossible? Can we believe this God who will make the first last and the last first? This God who cuts the mighty and powerful down to size and raises up those who work long hours at minimum wage and fills their cups to the brim and overflowing? This God who can come around to your dying bed and *cancel* the medical data and raise you up! This God whose love burns the weapons of the mighty military to ashes and whose love produces homes for the homeless, food for the hungry, rest for the weary, justice for the prisoners and the accused! It sounds kind of like a passage somebody read in his hometown church when he said, “The Spirit of God — Sister Ruach — is upon me [oh yes, his Mama taught him well!] to bring good news to the poor, the recovery of sight to the blind, liberty to the captives, healing to broken victims. . . .”

Is this the God for whom and in whom NOTHING is impossible? Who was it? Was that Jesus, son of Mary? The one born of Mary and the Spirit? The homeless babe laid in a feeding trough? The child of Bethlehem?

Can you see? Can you hear? Can you believe? ♣

Slaughter of Innocents *continued from page 3*

Afghanistan are hard to determine, but based on information available from several Internet sources, the number of direct war casualties exceeds 20,000. U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan have increased dramatically in the last several years. On August 22, 2008, U.S. air strikes killed 90 civilians.

Afghan investigators found that 90 civilians were killed in the village of Azizabad. About 60 of them were children or teenagers, and 15 were women. A survivor of the air strike said he lost 11 family members in the bombing.

We were painfully aware, even before he was elected, that Barack Obama wanted to increase U.S. military forces in Afghanistan and make it the main front in the so-called war against terrorism.

American air strikes have also increased in Pakistan. In one of these strikes, on October 31, 2008, 27 people were killed. Imagine for a moment a child you know being killed in an air strike!

We are also mindful of other threats that we and our children face as a consequence of empire and warmaking. The global climate crisis and ecological destruction are a direct consequence of our misuse and exploitation of the earth’s resources and our addiction to materialism and a consumerist lifestyle. The economic collapse we are experiencing is part of a larger systemic failure that is rooted in insatiable lust and greed, and the squandering of the public treasury by the powerful to maintain corporate power and finance the empire’s weaponry and warmaking ventures.

Let us recall the Pentagon doctrine: “The U.S. must use whatever force is necessary, including nuclear weapons, to control and protect its interests, especially oil and other vital resources, and to prevent the emergence of another rival superpower like the former Soviet Union.” (Quote from 1994-1999 Defense Guidance)



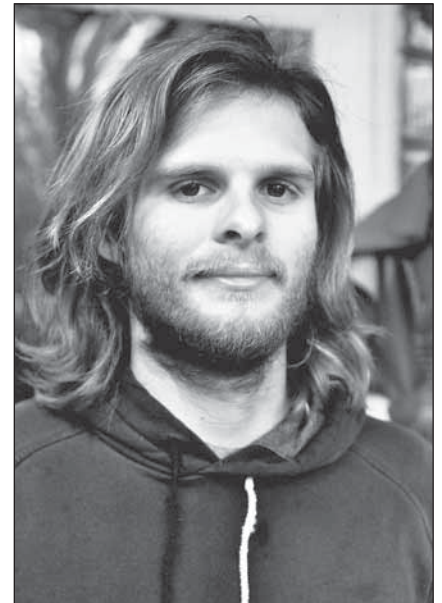
Brian Kavanagh

And the U.S. must militarize and dominate space if it is to control the earth. Nuclear weapons are still the centerpiece of our empire’s warmaking apparatus. This is evidenced by a first-strike, first-use nuclear posture and “Complex 2030,” a major new Energy Department initiative to upgrade the entire U.S. nuclear weapons complex and produce a series of new nuclear warheads. Under Complex 2030, U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories would return to the Cold War cycle of weapon design, development and production. This initiative would risk a return to underground nuclear testing and would undercut American efforts to limit the development of nuclear weapons by other countries.

And then there is StratCom. Tapped in the aftermath of 9/11 to wage the Bush-Cheney administration’s “war on terror,” StratCom today has an array of missions that stretches from directing an air- and sea-based attack on Iran to the out-right domination of space by the Pentagon. StratCom is still

Slaughter of Innocents *continued on page 10*

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Andrew Hendricks joined us in September as a Resident Volunteer. He brings a willing spirit and much energy to our daily work and our life together.

Live in a residential Christian community.

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

Join street actions and loud and loving nonviolent demonstrations.

Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.

You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Sarah Humphrey
at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7618

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

Thank You!



this year give HOSPITALITY

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

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

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

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

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

name_____

address_____

email_____

phone_____



volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community

Volunteers for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday Soup Kitchen (9:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.).

Volunteers to help staff our Foot Clinic on Wednesday evenings (6:45-9:15 p.m.).

Individuals to accompany Community members to doctors' appointments.

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

People to cook or bring supper for the Community on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

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

Slaughter of Innocents *continued from page 9*

performing its historic role as the command center of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. But under the White House's "Doctrine of Pre-emption," the Nebraska headquarters is now authorized to offensively attack any place on the planet within one hour — with either conventional or nuclear weapons — if a threat to America's national interests is simply suspected.

Recently, I came across an alarming news story regarding the future threats we face. Written by Tim Reid, it was titled "The National Intelligence Council Report: Sun Setting on the American Century" and appeared November 21, 2008 on Times Online/UK. Here are some excerpts:

The next two decades will see a world living with the daily threat of nuclear war, environmental catastrophe and the decline of America as the dominant global power, according to a frighteningly bleak assessment by the U.S. intelligence community.

"The world of the near future will be subject to an increased likelihood of conflict over resources, including food and water, and will be haunted by the persistence of rogue states and terrorist groups with greater access to nuclear weapons," said the report by the National Intelligence Council, a body of analysts from across the U.S. intelligence community.

"The likelihood that nuclear weapons will be used will increase with expanded access to technology and a widening range of options for limited strikes," said the 121-page assessment, titled "Global Trends 2025." The analysts draw attention to an already escalating nuclear arms race in the Middle East and anticipate that a growing number of rogue states will be prepared to share their destructive technology with terrorist groups.

"Over the next 15 to 20 years, reactions to the decisions Iran makes about its nuclear program could cause a number of regional states to intensify these efforts and consider actively pursuing nuclear weapons," the report said. "This will add a new and more dangerous dimension to what is likely to be increasing competition for influence within the region." The spread of nuclear capabilities will raise questions about the ability of weak states to safeguard them, it added. "If the number of nuclear-capable states increases, so will the number of countries potentially willing to provide nuclear assistance to other countries or to terrorists."

The report said that global warming will aggravate the scarcity of water, food and energy resources. "Widening gaps in birth rates and wealth-to-poverty ratios, and the impact of climate change, could further exacerbate tensions," it said.

"The international system will be almost unrecognizable by 2025, owing to the rise of emerging powers, a globalizing economy, a transfer of wealth from West to East, and the growing influence of nonstate actors." Global power will be multipolar with the rise of India and China, and the Korean Peninsula will be unified in some form.

"Strategic rivalries are most likely to revolve around trade, investments and technological innovation, but we cannot rule out a 19th-century-like scenario of arms races, territorial expansion and military rivalries."

What kind of world do we want to create and leave for future generations? Where is our hope?

We are heartbroken as more and more innocents continue to suffer and die. We remember the deadly U.S.-supported Israeli air strikes in Gaza, which killed over 300 Palestinians and injured countless more. In this Holy Season, we turn to Jesus, our hope and our life. And we turn to the inspiring holy cloud of witnesses who have gone before us and who now intercede on our behalf.

In response to a culture that deems children expendable,

we hear Jesus say, "Let the children come to me." And so we must do likewise. In response to our culture where vengeance, retribution, violence and killing are the norm, Jesus says, "Love one another," "Love your enemies," "Be merciful" and "Forgive and you will be forgiven." And so we must do likewise. In response to a society that has institutionalized war, oppression and poverty, Jesus says, "The reign of God is at hand ... reform your lives ... proclaim liberty to the captives ... let the oppressed go free ... be peacemakers." And so we must do likewise.

**If the human family is to survive,
 it is up to people of
 faith and conscience
 to be the change
 we want to see in the world.**

Dear friends, we believe that communities of faith committed to sharing, simplicity and doing the works of mercy and nonviolent resistance, working in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized, is the best way we can help transform our society and world and bring about the Beloved Community. Just as slavery was abolished, apartheid ended and the Berlin Wall fell, so too can empire and war be abolished. But as we know well from history, such change requires extraordinary patience and conviction, steadfast courage and the willingness to sacrifice and even give our lives.

There is great cause for hope today because all over the world there are people working to birth new social, political and economic paradigms that are rooted in economic and social justice and an unequivocal respect for human rights. There is growing understanding of the importance of safeguarding the environment, redistributing the wealth, and non-violent conflict resolution. If the human family is to survive, it is up to people of faith and conscience to be the change we want to see in the world. As Catholic Worker founder Peter Maurin stated, "If we want to make the future different, we have to make the present different." Thus we take to heart Jesus' proclamation that the kin-dom of God is at hand, right here, right now, and that we must act in faithfulness to daily proclaim the gospel with our lives.

We hope that each of us can shed light on the questions I have outlined and have offered some initial responses to. And we pray that the nonviolent actions we engage in, including our annual action at the Pentagon and at the embassies, will be yet another step to help bring to fruition God's reign of justice and peace.

Let us be filled with these words of hope taken from the Advent and Christmas Scriptures:

"Do not be afraid."

"Nothing will be impossible for God."

"The Word became flesh and came to dwell among us."

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." ✠



Brian Kavanagh

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Murphy,

Psalm 146!!! What an excellent interpretation in giving us THE MESSAGE in thought and feeling (September-October *Hospitality*). I kept reading it over and over — sometimes silently and sometimes speaking. It fed me, feeds me, in a wonderful way. Keep up that use of your special gift and let me enjoy and grow through your nurture!

Many thanks! And best wishes to Ed and hopes that all at the Open Door continues to go well!

God bless!

Wade Huie

Atlanta, Georgia

Editor's note: Wade Huie is Professor Emeritus of Homiletics at Columbia Theological Seminary. He taught Murphy Davis and Eduard Loring to preach.

Dear Murphy,

Today's mail brought *Hospitality* and your magnificent version of Psalm 23 (July). Manfred got it first and exclaimed about its excellence. I read it and loved it.

Either you should not ever stop writing, or this beautiful piece is all you ever need to write — I have no idea which.

We both send love and appreciation from our hearts to you (all).

Betsy Lunz

Atlanta, Georgia

Editor's note: Betsy Lunz and Manfred Hoffmann, long-haul friends and collaborators, are on the pastoral staff at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church. Manfred is Professor Emeritus of Church History at the Candler School of Theology, and Betsy has chaired the Open Door Community Advisory Board.

Dear, dear ones,

Because of you, four, not two or three, were “gathered together” today, not explicitly “under a name,” but “where love is, God is.” It was probably not a typical Open Door-initiated call, but I thank you profusely for this wonderful day.

Some time ago you published a note I had written in appreciation of you and your work, and as a result a college classmate of yore, Sally Sheffield Palmer, who had worked in your soup kitchen and now lives in Portland, set out to locate me and via a long round-about search did so. What an amazement to hear from this dear person of the past. We two had gone to see JFK when he spoke in Nashville, and I think we were the only two in our house who voted for him.

As a result of your connecting us, a reunion breakfast at always-loving Kathy's home was planned for this morning, also including Mary Ann, returned to Atlanta this week from the West Coast, sharing the news of her currently progressing to the book of Luke in translating the New Testament from Greek while her retired M.D. husband prepares to enter seminary at Berkeley this fall. Delightful dancing granddaughters and other kin were met.

You would have loved the music shared later at Sally's sister's, where her fiddle, Sally's mandolin, Joe's guitar, Edwin's banjo and my autoharp rang out “The Ash Grove.” (A line in one version: “The friends of my childhood again are before me / Each step wakes a memory as freely I roam. ...”)

I'm reminded of a favorite motto, that of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship: “Peace is the church's profession.” You all are fantastic professors — and enactors — ever grateful to your Source, the Friend opening the gate to green pastures, giving time to rest.

Your 23rd Psalm adaptation is beautiful, Murphy.

Love and appreciation to you and all yours,

Judy Collins

Lanett, Alabama

Good Day Eduard,

I wrote to Ms. Davis expressing my admiration and gratitude for all that you do, but I felt compelled to write to you about an entirely different subject.

First, a little biography would be in order. I am a 65-year-old cradle Episcopalian, a native Southerner who can trace his history back to 1066. I am, as my friend Lewis Grizzard used to say, “an American by birth but a Southerner by the grace of God.” WASP is the term often used to describe people like me, but I am a white Anglo-Saxon not just Protestant but Episcopalian. And yes, my ancestors owned slaves. I understand you are a native of South Carolina. You probably are familiar with the names Pinckney, Rutledge, Rhett, etc. They were of the same stock.

Okay, I have set the canvas on which I wish to paint the picture. I am proud of who I am and who my ancestors were. Am I ashamed of the fact that they owed slaves? No. Am I proud of that fact? No. I think the institution of slavery is horrible, but there were slaves throughout history. Slaves are mentioned in the Bible, as I am sure you are aware. There is slavery currently.

My point with all of this, Eduard, is simply that you are *not* “Eduard the Agitator,” as you proclaim yourself, at least not on this issue. In my opinion, you are “Eduard the Idiot.”

The “White Male Supremacist” you wrote of is no more and hasn't been for quite some time. You're hung up in a time warp, Eduard. Move on, or better yet, get help. You titled one of your articles “Love in Action: What Can We Do?” But only you see people who do not want a Welcome Table. Instead of speaking of Love, you speak of us vs. them. You polarize. Is that a solution to any problem?

But we are way past the “problems” you see. Is there still discrimination? Yes. But how does it manifest its ugly self? Apathy. Apathy in the black and white communities. When people, white and black, walking down the street see the homeless, do you think they see their color? Eduard, you're there. You know, don't you? No, they don't see them at all, do they?

For one reason or another you missed the “call” of the 1960s, but the rest of us who were there did not. I understand your situation. You suffer from guilt. Seek help, Eduard. Preach the gospel. Preach what is termed “the Commandments of Jesus,” not polarization.

Speak out when there are injustices, for there will be many. Speak out loudly about not hiring the qualified, the smartest, the best. And speak loudly, Eduard.

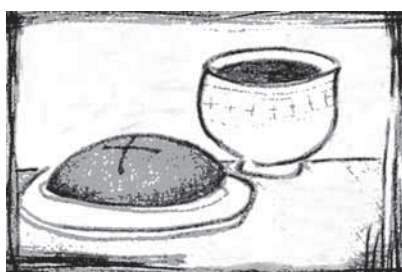
Yes, silence = Betrayal, Violence, Death. But so does blame, them vs. us, self-denial. Hate the sin, not the sinner. You aren't a “Radical Minority.” You are a person bogged down in issues that aren't issues now.

Prison is an excellent example. In the state of Georgia, the prison population is roughly 66 percent black and 34 percent non-black. The 34 percent is made up of whites, Asians and Hispanics. Whites represent only a small minority. Yet there is no racial tension. Is there discrimination? Yes. Usually it is reverse discrimination, but it's very small. Why? Because we see each other as brothers. By the way, most of the administrators and other prison personnel are black.

Move on, Eduard.

Edward F.

A Georgia Prisoner



Nelia Kimbrough

Dear Calvin and Nelia,

Please tell Murphy thank you for creating a wonderful resource in her rendering of Psalm 23 (July *Hospitality*). We used it in worship; about 10 people have asked for copies, and the calls keep coming. I always refer people back to your Web site and newspaper.

Ruth Harder

North Newton, Kansas

Editor's note: Ruth Harder is Associate Pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kansas. Nelia Kimbrough preached at Ruth's ordination service last September.

Eduard,

In front of City Hall, y'all practice biblical principles. It's more than words, words, words. Y'all take action ... Y'all do the Word.

So my thanks are to you and everyone at the Open Door Community. Thanks for the penetrating literature y'all provide. And thanks for the wonderful example y'all set.

Your letters are always welcome. Take care of yourself, Reverend. Best wishes to you and everyone at the Open Door Community.

Respectfully,

Warren Hall

Abbeville, Georgia



Robert McGovern

Hi Chuck!

I volunteered at the Open Door for a while a few years ago. I've been thinking about you all and praying for you quite a bit lately.

I'm currently serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio. My overall goal is to alleviate poverty, and I do that by working to connect student volunteers with non-profit organizations in Findlay. The students here are caring, but it is sometimes difficult to get them to participate in experiences that are outside of their comfort zone. I'm doing my best to think creatively and motivate them by telling stories.

I often use my experiences at the Open Door as examples of the impact that can be made through loving kindness. Sometimes I wish they could have a glimpse of the Open Door Community and the extravagant love poured out from its doors to people who may not receive it enough every day.

I'm not home in Atlanta much these days, but I still have your key on my key ring (Nelia told me to keep it!) and I think of you often. Thank you for all that you do! You're changing the world for the better! I'll be praying for you!

Harmony,

Gwen Stembridge

Findlay, Ohio

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon.
Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Men’s Showers: Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

Women’s Showers: Tuesday, 4 p.m.

Harriet Tubman Free Women’s Clinic:
1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

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

Mail Check: Tuesday – Thursday, during Soup Kitchen
Monday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.

Use of Phone: Tuesday – Thursday, during Soup Kitchen

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 U s for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 4 p.m. each S unday, 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.



Becca Conrad

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| November 28 | A dvent Worship at 910
Murphy Davis preaching |
| December 5 | No Worship at 910
A dvent Retreat at Dayspring Farm (12/3-6) |
| December 12 | A dvent Worship at 910
Service of Lessons & Carols
Nelia & Calvin Kimbrough leading |
| December 12 | A dvent Worship at 910
Visioning Christmas in a Cage
Murphy Davis & Eduard Loring leading |
| December 24 | Christmas Eve Eucharist & S upper
Friday 6:00 p.m. (please call ahead if you would like to join us) |
| December 26 | No Worship at 910 |

January 2 Worship at 910
Eucharist Service

January 9 Worship at 910
Eucharist Service

January 16 Worship at 910
Eucharist Service

January 23 Worship at 910
Eucharist Service

January 30 No Worship at 910
Retreat at Dayspring Farm (1/24-30)



Rita Corbin

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
acetamenophen
lubriderm lotion
cough drops
non-drowsy allergy tablets
cough medicine (alcohol free)

Foot Care Clinic

epsom salt
anti-bacterial soap
shoe inserts
corn removal pads
exfoliation cream (e.g., apricot scrub)
pumice stones
foot spa
cuticle clippers
latex gloves
nail files (large)
toenail clippers (large)
medicated foot powder
antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

We also need volunteers to help staff our Foot Care Clinic on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 - 9:15 p.m.!

Needs of the Community



we need **backpacks!**

Living Needs

- ☐ jeans
- ☐ work shirts
- ☐ 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, XXL, XXXL)
- ☐ baseball caps
- ☐ trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

Personal Needs

- ☐ shampoo (all sizes)
- ☐ lotion (all sizes)
- ☐ toothpaste (all sizes)
- ☐ combs & picks
- ☐ hair brushes
- ☐ lip balm
- ☐ soap (small sizes)
- ☐ multi-vitamins
- ☐ disposable razors
- ☐ deodorant
- ☐ vaseline
- ☐ shower powder
- ☐ Q-tips

Food Needs

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

Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ MARTA cards
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ Futon sofa
- ☐ single bed - box springs & mattress