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Peacemaking in a Global Nightmare

By Murphy Davis

On October 3, Murphy Davis was the speaker for a gathering in Nashville, Tennessee of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship to honor Don Beisswenger, retired professor from Vanderbilt Divinity School and a part of the Open Door's extended community.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to be here in Nashville with you good, faithful friends — you who are so committed to the struggle for justice and peace. And we could not be happier than to have this occasion to honor Don Beisswenger, our friend of many years, our mentor, and such an example of courage and faith.

Today I am preaching to the choir, but I don't worry about that. We must keep reminding each other of why we do what we do. If the choir doesn't get good preaching we'll be singing off-key real soon.

Of course, we need to talk to people who would never be in a gathering like this, as well. I loved it the other day when Bernie Sanders went to speak at Liberty University. Can you imagine this wild-haired old Yankee Democratic Socialist from Vermont speaking to those fresh-faced, washed-behind-the-ears, right-wing fundamentalist youngsters? When was the last time that somebody on one side of the political spectrum met with people so completely from "the other side," *with respect*, to seek out common ground? It seemed like a miracle.

It reminded me of Clarence Jordan and the Koinonia Community he founded in rural south Georgia in the 1940s. Because they believed themselves to be equally children of God with their Black neighbors, they were machine-gunned, dynamited, boycotted, shunned, kicked out of their churches and condemned by nearly everybody.

Sometime in the late 1950s, it got around that Clarence had welcomed Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Center, as a guest. Myles trained several generations of civil rights organizers including Mrs. Rosa Parks, coal miners and labor leaders; and songs like "We Shall Overcome" were taught at Highlander and spread around the world. Well, everybody "knew" Myles was a Communist so this was all the proof Koinonia neighbors needed that Clarence was a Communist, too. One day a fine citizen of Americus, Georgia was explaining to Clarence that he now knew for certain — since Jordan had been meeting with the likes of Myles Horton — that Clarence was a Communist. Clarence, in typical fashion, scratched his head and said, "Brotherman, lemme see if I got this straight. I talked with Myles Horton and that makes me a Communist? Well, I gotta tell you, I don't see how my talkin' to Myles Horton makes me a Communist any more than my



Brian Kavanagh

talkin' to you makes me a jackass."

We need to remember Clarence for his wisdom and his humor and his effort to talk with whomever he met to find common ground for the human struggle.

What a time this is to think together about what it means to be peacemakers. Last week in Atlanta seemed like a peacemaker's nightmare. When we left home — the Open Door Community — yesterday, our community members were finishing up the work of providing showers, clean clothes, needed medications and lunch to a large number of men and women who live outside and have no place to call home, to use the bathroom, take a shower, or prepare their own meal. Ed was at a demonstration in downtown Atlanta, trying to drown out a closed-door meeting of the players planning and plotting the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which will sacrifice our shredded, limping democracy to the whims and will of multinational corporations who will act unfettered by laws and regulations of any of the nations regarding trade, pricing, health and safety regulations, or any of the interests of the common good of the nations in the pact. And at the same time we come sad, dispirited, angry, distracted by the cruel execution of our sister Kelly Gissendaner on Wednesday morning.

Between Atlanta and Nashville, the news came of another school shooting, this time in Oregon: nine dead, eight or more injured. And Lord knows how many lives shattered.

The morass in the Middle East has reached proportions

Advent Credo

By Daniel Berrigan, SJ

It is not true that this world and its inhabitants are doomed to die and be lost —

This is true: For God so loved the world as to give the only Child so that everyone who believes shall not die but have everlasting life.

It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction —

This is true: I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

It is not true that violence and hatred shall have the last word, and that war and destruction have come to stay forever —

This is true: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, in whom authority will rest and whose name will be Prince of Peace.

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil that seek to rule the world —

This is true: To me is given all authority in heaven and on earth, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers —

This is true: I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young shall see visions and your elders shall have dreams.

It is not true that our dreams for the liberation of human kind, our dreams of justice, of human dignity, of peace, are not meant for this earth and this history —

This is true: the hour comes, and it is now, that true worshipers shall worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ — the life of the world. ✠

From *Testimony: The Word Made Flesh*, Orbis Books, 2004.



Rita Corbin

Wearing the Mask

By Catherine Meeks

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, —
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the Mask!

— Paul Laurence Dunbar

In the Foreword of *Black Pain*, by Terrie Williams, Mary J. Blige sums up the journey of far too many African Americans. She says, “Everywhere I go, I am moved by painful stories my people share with me. I look into their faces and I see myself reflected in their eyes. I feel their longing for comfort and their need for peace of mind. . . . I know that we are all bleeding internally, trying to patch up our own wounds with bandages, when we need healing from head to toe.”

But as Paul Laurence Dunbar so aptly states, we have been taught to wear the mask so well that it is difficult to release ourselves from it even though the pain of living with the mask is almost unbearable. Terrie Williams has captured the story of Black America’s journey with depression very well through the sharing of her own story and the stories of many others. Many of the people that she spoke with appeared to have the perfect life of success and power while they

were literally dying behind those constructed masks.

Many African Americans have internalized the master narrative about their capacity to bear all burdens and pain while smiling every minute. The slave owners were invested in having their notions of the “happy ducky” reinforced no matter what type of atrocities the slaves had to endure. Thus the mythology of the resilient Black person was born and continues into this present moment to be held up as an example of the way of being for African Americans.

I continue to be troubled by the speed with which the media and many others

assigned forgiveness to the families of the Charleston Nine. Yes, they contributed to this notion themselves by immediately talking about forgiveness, because there was no space in the country to embody their rage, grief and absolute sense of betrayal by their country and perhaps even their God. After all, expressions of rage can be directed to God and to others one has held in a place of faith. But it did not fit the master narrative for these grieving African Americans, whose family members had been murdered in church, to show their rage, grief and any other strong emotions. Only forgiveness would do because after all they were expected to be able to rise above their humanity and be strong.

The notion of the strong African American woman is another one that many



A Mother's Prayer

Brian Kavanaugh

of us have grown weary of hearing. It is not that African American women do not have strength; the conflict arises because she is only assigned that trait and not allowed to

**A page needs to be turned.
The masks need to be pulled off.**

be both strong and weak. Therefore, many times the African American woman picks up the mask and wears it to her own detriment. Perhaps the inability to express true emotions and to live into the truth of both weakness and strength contribute to the poor quality of life that so many Black women embrace as they try to make the assigned mask fit.

This projection of who the African American person is supposed to be makes it very difficult for folks who need treatment for depression to feel free to pursue it. Williams interviewed numerous persons in preparation for her book on the subject and she heard the same story over and over. Folks wore masks of being alright and managing their lives well, and were not even able to acknowledge the truth to themselves. This denial leads to addiction, expressions of violence, physical

illness and a generalized sense of powerlessness which affects the personal quality of life as well as the collective quality of the community’s life.

A page needs to be turned. The masks need to be pulled off. Mental health needs to be raised to a higher level in the liberation process, because no one can be free as long as the truth about the state of the soul is unrealized. Internal brokenness cannot be covered up by pretending to be fine, because it will become impossible to function at a satisfactory level while maintaining such denial. Black pain has to be unmasked so genuine healing can have a chance. ✦

Catherine Meeks is a community and wellness activist and an active member of the Open Door Community. She taught African American Studies at Mercer University and is the retired Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies at Wesleyan College, the author of five books and a columnist for The Telegraph in Macon, Georgia. (kayma53@att.net)

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**Advent and Christmas Greetings
from the Open Door Community!**

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From Silence to Salaam

A Reflection on Contemplative Peacebuilding

By Weldon D. Nisly

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest. (Isaiah 62:1)

Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes." (Luke 19:41f)

Isaiah sees injustice and invokes Jerusalem, refusing to keep silent. Jesus sees Jerusalem and laments our refusal to see what makes peace. Jerusalem, a central and symbolic place whose name embraces peace — *salaam/shalom* — embodies violence reverberating around the world.

Salaam is Arabic and *shalom* is Hebrew for "peace" although they hold a more wholistic meaning. In Arabic the greeting everywhere is *Salaam Aleykum* (the peace of God be with you) with the reply, *Aleykum Salaam* (God's peace be with you).

A Christian worship tradition is to "pass the peace" with the greeting, "The Peace of Christ be with you" and the reply, "And also with you." Jesus longs for us to embody Christ's peace and truly "see what makes for peace."

The heart of peace, as I have come to know it, is a contemplative heart. Contemplation, from the Latin *contemplatio* and *templum*, is deep devotional looking upon something with our hearts and minds to see the sacred and to seek *salaam*. It is to see God's love for the world and to see the face of Christ in the other. Contemplatives know that we must be silent and listen with the heart as much as the head and that we see and speak from the heart as much as the head. A gift of the contemplative heart is to have a disciplined sense of when to be silent and when to break silence in solidarity with suffering people seeking *salaam*.

I was listening and reflecting on "the things that make for peace" while Marg and I spent five months (December

break silence to help America see our triple sin of militarism, materialism, and racism. King said that this three-fold sin reveals a nation "approaching spiritual death," manifested by waging war on those whom we label *enemy* and dehumanize at home and around the world. Declaring, "A time comes when silence is betrayal," King exposed America's sin, not to denounce America but "to save the soul of America." He concluded, "We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation." We still face that choice today.

Sadly, we celebrate King with a national holiday, yet still refuse to see the truth of King's life and reason for his death in our warring nation. King knew that speaking truth to power is not without cost and consequence. One year later he was killed on April 4, 1968. More than an assassin's bullet killed King; a powerful military-industrial-intelligence complex meant to silence him. King, like Jesus, knew that the powers-that-be demand our unseeing silence and cannot tolerate anyone truly seeing what makes for peace. Yet King's life, like Jesus' life, will not be silenced if we dare to see and break silence in solidarity with suffering people seeking *salaam*.

Jesus and King turn my heart and mind to our current wars, especially Iraq, where I have been three times: March 2003, (beginning U.S. invasion of Iraq), January 2010 (war presumably winding down), and September-October 2014 (war escalating again). I was in Iraqi Kurdistan with Christian Peacemaker Teams. (www.cpt.org/work/iraq) CPT has been

A gift of the contemplative heart is to have a disciplined sense of when to be silent and when to break silence in solidarity with suffering people seeking *salaam*.

2014 through April 2015) at the Collegeville Institute of Saint John's Abbey in Minnesota. My first *work* there was to *pray* with the monastic community at 7:00 a.m., noon, and 7:00 p.m. The Benedictine monastic way of *Ora et Labora* (pray and work) offers contemplative wisdom for a world of war. My further work was to reflect on what God has set before me over four decades of Mennonite pastoral and peace ministry, and to envision what I see God still setting before me even in retirement for *Contemplative Just Peacebuilding*. Over my vocational life I have slowly become aware that at heart I am an activist becoming a contemplative activist becoming an active contemplative called to pastoral and peace ministry.

Last fall I was in Iraqi Kurdistan with Christian Peacemaker Teams. As I reflect on being there I have come to see what makes for peace more deeply as a contemplative interweaving of silence, seeing and speaking in solidarity with suffering people seeking *salaam*.

I began writing this contemplative reflection on the mid-January day when we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. As my heart and head returned to Iraq, my heart and head also turned to King, who helped us see what makes for peace in the context of an earlier war also waged on the basis of lies and myths. On April 4, 1967, King spoke a defining word at Riverside Church in New York City in his sermon, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence." He prophetically dared to

a peaceful presence in Iraq since 2002, first from Baghdad and since 2006 from Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq. As always, CPT is there at the invitation of and in solidarity with local people committed to nonviolent peacemaking.

Being in Iraqi Kurdistan helps me "see what makes for peace" with eyes of the heart. To truly see is to have one's eyes opened to see the land and culture as well as the setting and the suffering of people rooted in ancient history with an ongoing story and struggle. It is to be welcomed into another life and world and to begin to see through others' eyes.

When I arrived at the Sulaymaniyah International Airport, I soon saw Mohammed in his red CPT cap. He greeted me with a warm smile, "Welcome to Kurdistan." A Kurdish school teacher and a leader of CPT in Iraqi Kurdistan, Mohammed's gracious hospitality made me feel at home. One evening we were walking along a busy street when two guys on a motorcycle passed us and yelled, "Welcome to Suli" (as Sulaymaniyah is known). Traveling across Iraqi Kurdistan, a checkpoint guard, hearing that we were CPTers, waved us on with a smile, "Welcome to Kurdistan." We were often welcomed in word and with tea in Kurdistan.

Razhier, a Kurdish activist identifying unexploded landmines in Kurdistan, took us to a village to see the harm caused by a nearby oil and gas drilling company. In addition

to destroying the roads and polluting the air and water, the company's earthshaking drills caused a jagged crack across the wall of the village's small school. In this huge crack in the wall we saw both the literal danger to village schoolchildren and the symbolic damage caused by drilling to feed the world's insatiable appetite for oil.

The leader of this village of 18 homes invited us for tea. As we sat on the floor of their home drinking tea, he and his wife told us about the damaged roads, trembling earth, foul air and polluted water that endanger their children's lives. They told us of the drilling company's endless broken promises to repair and rebuild their village and roads. Unlike other villages that want to stop the drilling, they assured us that they weren't asking for the company to stop drilling; they were asking to be seen and helped rather than endangered and disempowered.

At an outdoor people's press conference held at a center for citizen's dialogue called the Cultural Café in Sulaymaniyah, we saw and heard Muslims, Ezidis (known as Yazidis), Christians, Kurds and others calling for everyone to work together for peace and healing in their war-weary land. One



Weldon Nisly

An abandoned market in the city of Duhek in Iraqi Kurdistan that has become housing for Ezidi Internally Displaced Persons.

table, including CPTer Peggy Gish, embodied this commitment with Kurds, Ezidis, Muslims, and Christians welcoming each other in peace and friendship.

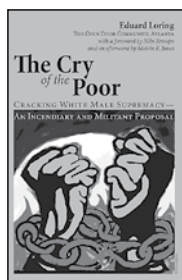
In that meeting, an Ezidi leader explained that the common reference to them as Yazidi is false, with connotations of devil worship, while Ezidi means to worship God. Later we saw a central Ezidi temple and heard their elders explain their religious beliefs and practices, which have roots in Zoroastrian, Islamic and Christian traditions.

The most immediate and intense context for war was the simmering ISIS crisis that boiled over in August 2014 throughout western Iraq and eastern Syria. While the world considers ISIS to be a non-state terrorist group, it now controls about a third of both countries as a strict Islamist state called a Caliphate. There are significant differences between ISIS and Al Qaeda, including local, internal, targeted territorial control vs. global, external, specific targets. Yet the West lumps both together as "terrorists" against whom the U.S.-led Global War on Terrorism is waged in what has become unwinnable permanent war.

I am reminded of a wise word by an early United Nations Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who said, "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." When permanent war is our answer and all we have are weapons, we see more bombs as the way to "degrade and destroy" ISIS, to use the President's language.

From Silence to Salaam *continued on page 9*

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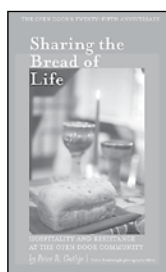
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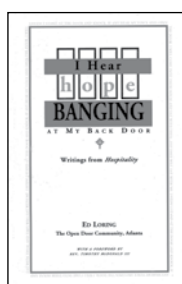
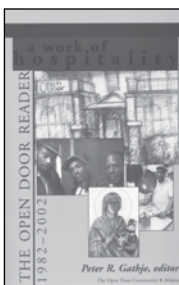
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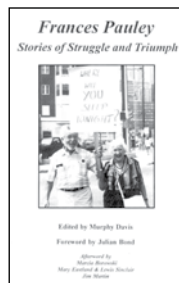
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Looking for Advent in the City Streets

By **Andrew Foster Connors**

In the midst of the uprisings in Baltimore, one of my colleagues, a white male like me, expressed the confusion coming across his Facebook feed. “Some of my Black friends are saying, ‘White people, it’s time for you to stand up and say that Black lives matter!’ Others are saying, ‘White people, it’s time for you to shut up and listen!’” My colleague and I tentatively agreed that both kinds of responses are called for in these times. The hard part is discerning when which response is required. Such is true not only for white people at the end of 2015, but more broadly, for the church in Advent. We are torn between a radical, active posture of living into a heavenly reign that has already invaded our world and a humble, empty-handed waiting for that reign to come to fruition.

Like the cyclical nature of Advent, we find ourselves circling around to the issue of race in America. More accurately, the whole nation finds itself spiraling around again to a reality that people of color navigate daily but that white people have the privilege (by and large) to ignore. The “peculiar institution” of slavery has forever marked the peculiar history of our nation, and preachers everywhere find



Brian Kavanaugh

The good news in Advent is first and foremost that Christ enters into that pain and actively transforms it.

ourselves uniquely equipped by the stories of our faith to address concrete, systemic sin and the pain that rises from it. I say uniquely equipped because the language of sin is more relevant to addressing contemporary racial wounds than any other.

Sin speaks of a condition that we cannot escape by our own choices. It is a concept that the American myth finds almost impossible to swallow, which is why it evokes so much resistance when spoken from American pulpits. And yet the word describes the reality in Baltimore, where I live, better than any other. What other word can account for the fact that every Black man I know in this city has at least one story of a humiliating encounter with the police? What other word can account for the complex reality that studies of police officers show that all officers demonstrate an implicit bias against young Black men, including officers who themselves are Black? What other word can account for the deep disparities in household wealth, life expectancy, or the likelihood of going to prison than the word that makes clear that our best selves are marred by histories and cultures that shape us in ways beyond our choosing?

Conservatives, by and large, apply the concept of sin in individual, spiritualized ways that ignore historical realities. The gnostic Jesus that descends from this mythic cloud never says a mumblin’ word about racial injustice, economic systems of oppression, or criminal policies that leave more Black people disenfranchised today than during Jim Crow segregation.

Liberals, squeamish on sin, express worry that this language shapes a passive people who are forever washing their hands of responsibility, waiting for a Jesus of the least of these to come and save us while we sit by and do nothing. I’ve found the opposite to be true. Confession leads to a kind of truth-telling that makes relationship possible — first with God, but then with other people.

One of the inadvertent negative results of the Civil Rights Movement is that white people learned to substitute correct language *about* race for *actual relationships* that cross racial boundaries. As a result, white people, on the whole, still live at a safe distance, literally and figuratively, from the injustice leveled against people of color and the pain that results. From a distance, we can work on getting our talking points

correct without ever risking ourselves in relationships that could challenge us and transform that pain into real healing.

The good news in Advent is first and foremost that Christ enters into that pain and actively transforms it. This is why Black theologians can speak of the “Black Christ” present in and among people of color. White people who are in relationship with Black people know what they mean. There is a power that rises within the heart

of the Black community, a power most evident in the Black church. It is the power of a people who have survived countless crucifixions to still sing of hope and the promised land that is just around the corner. Liberal white Christians, by and large, have treated Black people as charity cases, a “cause” to be helped, when the truth of the matter is that the Black church is a kind of clay jar that holds the truth of gospel.

Much has been written by white theologians about the decline of the power of the church in North America. But the gospel is alive and well, and has been for a long time, in the disestablished, vulnerable Black church. In Advent, we are invited to see the places where our God enters, vulnerable and almost imperceptible, discounted by some in power, but pursued as a threat by the Herods of the world who recognize the true power that resides there.

The church is invited to meet Christ in this vulnerability, which means that the church can’t stay still. The night after the uprisings in Baltimore, an invitation came from residents of Sandtown-Winchester where Freddie Gray was arrested before dying in a police van. The streets were like a war zone. People were afraid of police, gangs and the National Guard. No one knew what might happen next. Police helicopters hovered all night, a constant, unnerving drone. The grocery store had burned down, and since it was the end of the month, some were already out of food. A number of us walked the streets and listened. Neighborhood leaders invited people to

Looking for Advent *continued on page 10*

Engaging the Black Jesus

By Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach

Oakhurst Presbyterian Church is a church that has known the movement of the city. We are located in Decatur, Georgia, a part of the metro-Atlanta area. In 1960, the congregation of 800 added an education building and installed in the sanctuary a new stained-glass picture of Jesus at the Ascension, with a white Jesus, two white angels and twelve white disciples watching him ascend into the sky.

A few years later, when the city of Atlanta took Black housing for “urban removal,” Black folk moved into the Oakhurst neighborhood. The white residents of Oakhurst did not think they could have a decent quality of life with Black people in the neighborhood, and the white flight began. The membership of Oakhurst Presbyterian dropped from 850 to 80 over a period of 15 years, a 90% drop. The congregation struggled to survive, but there were courageous whites who stayed and even more courageous Black people who came. There was powerful elder and minister and member leadership, and with the financial and spiritual help of Atlanta Presbytery, the church survived.

We came as pastors in 1983, and worked to shift the congregation’s focus from being a white church with Black members to a church that sought to share power and live more as a multicultural body. While there were many areas of struggle in this transition, one was around the power of art. We were assisted in this by people like Virginia Gailey and Choquita McGriff, an artist and a teacher

who knew these values first hand.

We decided to concentrate on the stained-glass window of the white Jesus in the sanctuary. We chose this because everyone who came to worship would see it, and we wanted to change it from a white Jesus to a Black Jesus. This Black Jesus would not only express solidarity with many of our Black members, but it would also engage our white members, and indeed anyone who came to worship with us. What does the skin color of Jesus have to say about anything? In American culture, it says everything! If Jesus is not a privileged white man but is rather a persecuted Black man, what does that say about the Gospel?

All these questions rolled around in our elders’ meeting on the proposal. We had engaged the company who had originally put in the stained-glass windows to give us a proposal. There was no opposition in the elders’ meeting, so we approved it, and then came the next issue: how does a struggling church like ours find the dollars for this? Virginia found a family member who was willing to pay the cost, and off we went. Though we had voted to do it, we wanted to “sneak” it in, to have the company come get the stained-glass pieces, change them and bring them back before Sunday. They got it done — Jesus with brown skin, hands and feet, two disciples with African features and



Susan Stroupe

What does the skin color of Jesus have to say about anything? In American culture, it says everything!

one woman among the disciples! When Sunday came around, the change had been made, but God was laughing at us. The artwork of the company was terrible, so we asked them to take it back and rework it. They could not get to the window until Thursday of that week, and that meant that when people came on Sunday, they would see only holes for the head, hands and feet of Jesus. On top of that, on that particular Sunday a woman who had grown up singing in our choir and who now sang on occasion for the Metropolitan Opera, was coming back for an encore at our church. Many of the white folk who had fled the church in fear would be there, and they would see it too! No secrets now — everyone would know. And they did!

We have made many changes at Oakhurst over the years, but this has been one of our most powerful evangelical tools. If you come to worship with us, you will engage the Black Jesus and will be required to make a decision on the issue of skin color. What does it mean to worship a Black Jesus? For all of us who breathe the air of racism, it is fundamental and revolutionary. It calls that system of race into question, and it calls us to make a decision about who Jesus is, and even more importantly, who we are. Do we belong to racism or to the Gospel? Both of those forces flow in all of our veins, but the Black Jesus calls on us to start bending that moral arc of ourselves toward justice. ✦

Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach are longtime friends of the Open Door Community. Nibs is the pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur. Caroline is retired from her pastoral work at Oakhurst.

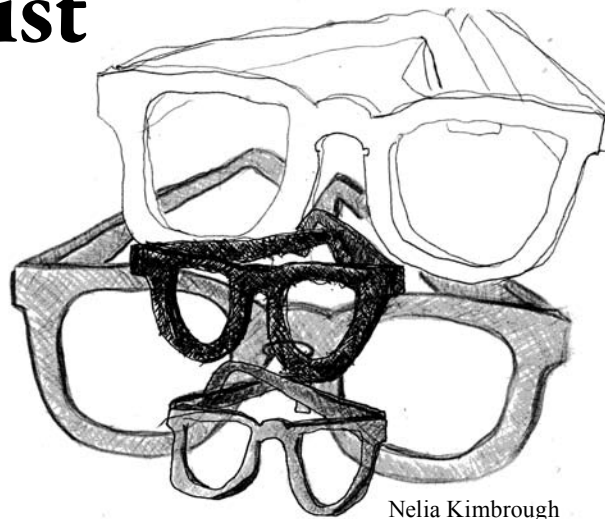
Jesus is My Optometrist

By Peter Gathje

We were on our way to the Southern College of Optometry, a short walk from Manna House. We talked as we walked, about glasses and about our lives. “I got my first pair of glasses when I was in the 4th grade,” I said. “I got my first glasses when I was in 9th grade. I lost them when I was in 12th grade. I haven’t had glasses since,” Mary (not her real name) shared. “When was that?” I asked. “1980. Lord, a long time ago.”

The other guest, Harold (also not his real name), said, “I got mine later, when I was an adult. My eyes just haven’t kept up.” Being the theological type, I mentioned that Jesus thought people should be able to see. He went around healing blind people. I wanted to give some praise to the Southern College of Optometry for the free eye exams so I added, “Seems like the folks helping you all get glasses are like Jesus.” “Yes sir,” Harold said, “Jesus is my optometrist.” “That’s a good one,” Mary said laughing, “Jesus is my optometrist too!”

We got to the Southern College and briefly waited before being served. “When I get my glasses I won’t bump into things anymore,” Mary told me. “I really can’t see very well at all. See this bruise on my arm? I got this one yesterday when I ran into a table where I live.” Mary was called to come and pick out her frames. Harold



Nelia Kimbrough

Harold came out with his new glasses, a big smile on his face. “I can see again! I can see again!”

waited to receive his glasses. “I picked out some frames that didn’t cost too much,” he said. “The frames aren’t gonna help me see anyway.”

Then Harold was called. Mary returned. “I saw them Gucci and Coach frames,” she said. “Why do people spend so much money? Mine are plain and simple. That’s what I like. I’d be afraid to lose my

glasses if they cost so much.” I went with her and paid for the frames. She was right. She had picked inexpensive but sturdy frames. Shortly after we were done, Harold came out with his new glasses, a big smile on his face. “I can see again! I can see again!” He was excited like a child on Christmas morning. We went to settle his account, but somehow everything was already settled. “You’re free to

go. It’s all paid,” the cashier told us.

“I guess the College covered what my insurance didn’t,” Harold said. “I was supposed to owe a hundred dollars. Now Manna House don’t have to pay.”

I didn’t argue with the cashier, and off we went. I asked Harold if he wanted a picture of himself with his new glasses. He most certainly did. So next time Harold comes to Manna House I can give him the picture of him standing in front of the Southern College of Optometry wearing his new glasses. Mary’s glasses will come in next week. She is anticipating how the glasses will change her life. “I am most happy because I’ll be able to read my Bible. I’m gonna read and read. And I’ll be able to see far away. I won’t have to squint so much. Lord, it will all be good!”

“Jesus is my optometrist,” Harold had said. Indeed, it will all be good. ✦

Peter Gathje is a professor and Assistant Academic Dean at Memphis Theological Seminary; a founder of Manna House, a place of hospitality in Memphis; and a longtime friend of the Open Door (pgathje@memphissem.edu).

In, Out & Around 910

Compiled and Photographed by Calvin Kimbrough

Vigil for Life at the Death of Kelly Gissendaner

Kelly Gissendaner was executed by the state of Georgia at 12:21 a.m. on September 30. The Open Door hosted a Vigil earlier that evening at the State Capitol during the 7 p.m. time of her scheduled execution to call for the abolition of the death penalty and to remember Kelly.

This was her third execution date, the first canceled by weather, the second by "cloudy drugs" (see *Hospitality*, April, May and September 2015). *Above: Emma Stitt*, a Novice at the Open Door, welcomes all to the Vigil. *Right: Terry Kennedy*, a Partner at the Open Door, stands as part of the crowd calling for the end of the death penalty. *Below, right: Melvin Jones*, a Resident at the Open Door, reads from Psalm 146.



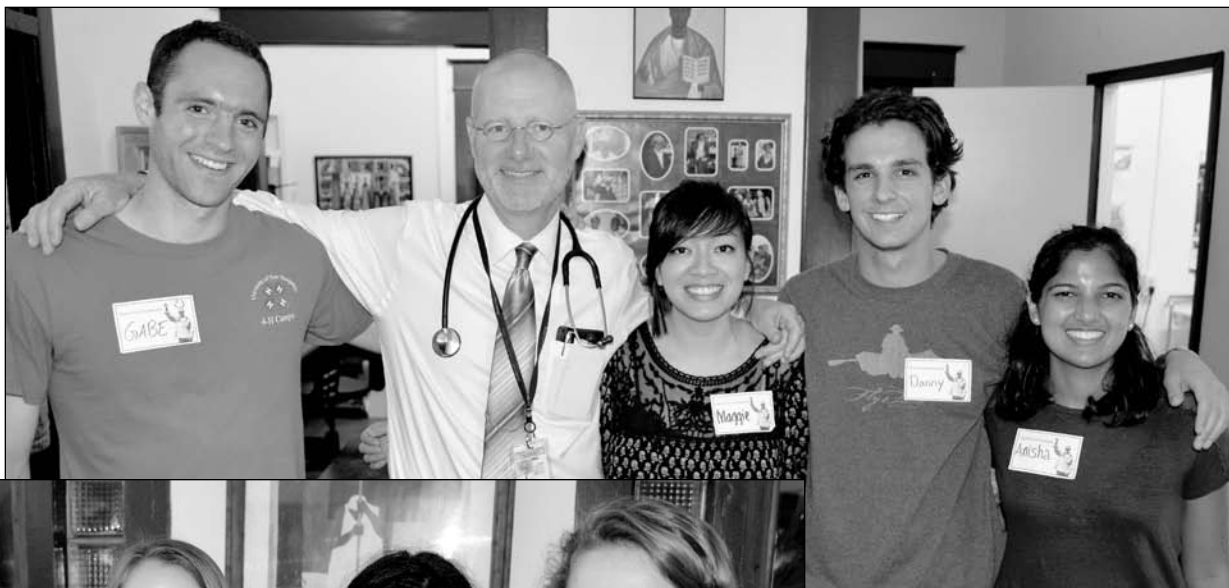
Above: Eric Rucker speaks of his relationship with Kelly as part of the Candler School of Theology Certificate in Theological Studies at Lee Arrendale Prison for Women. Eric, a Candler graduate, is a part of the Open Door extended community.

Above: Wende Ballew, Founder and Director of Reforming Arts, speaks about her relationship with Kelly at the prison and Kelly's mentoring of other women prisoners.

Right: Reading the names and remembering those previously executed.



Right: Bernadette O'Neill, a Catholic Worker and current Candler student, joins us for each execution Vigil. Below: Eduard Loring, a Partner at the Open Door, leads us in prayer to close the Vigil. Bottom: After the Vigil we gather for Eucharist at 910, led by Nelia Kimbrough, a Partner at the Open Door. Please see the poem "On the Execution of Kelly Gissendaner in Georgia Last Night" on page 10.



Celebrating Our Clinic Coordinators

The Harriet Tubman Medical Clinics at the Open Door Community are coordinated by Emory University medical students who serve for a year under the direction of Emory faculty members. Each fall, new students are interviewed and selected to lead the clinics. The Tuesday evening Women's Clinic was led in 2014-15 by Kayley Alden and Sydney Archer. The new coordinators for 2015-16 are Emily Goggins and Akshaya Kannan. *Left: Kayley, Emily, Akshaya and Sydney.* The Wednesday evening Clinic was led in 2014-15 by Maggie To and Gabe Perlow. The new coordinators for 2015-16 are Anisha Apte and Danny Piening. *Above: Gabe, Dr. Allen Dollar (Medical Director), Maggie, Danny and Anisha.* We thank them all for their dedication to the leadership of these clinics and look forward to having them all back in a few years as physicians in our clinics.

Peacemaking in a Global Nightmare *continued from page 1*

and complications that leave most of us scratching our heads. Robert Fisk, a scholar of the Middle East, said this week:

Let me try to get this right. The Saudis are bombing Yemen because they fear the Shia Houthis are working for the Iranians. The Saudis are also bombing Isis in Iraq and the Isis in Syria. So are the United Arab Emirates. The Syrian government is bombing its enemies in Syria and the Iraqi government is also bombing its enemies in Iraq. America, France, Britain, Denmark, Holland, Australia and — believe it or not — Canada are bombing Isis in Syria and Isis in Iraq, partly on behalf of the Iraqi government (the Shia militias) but absolutely not on behalf of the Syrian government.

The Jordanians and Saudis and Bahrainis are also bombing Isis in Syria and Iraq because they don't like them, but the Jordanians are bombing Isis even more than the Saudis after their pilot-prisoner was burned to death in a cage. The Egyptians are bombing parts of Libya because a group of Christian Egyptians had their heads chopped off by what might — notionally — be the same so-called Islamic State, as Isis refers to itself. The Iranians have acknowledged bombing Isis in Iraq — of which the Americans (but not the Iraqi government) take a rather dim view. And of course the Israelis have several times bombed Syrian government forces in Syria but not Isis (an interesting choice, we'd all agree). Chocks away!

And then he says what common sense would lead us all to agree: "It amazes me that all these warriors of the air don't regularly crash into each other as they go on bombing and bombing."

Who knows really *what* is going on? I'm overwhelmed, aren't you?

In the U.S., according to a *Guardian* investigation, police in the United States are killing people at a rate that will result in 1,100 fatalities by the end of this year. That is an average of three people killed per day during the first half of 2015.

In the years 2003-2009 and 2011, the FBI counted 383 homicides as an annual average. But the actual average, as estimated by a March study from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which even that agency's accountability researchers admit is incomplete, was 928 human beings per year. That's 928 brothers, sisters, children, shot down in their homes, in the streets of our cities and towns, in their churches, mosques, temples, schools.

The local and state police have, as we know, become a highly militarized occupying force, and Black parents live in fear when their young people leave home, wondering if they will return alive.

We come to you with fresh pain from the execution of Kelly Gissendaner. How futile and unnecessary is all the pain we create with the spiral of violence represented by the death penalty. How stupid it is that her three young-adult children — victims of the original crime when they lost their father — are now re-victimized by this cruel and bizarre execution of their mother, whom they worked so hard to forgive and with whom they established a beautiful relationship of love and trust? How is it that we are so hell-bent to create suffering piled on suffering

piled on suffering? Millions of dollars and human resources squandered, producing only more and more and more violence and creating unnecessary suffering, bitterness and misery in its wake.

Mass imprisonment — the new Jim Crow — the same old, same old. Human misery, ruined lives, wasted talents, taking citizens and rendering them non-persons, administering policies of soul death.

And then there's Oregon this week. Another lone gunman — another disaffected young white man — heavily armed (he had 13 guns), killed nine people and wounded more Thursday, soaking an Oregon college campus in blood. We are 274 days into the year of our Lord 2015, and in the land of the free and the home of the brave we've had 294 mass shootings.

Oh dear friends, do you say you want to be PEACEMAKERS? I guess you could say that we're not the most successful folk in town. But what in the world are we to do?

Don Beisswenger would probably say, "Life is just a question of hermeneutics." Indeed. Hermeneutics has to do with how we interpret what is going on around us. Hermeneutics asks about our angle of vision and how we understand our personal responsibility for what is going on. Where, in fact, are we standing when we look around and ask what is going on? What is the lens through which we look? When we read about a police officer killing another young unarmed Black man, have we walked in that child's neighborhood? Do we know his mama? Do we know what school he attended and what he hoped for in his life? The late, great Phil Berrigan always said, ever so delicately, "Your hope is where your ass is." In other words, if we hope that the homeless poor will be housed, we will truly live out that hope by putting our bodies in the places where the homeless poor live their lives. It's like Paul said, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice." (Romans 12:1)

If we are to have hope to go on — if we are to fight the forces that threaten to overwhelm us and leave us in despair — we must be very, very intentional. I would suggest that we pay attention to our friend and mentor Don Beisswenger and re-commit ourselves in three areas:

1. We must be with and on the side of the poor — not just in our minds and in our hearts, but with our bodily presence. We will not experience the dead Black children as personal loss if we do not know them and love them. Don is a good model of this. But you might want to remember that if you are thinking and talking and grieving about the plight of the poor on a regular basis, you won't get invited to many dinner parties with your upper-class friends. That's okay, we just need to decide whether or not to live a life of discipleship and count the cost.

If we are to have hope to go on — if we are to fight the forces that threaten to overwhelm us and leave us in despair — we must be very, very intentional.

2. We must work to build community every day — not just with the people who look, act and smell like us. We must build community (as Don has done for so many years here in Nashville through The Living Room and his work among the homeless poor) with people whose lives do not normally intersect with ours. This requires a significant level of intentionality. We need to learn to love each other and build our care for the common good.

O look, look in the mirror,
O look in your distress:
Life remains a blessing
Although you cannot bless.

O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbor
With your crooked heart.

— W.H. Auden, from "As I Walked Out One Evening"

3. We must be ready — we must get ourselves ready — to learn new forms and acts of resistance.

Since we are honoring Professor Beisswenger tonight we might ask ourselves, were we not a bit taken aback when he crossed the line at the Fort Benning School of the Americas and faced six months in Federal Prison for his act of solidarity — for his demand with his own body that we stop the killing, stop the torture, stop the training for war and terrorism? Can we remember how he made us all re-think our own commitments? When someone we know walks the talk and suffers the consequences then we have to take stock of our own courage and willingness to take responsibility for our vicious and deadly political policies. We can be certain of this: The madness of war across the world and the war in our streets, and hateful violence against the poor will go on *as long as we let it go on*.

How many bodies will it take? How many black, brown, white bodies piled up will we tolerate before we are willing to move out of our comfort zones and act? How many gallons of blood will we tolerate? How much blood on the streets, in the prisons? Blood in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq,

Palestine, Central Africa?

At the Open Door, we've had some wonderful new experiences in the past year. After Ferguson, Ed Loring and Terry Kennedy went up to be part of the response to the police violence and the killing of young Michael Brown. Back in Atlanta we began to get to know and support the bright and energetic young leaders of Black Lives Matter, Rise Up, Color of Change and other groups. We thrilled at the actions of Bree Newsome, who scurried up the flagpole at the S.C. State Capitol and took the odious Confederate flag

down! In the wake of the horrific Charleston massacre and the boastful white child with his automatic weapons and his obscene Dixie flag, she said, "To *hell* with waiting for a vote." SHE TOOK IT DOWN. As the old deacon said, "Sometime somethin' just have to be DID!" We must discern the times when "something have to be did."

And we do well, sisters and brothers, to examine our symbols and honored ancestors and purge our homes and churches and communities of any and every symbol that gives one inch to White Supremacy. We have churches, schools, buildings, and even stained glass windows named for white supremacists, and they have to go.

"Not everyone is guilty," Rabbi Heschel reminds us, "but all are responsible." We share responsibility for what happens next. Naomi Klein, one of the great prophets of our era, said yesterday on "DemocracyNow": "So here's the big question: What if global warming isn't only a crisis? What if it's the best chance we are ever going to get to build a better world? Change or be changed." I agree with her; the present moment is either a real opportunity or the beginning of a very ugly end to life as we know it. All we need to do to prevent that end is change everything.

Thank you, my friends, for this opportunity to bring you tidings of good cheer. I leave you with love and great appreciation, and with deep gratitude for this opportunity to honor Don Beisswenger, our dear friend and teacher. And I leave you with another word from W. H. Auden:

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

— W.H. Auden, from "September 1, 1939" ♦

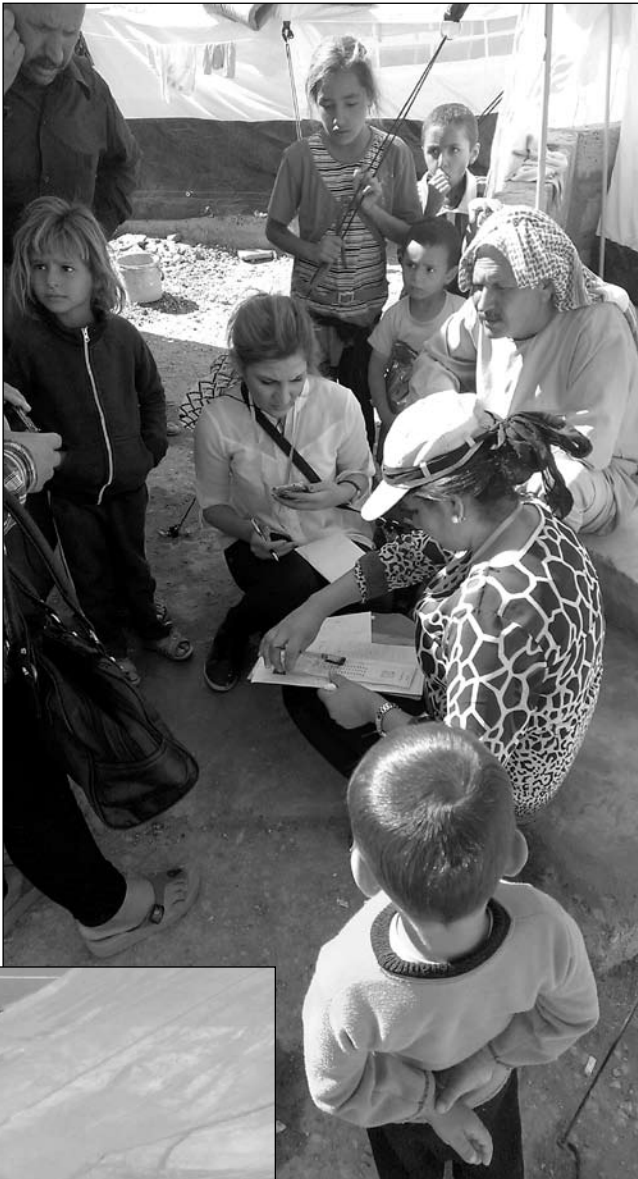
Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community (murphydavis@bellsouth.net).

From Silence to Salaam *continued from page 3*

A tragic cost of war is the countless victims left in war's wake. Victims are rarely those who decide to wage war. Victims are those who fight and are left with physical, emotional, psychological, economic, spiritual and moral injury. Most of all, victims are civilians, especially children, women, elderly and others whose lives are torn apart by war.

Victims of this war include thousands who have lost everything they have ever known, including family members, and have been forced to leave home and become Internally Displaced People (IDPs). Fleeing in terror from ISIS, they struggle to find a new life in UN refugee camps or empty open buildings in the cities of the Kurdish region of northern Iraq.

CPT collaborates with Kurdish human rights groups working with these victims of war. For several days, another CPTer, Peggy Gish, and I accompanied Zhiyan (meaning *Life*), which is a human rights delegation of about 20 people, visiting Ezidi IDPs in Iraqi Kurdistan near the Syrian border, to document women and girls recently abducted by ISIS. In our Zhiyan leader, Bahar, I saw a woman of gracious diplomatic wisdom speaking passionately with the Governor of the Duhok region of Iraqi Kurdistan and compassionately with displaced Ezidi people. Our Kurdish Zhiyan team members were also passionate and compassionate people, listening to those who told heart-breaking stories of beloved wives, sisters, mothers, daughters and grandmothers missing at the hands of ISIS. We visited two IDP camps, each with thou-



sands of people in endless rows of UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) tents lined across the desert hills. In teams of four we listened to countless stories of Ezidi women and girls abducted by ISIS. In one tent, our team sat with two sisters (17 and 15 years old) who gave details of 70 girls and women from two years old to their 70s that they personally knew who were missing. Seeing their suffering hearts and their gracious spirit was heartbreaking and eye opening. Seeing my three Kurdish team members being so compassionately present while documenting missing women was also eye opening. I discovered what it means to "see" with the heart while being a silent presence with others engaged in intense conversations in languages I don't know, a mixture of two Kurdish languages, Arabic, and an Ezidi dialect.

We saw hundreds of children of all ages playing in the treeless desert sun of the IDP camps or in multiple-story, unfinished, open-walled cement buildings that are now home for their families. Children swarmed around us to welcome us with joy and sadness. With no playgrounds and no schools, they played under the hot desert sun that would soon turn into cold winter weather.

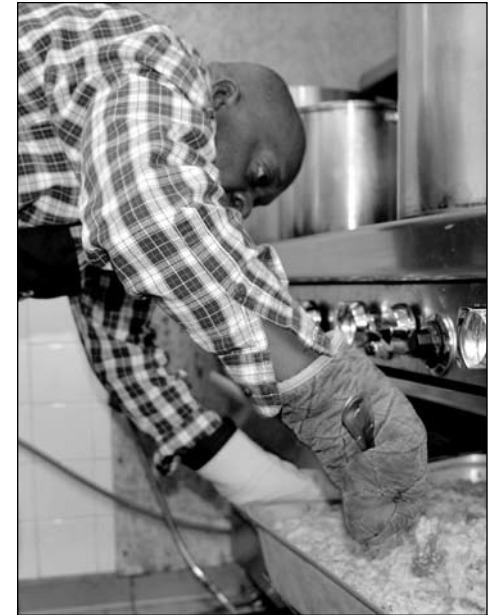
We faced the reality of our own privilege, knowing that we would get on a bus and leave before the day was over,

while they had nowhere to go and an unknown future. Many Ezidis lamented not being able to return home and longed to migrate to other countries to begin a new life. We heard cries about once again being oppressed and abandoned by the world. We heard pleas to be seen and gratitude for our presence to show their suffering face to the world.

We faced the challenge of hearing victims of war call for bombing as the global response to ISIS. To be in solidarity with suffering people means listening to the cries of the heart without devaluing or disempowering others. A contemplative challenge in the suffering face of war is to sense when to be silent and when to speak on behalf of others while holding a vision and commitment to break the cycle of violence inherent in war by seeing what makes for peace through Jesus' eyes. It is the contemplative way of Just Peacebuilding. In America, especially with those who call themselves Christian, we are called to break the silence and share their story so suffering people and Jesus' way of peace do not remain forever hidden from our eyes. ✦

Weldon Nisly is a retired pastor of Seattle Mennonite Church and a faithful peacemaker and justice seeker (nislyweldon@gmail.com).

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Calvin Kimbrough

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needs
at the
Open Door Community

Volunteers for Tuesday and Wednesday
Soup Kitchen and Showers (**8:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**).

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

Individuals to accompany community members to medical appointments.

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

People to cook or bring food for our **6 p.m.** household supper on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

For more information,
contact **Sarah Humphrey**
at sarah@opendoorcommunity.org
or **404.874.9652 option 4**

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

On the Execution of Kelly Gissendaner in Georgia Last Night

A morning of mourning...
The skies in Memphis are low and grey.
There was a song once, "Mississippi Goddamn."
It is now also (as it always was) inclusive of Georgia.
And Tennessee, and every Confederate State.
If one can speak of a lynching of a white woman.
Which I think we can.
A pope, politicians, and protesters are nothing
in the face of principalities and powers given to death.
Jesus even was crucified.
I will wait three days to speak of resurrection.
And try to hope again.

— Peter Gathje

Peter Gathje is a professor and Assistant Academic Dean at Memphis Theological Seminary; a founder of Manna House, a place of hospitality in Memphis; and a longtime friend of the Open Door (pgathje@memphisseminary.edu). Please see pages 6 and 7: "Vigil for Life at the Death of Kelly Gissendaner."

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.



Rita Corbin

Looking for Advent in the City Streets *continued from page 4*

come and listen to those most deeply affected by the violence and unrest. So we gathered that night around tables brimming with food to listen to fears and to pray for a way forward.

I have walked those streets and others in our city many times since the unrest. With others in BUILD, a 37-year-old citizens' power organization of churches, synagogues, schools and community groups, I have challenged mayors, police commissioners and business leaders to get out from behind their desks and into the streets to know the pain of the people we are all obligated to serve. Sometimes I have listened; other times I have argued with brothers and sisters of many colors as we have discerned where God is leading us, together, to meet Christ, and how Christ is calling us to die to sin so that we might be alive to the new creation that we see rising from the ashes of our city of ruins.

In the weeks afterward, I have often found myself in conversations with white people outside of the city who are literally afraid to drive into it. I find myself feeling deeply sorry

for them. Christ is alive, and they know him only as an idea, rather than as wounded flesh who speaks of life, not from the distance of division and pain and suffering, but in the midst of it! The risen Christ is here, marked by violence but forever freed from it, and they still live in fear! A friend said to me recently, "White people need to have more courage in engaging these relationships." Perhaps. Or maybe we all need to be reminded of where to find our Lord, and of the powerful joy that arises from those vulnerable places only because Christ lives there. ✠

Andrew Foster Connors is Senior Pastor of Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, Maryland (andrew@browndowntown.org). Andrew and his wife Kate Foster Connors were volunteers at the Open Door during their years as students at Columbia Theological Seminary. This article first appeared in the Advent issue of Journal for Preachers (www.journalforpreachers.com).

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Hi Bill Quigley,

I am a friend of the Open Door Community and I want to congratulate you on the fine job you have done on the article, "Ten Facts about being Homeless in the USA" [*Hospitality*, November-December 2014]. I would appreciate very much the entire article with references in a format that I can send to others or photocopy. I work with housing and non-profit groups in Georgia concerned about affordable housing and homelessness and I want to share it with them.

Thanks, and many blessings on you for doing this fine and concise piece. We must memorize these facts and find solutions!

Marty Collier
Decatur, Georgia

Dear Bill [Quigley],

I address you by your first name, since I have read so many of your writings and so much about your labors for underprivileged and under-represented people in the USA. I would appreciate your sending me a copy of your article in the November-December issue of the Open Door's *Hospitality*.

I have been working with Homeless Coalitions in Manatee and Nassau Counties in Florida since 2000. My personal goals are improving public education about homelessness and the faces of homelessness, and improved advocacy for funding for access to housing with supportive services for homeless persons. On a public level, I want to see more affordable housing, improved pay scales, and better access to quality health care for the entire community.

Thanks for your offer to send the copy of your article and for all your work!

Peace,
Thomas C. Washburn, M.D.
Fernandina Beach, Florida

Ed,

Both your letters to the Emmanuel AME Church and to Dylan Roof move me to tears. I pray that the Spirit works through your words and all our hearts to bring about the truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation we so desperately need.

Thank you so much.

Love,
Stacy Rector
Nashville, Tennessee

Stacy Rector is a longtime friend of the Open Door, a Presbyterian minister and director of Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

Eduard,

I appreciate receiving *Hospitality* and look forward to your regular submissions. Always thoughtful and troubling, they do force us to think afresh about Atlanta's and America's problems. I thought both of yours for the July-August issue particularly hard-hitting and persuasive.

In my years at Candler and occasional encounters with you and Murphy, I somehow never learned or else quickly forgot that we share a Drew background. Your mention in "Pew on Pew" of Drew and of Gordon Harland brought back memories. I went to Drew, in a sense, because he left. His modern/American slot became mine when distinguished successors like Conrad Cherry backed out at the last moment. Desperate, they appointed me. And when I heard about the opening I had several good conversations with Harland, who encouraged my application (don't know what he thought about me as his "replacement").

Anyway, I do appreciate receiving *Hospitality*, continue to be impressed with its prophetic role, and remain in awe of what you/y'all have built there through the years.

Russ Richey
Duke Divinity School, Duke University
Durham, North Carolina

To the Open Door Community,

I read an article in the June 2015 *Hospitality* called "Daily Misery and Suffering on Death Row." I'm [in the regular prison population], and we're experiencing the same type of treatment as the brothers there.

Our food is also served on insulated trays that are old, dirty, full of bacteria (since the dishwashing machine broke, they are washing trays by hand, not being washed in 200 degrees required to clean). The trays are leaking water and dish detergent onto food. The food is spoiled half of the time, bread and cake is not cooked thoroughly, milk is spoiled the majority of the time, coffee is always cold and bitter, beans have rocks and bugs in them, the mystery meat is always raw. It's either eat what they give you or don't eat at all, 'cause the officers are implementing this to the fullest. The administration knows about it and does nothing, from the warden all the way down to the last in charge — they condone this mistreatment.

Yes, the living conditions are inhumane and downright cruel and unusual punishment. We don't get cells cleaned out for weeks and weeks apart, and when we do there are no proper chemicals given to us to clean adequately. Blankets are washed every seven to eight months (supposed to be quarterly). Sheets and laundry go out and come back looking as if they were run through a mud puddle. The dirty toilet and sink don't work properly. No haircuts, no shaves, no dental, it takes a week to 10 days to be seen at sick call.

They won't allow us any packages at Christmas time anymore. They won't allow us to buy underclothes, socks, towels, long johns, sweatshirts, and necessities in order to survive. These folks are doing things that are not in compliance with "standard operating" policy. They're only doing things that keep their foot on our necks. They try to mentally and emotionally break you down, only doing things that benefit themselves; when it's beneficial to us or in accordance with policy, it's not done.

Just wanted to shine some light on our situation and let others know, we're going through the same treatment as death row. Thank you for your time, concern and cooperation. Keep up the good work; it's really an outlet for us and y'all are our voice. Thank you and God bless the Open Door Community family.

Always,
A prisoner in Georgia



Rita Corbin

Ed,

Thanks for your two pieces [the letter to Emmanuel AME Church and the "Prayer for Dylann Roof," *Hospitality*, September] so FULL of Gospel values you not only articulate well, but live and carry out — even though you do have that "opposition" from both Left and Right, White and Black!!

Ed, I admire your truly prophetic ministry; you have your finger on the very pulse of Black-White issues, from all angles, as you also draw flak from both left and right. To me, you are a combination of both Jeremiah and Isaiah, with a dash of the "Denunciatory" prophets too. Your biography MUST be written, even before your death (however that might come about). I am sure that not only the U.S. government has you on their radar, but many other left and right wing organizations too. What is predictable about you is that you will call a spade a spade no matter who or what organization is trying to pass it off as the ace of hearts!!! LONG LIVE that "Rabble Rouser" is my own epithet for you! May the blessings and curses heaped upon Jesus and His authentic disciples be upon you too, (and YES, upon your co-prophet, Murphy.)

Fr. Tom Francis
Monastery of the Holy Spirit
Conyers, Georgia

Dear Murphy, Ed, Nelia, Calvin and All,

We send our love to you all from Virginia! I've been wanting to write to tell you all a lovely story about an Open Door connection. When Sarah was born, our neighbor recommended her pediatrician to us and she was in the practice that our midwives recommended, too. It was a great fit. Dr. Leah Rowland is a kind, attentive and excellent doctor. She's been our pediatrician now for almost four years. As we were talking at one visit recently, the Open Door came up in our conversation. It turns out that she was a student of Ron Santoni's at Denison University and spent a spring break serving at the Open Door in college. She helped at the medical clinic and she commented how her experience had shaped her and her vocation. It's been a lovely connection to share. I saw her again for Davis' two-year check-up and she was leaving to go to Jordan on a medical mission to provide health care for women and children in the Syrian refugee camps. I am thankful to have had her for our pediatrician and thankful for her heart of compassion and spirit of courage. I wanted to let you know that the Open Door has impacted so many people, more than you will likely ever know.

We send our love to all of you! We just moved to Richmond, where Doug is the Capital Defender for Central Virginia; you may hear his name in the news as he is the attorney in a national case. I am still searching for my next call. I am happy to share that our church in Virginia Beach is a host church this summer for a summer shelter for families with children. I am so thankful for our congregation opening its doors and hearts to our community. The work for justice and compassion goes on.

Lauren [and Doug] Ramseur
Henrico, Virginia

Lauren Cogswell lived at the Open Door Community for six years as a Resident Volunteer and Novice until her heart was won by Doug Ramseur; now with the Virginia Capital Defender Office. Lauren has been most recently pastor of the Lynnhaven Colony Congregational Church in Virginia Beach. They have two children, Sarah (5) and Davis (2).

Dear Folks,

Thank you for living the life of Radical Discipleship. Your series on the History and Violence of Christianity has been core-shaking to me.

In solidarity and with warm regards,
Pat Tompkins
Bakersville, North Carolina

Thank you so much for all you at the Open Door do for the poor and helpless. I know you must be very busy these days with the rough weather coming.

Thank you and all those who take the time to make *Hospitality* the news worth reading. Much love to you all.

Nan Clarke
Montreat, North Carolina

Dear Murphy, Ed and Catherine,

Peaceful greetings to you all! Hope you're doing well. I read Catherine's article on Mary Magdalene ["Mary Magdalene's Witness," *Hospitality*, July-August]. Are you familiar with the Gospel of the Beloved Companion? It was translated in 2010 from a first-century Alexandrian Greek manuscript and it appears that the Gospel of John was possibly based upon it, though John has many added verses. The Gospel of the Beloved Companion contains more than 20 sayings of Christ that Thomas also included, and parts of the Gospel of Mary. So if this gospel is authentic, and I feel it is, then this is a first-hand account left for us by Mary Magdalene, the beloved companion.

Peace to you all!
Laurie Findlay
Decatur, Georgia

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Tuesday & Wednesday, 9 a.m.
Women's Showers: Tuesday, 9 a.m.
Men's Showers: Wednesday, 9 a.m.
Harriet Tubman Free Women's Clinic: Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic: Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Harriet Tubman Foot Care Clinic: Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Mail Check: Tuesday & Wednesday, during serving;
 Monday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Use of Phone: Tuesday & Wednesday, during serving
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; and pastoral visits to
 death row and various jails and prisons.

Sunday: We invite you to join us for **Worship at 4 p.m.** with
 supper following worship.

We gratefully accept donations at these times:

Sunday: 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.
Monday: 8:30 a.m. until Noon and 3 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.
Tuesday: Noon until 8:30 p.m.
Wednesday: Noon until 6 p.m.
Thursday: 8:30 a.m. until 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.
Friday and Saturday: We are closed. We are not able to
 offer hospitality or accept donations on these days.

Our **Hospitality Ministries** also include visitation and letter
 writing to prisoners in Georgia, anti-death penalty advocacy,
 advocacy for the homeless, daily worship, weekly Eucharist,
 and Foot Washing.

Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 4 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.
 If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 404.874.9652 option 6.
 Please visit www.opendoorcommunity.org or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

November 29	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Weldon Nisly preaching	January 3	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
December 6	No Worship at 910 Advent Retreat at Dayspring Farm	January 10	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
December 13	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Celebrating Christmas in a Cage	January 17	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Celebrating the Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tabatha Holley preaching
December 20	4 p.m. Advent Worship at 910 Service of Lessons & Carols	January 24 & 31	No Worship at 910 Dayspring Care Week
December 24	6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist & Supper Thursday (please call ahead if you would like to join us)		
December 27	No Worship at 910		

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification
 on Thursdays 3 pm. - 5 p.m..



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and
 scheduled topics, please call
 404.874.9652 option 8
 or visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org.



Brian Kavanagh

Medical Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

ibuprofen
 acetaminophen
 Lubriderm lotion
 cough drops
 non-drowsy allergy tablets
 cough medicine (alcohol free)

Foot Care Clinic

Epsom salt
 non-scented/allergen-free soap
(Dr. Bronners Baby Mild or similar)
 shoe inserts
(especially men's larger sizes)
 apricot scrub
(St. Ives or similar)
 pumice stones
 vitamin A&D ointment
 lavender essential oil (pure)
 tea tree essential oil (pure)
 Smart Wool (or equivalent) socks

**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 blankets



We need **full size**
 blankets for our friends
 that can be **washed** and
dried in a dryer on hot.

Living Needs

- jeans 30-34 waist
and 46-60 x 32 long
- women's pants 16-24
- cotton footies
- sweat pants 1x-3x
- work shirts
- hoodies
- belts 34" & up
- men's underwear M-L
- women's underwear
- walking shoes
especially sizes 11-15
- baseball caps
- T-shirts especially
XL through 5XL
- sweaters, jackets
and winter coats

Personal Needs

- shampoo (large)
- disposable razors
- nail clippers
- nail files
- cough drops
- toothpaste (small)

Food Needs

- fresh fruits &
vegetables
- hams
- sandwiches:
**meat with cheese on whole wheat
bread (NO PB&J, bologna or white
bread, please)**

Special Needs

- backpacks
- MARTA cards
- reading glasses
- trash bags
(30 gallon, .85 mil)
- postage stamps
- digital camera
- twin bed sheets
- prayers for the
**Abolition of the
Death Penalty**