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

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July-August 2015

Mary Magdalene's Witness



Brian Kavanagh

By Catherine Meeks

Meanwhile, Mary stood weeping beside the tomb. Even as she wept, she stooped to peer inside, and there she saw two angels in dazzling robes. One was seated at the head and the other at the foot of the place where Jesus' body had lain. They asked her, "Why are you weeping?" She answered them, "Because they have taken away my Rabbi, and I don't know where they have put the body."

No sooner had she said this than she turned around and caught sight of Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus. He asked her, "Why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?"

She supposed it was the gardener, so she said, "Please, if you're the one who carried Jesus away, tell me where you've laid the body and I will take it away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and said, "Rabboni," which means "Teacher." Jesus then said, "Don't hold on to me, for I have not ascended to Abba God. Rather, go to the sisters and brothers and tell them, I'm ascending to my Abba and to your Abba, my God and your God!" Mary of Magdala went to the disciples. "I have seen the Teacher!" she announced. Then she reported what the savior had said to her. (John 20:11-18 *The Inclusive New Testament*)

Our wonderful pilgrim saint, Howard Thurman, has said that there are points in a book so striking that they are like the smell of ammonia. Perhaps you know that ammonia is used to wake folks up when they have fainted. Well this book, *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene: Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity*, by Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episco-

pal Priest and Scholar of Medieval Studies, has been my hit of ammonia. I bought the book and left it lying around for a good while before I picked it up, but when I began to read it, I could hardly contain my delight as Bourgeault illuminated the life of Mary of Magdala and her role as companion to Jesus and as an apostle.

Let me be completely clear about where I stand in regards to Mary Magdalene, the role she played as Jesus's apostle and the role of the feminine in general. It is crucial to my journey of faith to have a deeper understanding of Mary Magdalene than traditional religion has been willing to give of her, and to understand the feminine side of God since I happen to be a woman. I am a woman who is not interested in trying to be like any man that I have ever met, and that includes a male God. This does not mean that I am disinterested in men and their welfare. I love my sons, nephews, brothers and friends, but cannot allow those relationships and kinships to retard my determination to dig deeper into the nature of things related to the feminine aspect of the faith instead of accepting a patriarchal religion that attempts to define who and what women can be by controlling them. My comments are not about any particular man, but rather are about a system that is designed to control and to maintain itself as ruler. Therefore, I want to be clear so that the men in the room can hear these words as words of liberation for you as well as for women. This is important because our first inclination is to make information personal instead of applying it to a larger picture. So stay with me!

I want to share a few things both from Bourgeault and

Mary Magdalene continued on page 9

Pew on Pew

The Pew Report on the Empty Pews

By Eduard Nuessner Loring

pew, noun. In a church: a place where seating, often enclosed, is reserved for the use of a particular (often distinguished) worshipper or group of worshippers; (more generally) any enclosure or compartment in which worshippers may be seated. *Oxford English Dictionary*

pew, interjection. Expressing contempt, disgust or derision. *Oxford English Dictionary*

Pugh, Claudia, person. Ed Loring's good friend from their days together at Drew and Vanderbilt Universities. *Journals of Eduard Nuessner Loring*

I have had several seasons of conversion and transformation in my life, when I was shepherded by amazing folk sent to me by God. Among these folk is Neely McCarter, who moved me into a liberal faith. There's also Gordon Harland of Drew University, who taught me American history and Martin Luther King Jr. in radically new dimensions that I continue to appropriate, even in the writing of this article. And, of course, there's my wife, Murphy Davis, who brought brilliance, deep faith, love and activism into my heart and feet, and came with me to Clifton Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, where we began to work out our marriage and radical discipleship. At Clifton we were turned upside down and downside up, just as the Gospel of the Poor says it will happen.

Clifton is where we began (thank you Marilyn Schertz and Bill Horrisberger) Footwashing — the astounding, liberating sacrament of solidarity and equality with the oppressed and outcasts. It continues today; we practiced Footwashing at the Open Door Community's Sunday worship recently, and it's always enacted at our Dayspring Farm retreats. The free Foot Clinic on Wednesday nights at 910 is also a manifestation of this sacrament. Jesus promises JOY to those who practice Footwashing, and a relationship of equality with leadership. "Now," he says, "I call you friends."

But the gift among gifts at Clifton for our forty-five members was that we had no pews. No one sat in a pew at any time at Clifton. And the thirty homeless men who will sleep at Clifton tonight, as they have since November 1, 1979, will not be bothered by hard, immobile pews. Our church was an old house with a 1,500 square foot concrete block sanctuary tacked on the front. 1,500 square feet!! So as we began to be led by the Holy Spirit, the Jesus Story and the Book of James (that right golden epistle), we began to *act* on what we said and what the Bible said and what James Cone said and what Jim Wallis said and what William Stringfellow said and what Rosemary Reuther said and what Walter Wink said and what Jürgen Moltmann said and what Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Pew on Pew continued on page 8

Loving Those We See

By Peter Gathje

One of our guests is in the hospital. She was brutally beaten and stabbed and left for dead just a block from Manna House. This guest is an African American transvestite. We lifted her up in prayer this morning when we opened at Manna House. We invite others to do the same.

Our guests who are gay or transgendered are especially vulnerable. When Manna House first opened we quickly learned that they are harassed and harmed by other persons on the street, by their families, by random attackers, by police officers, and are sometimes even excluded, due to their sexuality, from places that are supposed to serve people on the streets.

We've been clear: all are welcome at Manna House. Denigrating language about someone's sexuality or dress is not allowed at Manna House. We have had some guests insist that they would not go into the shower room at the same time as someone who is gay or transvestite.

Our response? You either shower now while that person is in the shower room or you don't shower here.

I know that within the broader society and in religious communities there has been and continues to be quite a struggle over acceptance of LGBTQ people. As a Christian ethics professor for twenty years, I'm quite familiar with all of the arguments about homosexuality. The more I have studied, the more I have become convinced that on the basis of the Bible, Christian experience and psychology, the traditional condemnations are wrong.

But until I became involved with Manna House, I didn't have much ongoing experience with persons who were homosex-

ual or transgendered. A lot of the arguments I'd cover in class were mostly in my head. In offering hospitality to persons on the streets, I've gotten an education in my heart as well.

The most painful part of that education is my experience with the suffering of people who are gay, lesbian, or transgendered. One story stands out. Several years ago I had a



Michelle Dick

long conversation with a guest who was an African American, transvestite, drug-addicted prostitute. In tears, she told me of being kicked out of her family home by her preacher father before she was even 18.

She ended up on the streets, took drugs to numb her pain, and ended up surviving through prostitution. She showed me the marks on her wrists from multiple suicide attempts. She told me she wanted out from the pain of addiction, prostitution, of rejection, of being on the streets. She just wanted to be accepted for who she is. Then she took my hands and said through tears, "I need you to pray for me."

I was taken aback. I had never heard

such a desperate plea for prayer. And at this point in my own life I wasn't all that comfortable with either someone who was transvestite or with that kind of spontaneous prayer. But I prayed; how could I not?

I prayed that she would experience the truth that she is a child of God, that she would find a home, a place where she would be accepted and loved, and that she could be freed from addiction and find good work that was not harmful to her. By the time I was done I was feeling tears on my own face.

I never saw this person again. I don't know what has happened to her. I do know that her request for prayer deepened my own conviction that, as Dorothy Day has said, "The only solution is love." I'm tired of arguing about homosexuality with hateful bigots, whether in churches or out. I know how destructive churches and the broader society have been in the lives of those who are LGBTQ, even with the semi-polite arguments about "hating the sin and loving the sinner." Those arguments still legitimate hatred and I can't abide them.

Our Manna House guest lies in a hospital bed now, stabbed, beaten and struggling to live because of such hatred. And she is, tragically, just another one among many. "Those who say 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." (1 John 4:20) ✠

Peter Gathje is Professor of Christian Ethics and Associate Dean for Curriculum and Instruction at Memphis Theological Seminary; a founder of Manna House, a place of hospitality in Memphis; and a longtime friend of the Open Door. This article first appeared on Peter Gathje's blog, Radical Hospitality, <http://radical-hospitality.blogspot.com/>, on October 16, 2014.

Please Help! we need shoes



We need gently used running and walking shoes for our friends from the streets. **Men's shoes sizes 11-15** are especially helpful.

and **backpacks!**



Thank You!

HOSPITALITY

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

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Open Door Community

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Calvin Kimbrough

*A chalice created by **Bruce Bishop** for Eucharist at the Open Door Community — broken in service. Restored by **Nelia Kimbrough** using the Japanese tradition of mending broken vessels — Kintsugi (golden repair).*

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Harassing the Homeless Poor

By Terry Kennedy

No population has their human and civil rights so casually and routinely trampled on as do the homeless poor. For decades, cities all over the country have criminalized homelessness, instituting measures that outlaw acts in public such as holding a sign, sleeping, sitting on a bench — measures that are only enforced if you appear to be a person that lives on the streets. Where the law doesn't mandate outright harassment of the homeless poor, police and municipal authorities have come up with ways, called workarounds, like destroying or confiscating tents, blankets and other property.

The mindset of some people is that those who are homeless are just lazy, good-for-nothing bums who should stop spending all their money on drugs and alcohol so they can get off the streets. If we are to understand homelessness

where some people are worthy of sitting and resting in public, while others are forced to walk endlessly, or hide in cat-holes and abandoned buildings, out of the public eye. Outrageous.

Some cities have made it illegal to give out food to homeless people. These ordinances prohibit serving food in public without a permit. Again, what an outrage! At Hurt Park near Georgia State University, if you set up tables without a permit you'll receive a hefty fine. Food is essential to life, so if you deprive people of it, aren't you in effect giving them a death sentence? And doesn't that make you a murderer? These laws achieve what they set out to do: hassle and discourage those who are homeless and those trying to be good Samaritans.

Instead of devising solutions to end homelessness, police and cities alike instill fear in their citizens and tourists by warning against giving money or assistance to panhan-

homeless people their business card, outreach workers offer homeless people access to a permanent home. In the first 14 months of operation, the program housed 224 people. Of these, 168 were permanently housed and 90 percent remained housed 6 and 12 months after placement.

Another successful program is in Daytona Beach, where service providers and business leaders banded together to lower homeless rates with a program that hires people who are homeless to clean up the downtown area in exchange for transitional housing. What these programs have proven is that with housing, hospitalizations and arrest rates have been lowered, which frees up more monies for programs of social uplift.

What people who are homeless need is housing, not animosity from police and service providers. When I lived on the streets, I experienced police harassment in the form of trespassing tickets for sleeping in abandoned buildings and for being at the airport without an airline ticket. I was directed by MARTA police to leave a train because I was sleeping. And the list goes on and on.

As I look at the issue of homelessness, I ask where to find the money to give everyone a key to their own housing. I keep coming back to these billion-dollar "religious" edifices called sports stadiums. I say to hell with people's entertainment when our brothers and sisters are dying on the streets for lack of food, housing and adequate medical care. The priorities of this society are so devastatingly out of whack that we would rather see grown men brutalize each other for the sake of sport and entertainment, than to see the quality of life improve for those who are considered to be the least of these.

Regardless of the number of anti-homeless ordinances passed, persons who are homeless still must eat, sleep and survive in public; no alternative is available to them. All the fear and hysteria that the public feels toward those who live on the streets will dissipate when all of God's children have a key. When the quality of life for ONE improves, the quality of life for ALL improves. ♣

Terry Kennedy is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

With housing, hospitalizations and arrest rates have been lowered, which frees up more monies for programs of social uplift.

in America, we have to look at the 1980s and the presidency of Ronald Reagan — a presidency that saw federal housing subsidies slashed and mental health institutions closed, which threw more and more people out on the streets and left local governments to deal with a crisis for which they were ill equipped.

Since local governments didn't have the means to address this crisis, they left it up to the police to manage the presence of homeless people on our streets and in our neighborhoods. Out of this police management came "quality of life" ordinances such as those outlawing sitting down in a public park. If people are allowed to appear in public, and people who are homeless are a part of the public, then why are they not allowed to sit or rest in a public space? Whose quality of life is most being impacted? We live in a world

where laws and ordinances that criminalize poverty legitimize that fear and give birth to further discrimination. Here in Atlanta, city officials have removed most benches from city parks, constructed barriers on bus stop benches to prevent people from lying down, and set city sprinklers to come on during the hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. What this criminalization of the homeless and erection of barriers does is make the struggle to survive on the streets even more difficult, depressing, demoralizing and frightening. And to add insult to injury, the criminal justice system acts as a major barrier to individual efforts to escape homelessness, as it makes jail cells the solution to poverty, addiction and mental illness.

Cities might be more successful in ending homelessness by developing programs like the one that Portland, Oregon started called "A Key Not A Card." Rather than giving

Still We Fight

By Melvin E. Jones

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a 19th-century Russian novelist, stated, "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." American society and its prison industrial complexes are in need of abolition, and some of those best equipped to accomplish this entered American prisons as prisoners.

On April 28, 2015, six grey-haired, liberated prisoners, all in our fifties and sixties, gathered together at the Open Door Community for the semi-annual Death Penalty Forum that is held here. While in the belly of the beast, this sextuplet of sexagenarian ex-prisoners, on many occasions, suffered the inhumanities and indignities of placement in "the hole" as a result of their efforts to right the wrongs that are arbitrarily and capriciously, on a daily basis, inflicted upon prisoners in Georgia and throughout the country.

Weeks before the Forum, I had visualized the coming together of ex-prisoners who have fought the good fight and have won — ex-prisoners who spoke out to and engaged prison guards, wardens and other advocates of the prison industrial complex. Consequently, I extended an invitation to several ex-prisoners so that we could get together in our common fight to destroy that which was put in place to destroy us.

After the presentations at the Death Penalty Forum,



From left to right, top row: Al Geter, J.P. Norris and Jerome Patillo.
Bottom row: Andrew Legare, Terry Eiland and Melvin Jones.

the six of us sat together and ate a meal fit for an African abolitionist king. I looked around our table and envisioned the six of us as liberationists in the fight to overthrow the prison industrial complex, which is the most evil of the evil institutions in our domination system.

As advocates of those who are now in the belly of the

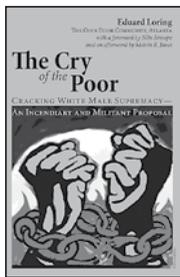
beast and those who will, in the future, enter the stinking bowels of the unholy, corrupt, foul, ugly beast, STILL WE FIGHT! For, as James Baldwin wrote in "An Open Letter To My Sister, Angela Y. Davis,"

"Some of us, white and black, know how great a price has already been paid to bring into existence a new consciousness, a new people, an unprecedented nation. If we know and do nothing, we are worse than the murderers hired in our name. . . . If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own — which it is — and render impassible with our bodies the corridors to the gas chamber. For if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night."

Pamoja tutashinda (Swahili for "Together we will win"). ♣

Melvin E. Jones is a Resident at the Open Door Community.

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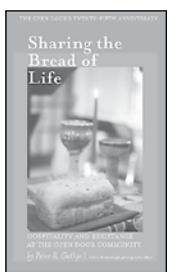
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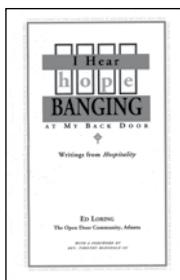
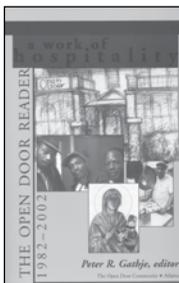
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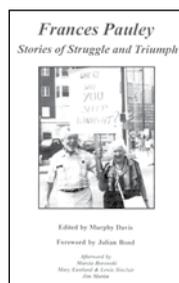
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Moving Toward Abolition

Embracing God's Dissent after *Glossip v. Gross*



By **Mary Catherine Johnson**

On the morning of June 29, 2015, eight of us from the Open Door Community joined a group of fellow activists on the sidewalk in front of the U.S. Supreme Court for the **22nd Annual Fast and Vigil to Abolish the Death Penalty**. Among us were death row exonerees and family members of both murder victims and death row prisoners, as well as activists of all ages from around the world. For the next four days, rain or shine, we held banners, distributed flyers and talked to passers-by about the urgent need to end capital punishment in the U.S. and throughout the globe.

On this particular morning, June 29, there was great anticipation among our feisty and dedicated band of abolitionists, as we awaited the Supreme Court's decision in the *Glossip v. Gross* case. Richard Glossip was one of three death row prisoners in Oklahoma, along with John Grant and Benjamin Cole, Sr., who argued that the state's use of midazolam as part of a three-drug lethal injection cocktail creates an "objectively intolerable risk of harm" and therefore violates the "cruel and unusual punishment" prohibition of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. Midazolam is currently used in the lethal injection protocols of four states: Oklahoma, Arizona, Florida and Ohio. All of these states have witnessed botched executions over the last two years, including that of Clayton Lockett, who writhed in torturous pain for 43 minutes after the drug was administered.

Around 10 a.m., the news came like a bolt of lightning: In a 5-4 decision, the justices ruled against Glossip, holding that midazolam is constitutional for use as the first drug in a three-drug lethal injection formula.

"While most humans wish to die a painless death," Justice Alito wrote for the majority, "many do not have that

the Eighth Amendment. At the very least, the Court should call for full briefing on the basic question. . . . For it is those changes, taken together with my own 20 years of experience on this Court, that lead me to believe that the death penalty, in and of itself, now likely constitutes a legally prohibited "cruel and unusual punishment."

Though the Court has examined various aspects of death penalty protocols, including applying the punishment to the intellectually disabled and to minors, the justices have not ruled on the constitutionality of the death penalty at-large since *Gregg v. Georgia* in 1976. Justice Breyer's opinion is reminiscent of Justice Thurgood Marshall's powerful dissents in death penalty cases toward the end of his career on the bench, and it has clearly established a blueprint that anti-death penalty lawyers can follow in challenging the constitutionality of capital punishment.

Nevertheless, our hearts are broke as the implications of this ruling for death row prisoners became clear. Despite all of the irrefutable evidence in the *Glossip* dissent that the death penalty is unconstitutional, in practical terms it does nothing to prevent states from moving forward with executions using questionable and unpredictable lethal injection drugs. Tragically, the punishment for Richard Glossip and his two co-plaintiffs will be swift and brutal. Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, who oversaw the use of midazolam in the botched executions of Clayton Lockett and Charles Warner, wasted no time in setting 2015 execution dates for Glossip (September 16), Grant (October 7) and Cole (October 28).

As I contemplate the horrors of these upcoming executions, and bemoan my powerlessness to stop them, I turn to my community at the Open Door to teach and comfort me, and to help me know the way forward. The Open Door has

**Jesus implores us to love one another as he has loved us,
and teaches us that *no one* is outside of God's love.**

good fortune. Holding that the Eighth Amendment demands the elimination of essentially all risk of pain would effectively outlaw the death penalty altogether."

Justice Scalia also issued an opinion for the majority, in typical disrespectful and undignified fashion. He openly mocked his dissenting colleagues by referring to their opinions with terms like "gobbledygook," which makes him easy fodder for late-night comedians instead of a serious judge writing about life and death issues impacting thousands of his fellow citizens.

But then, amidst the darkness brought on by Alito and Scalia, something amazingly hopeful happened: The weak arguments and lies put forth in the majority opinions — lies that embodied the farce of trying to defend lethal injection as a humane, more enlightened way to kill people — started to crack, and light began to shine through. Details began to emerge about the minority dissent for *Glossip*, penned by Justice Breyer and joined by Justice Ginsburg, which points to the unconstitutionality of the death penalty itself, and gives me and my fellow abolitionists a great deal of hope:

"Today's administration of the death penalty involves three fundamental constitutional defects: (1) serious unreliability, (2) arbitrariness in application, and (3) unconscionably long delays that undermine the death penalty's penological purpose. Perhaps as a result, (4) most places within the United States have abandoned its use. I believe it highly likely that the death penalty violates

showed me what God's dissent is to the death penalty, and it is my faith in this loving and just God that sustains me. We are radical disciples of the nonviolent Jesus, who is the human manifestation of God's dissent to the death penalty. Jesus implores us to love one another as he has loved us, and teaches us that *no one* is outside of God's love. You can't follow Jesus and take part in executions.

We also find God's dissent in the example of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who taught us that nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people. The death penalty seeks to destroy people, and leaves in its wake numerous injustices that fester and destroy even more people. What if we took the energy and resources currently being used to carry out death sentences and devoted them to programs of social uplift and healing? What if, instead of spending millions of dollars to execute Richard Glossip, John Grant and Benjamin Cole this fall, we invested that money in mental health and addiction programs that would actually serve as deterrents to violent crime? These alternatives would move us closer to the Beloved Community, while executions divide us and perpetuate violence.

As we persist in using every legal and moral avenue possible to fight like hell for the lives of every person on death row, we will continue to affirm what we know to be God's dissent to their executions. ✠

Mary Catherine Johnson is a Novice at the Open Door Community.

Radical Hospitality on Skid Row

Review by Frank Cordaro

The Good Samaritan can be considered a sequel to Jeff Dietrich's 2011 book, *Broken and Shared*. The essays in both books were first published in the Los Angeles Catholic Worker's newspaper, *Catholic Agitator*, as well as *National Catholic Reporter* and the *Los Angeles Times* over a period of more than 40 years. These books confirm what many of us have known for years: Jeff Dietrich is the best writer of our generation of Catholic Workers — baby boomers raised in the 1950s, schooled in the '60s and entering the Catholic Worker Movement in the '70s.

Los Angeles Catholic Worker (LACW) is modeled on Dorothy Day's New York City Catholic Worker (CW) community, which was urban, Works of Mercy-focused and community-based. The LACW was one of the few up-and-running communities in existence in 1976 when we started our Des Moines, Iowa CW community. And for us, their five-year lead made them old-timers to whom we looked for guidance. In the 1970s, there were few CW communities or individuals that had been in the Movement even 20 years. Today there are dozens of communities and hundreds of individuals who are longtime

veterans of the Catholic Worker Movement.

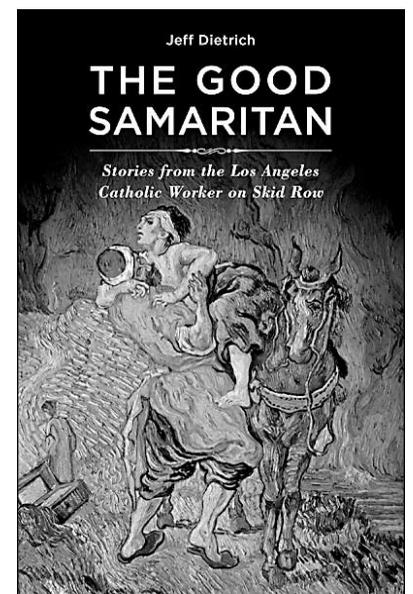
It was in the *Catholic Agitator* that I was first introduced to Jeff and his writings. Never big on book learning, my degree in Physical Education did not prepare me well for a lifetime of literature and Scripture study; these are skills acquired since I became a Catholic Worker. When I first started reading Jeff's articles, they almost always had a word or two I did not understand, and he still stumps me once in a while. Writing about the government's response to military veterans, Jeff writes, "Our government . . . chooses to meet their needs in the most pusillanimous . . . manner." He describes a guest who verbally assaulted someone with "a string of vivid metaphorical references to biological and scatological activities." Pusillanimous? Scatological? I'm still improving my vocabulary via Jeff's writings.

Those who joined the Catholic Worker Movement in the 1970s were very different from those who joined Dorothy Day in the '30s. We were raised in the post-WWII era, and many of us developed an inflated sense of privilege and entitlement. Our whole lives we have been recipients of the benefits of the ill-gotten gains of WWII and the wealth

The Good Samaritan Stories from the Los Angeles Catholic Worker on Skid Row

By Jeff Dietrich

Marymount Institute Press



that has come with the ever-expanding U.S. global economic and military empire.

Those of us who are Catholics in the Movement were formed by a very different Catholic Church than the church of the 1930s, '40s and '50s. We are part of the post-Vatican II church and of the Call to Action reform movement of the 1970s. We take pride in the fact that Dorothy Day and the early CW Movement had a great influence on the larger church's rediscovery of the nonviolent Jesus and the Second Vatican Council's condemnation of nuclear weapons. We are the CW

generation that lived through the Vietnam War. We have been greatly influenced by the rise of the Catholic Left and the Berrigan brothers, Daniel and Philip.

Most of us started in the Catholic Church. Many of us have since left, if not officially, then unofficially, realizing that the institutional church is part of the problem and an obstacle to following the ways of Jesus and living out the "Aims and Means" of the CW movement (See: comm.dmcatholic-worker.org/aims). However, we have not stopped being Catholic in spirit and in our

Radical Hospitality continued on page 10

A Personal Testimony: The History and Violence of Christianity, Part 2

By Heather Gray, with commentary by
Eduard Nuessner Loring

This is the second in a series of collaborative articles by Heather Gray and Eduard Loring. The original texts are courtesy of the Justice Initiative, a project of Heather Gray.

Eduard Loring:

I am not a follower of mainline Christianity, which I characterize as the use of state power and violence to implement the societal values of Magisterial Christianity: Roman Christianity; Holy Roman Empire; Magisterial Reformation, including Lutheran and Reformed (Presbyterian), Anglican and Episcopal, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, formed in 1844, the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America, 1861, the Southern Baptist Convention, 1845. The Methodist and Baptist churches were the first national institutions to secede, followed by the split with the Democratic Party in 1860 and the Presbyterians in 1861. These Southern white supremacist Christians were formed to proclaim the white Christ as a creator and defender of racial-Black human bondage. When war came, their frightful white god baptized violence and the Holy War "against Northern aggression," as the fire-eaters named the War for Freedom. Then their god, who

looked like Colonel Sanders selling fried chicken, promised victory to the Slaveocracy. Lest we forget, in our own time this manifests as the Christian Right, the Moral Majority and 20+ out of the present 20+ Republican candidates running to face Bernie Sanders in the 2016 presidential election.

I am a disciple of the Black Jesus who arrived in Virginia in 1619 before there was Black Christianity. He is the Palestinian Jesus in his American mode. The Open Door Community is part of the pre-saint Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Movement, the Black Liberation and North American Liberation Movements, and our own particular "brand" of radical discipleship. Nonetheless, I write because the seeds of Revolutionary Discipleship are buried deep in the hard shell, like a Brazil nut, of the Church of the White Christ. Heather Gray is one of the most important voices in the South today. Weekly I learn from her about White Supremacy, women's history and the struggle for equality, the poison of the Coca-Cola Company and corporate totalitarianism. Thank you, Heather.

Heather Gray:

In this article I do not go into the history of the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, and the other historic incidents of violence

by Christians. Rather, what I write about here is largely a brief history of the founding of Christianity; contemporary Christian violence that is to a great extent right-wing and anti-communist; and some of what I have learned from my own direct experience internationally.

EL:

There has been, and likely will be for too long to come, a state Christianity. This officially began under King David and King Solomon, David's son, with the beginning of Israel as Empire. David and Solomon transformed the religio-political structures into a centralized theocracy; from local tribal government and a confederation of 12 tribes to centralized government in Jerusalem; from the mobile sharing worship structure of Tabernacle to Temple, with residential high priests and, of course, Temple Guards (police). This unholy construct was born and then, we are told, blessed by Yahweh-Elohim, now the God of Empire and furthering land acquisition of their neighbors, the Canaanites (Palestinians), whose land it was. (Netanyahu is no anomaly in this line of governance.) Beginning around 1000 BCE Israel's changed to theocracy and land-based empire. This dra-

matic change is one of the primary heresies that Jesus came to overthrow with his New Covenant. His Beloved Community/Kingdom of God is not land based. No need to kill Canaanites, Palestinians or the Pequots, among others. Radical Christianity is not a state religion or a geographical place; our Anabaptist sisters and brothers were drowned in the rivers of Germany by magisterial Christians. They preferred martyrdom to state-sanctioned, violent Christianity. Long before Mahatma Gandhi, the Anabaptist lived out his dictum: "It is better to be killed than to kill." State Christians and mainline Christianity do not understand the proclamations of Jesus as well as Gandhi!!! Or as Gandhi said, "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

A key to the violence committed by Christians toward other Christians and toward non-Christians is the work of the state, sanctioned by those who have taken over the way of radical discipleship. Every American church with a USA flag or flags inside and/or outside the church sanctuary is a violence-sanctioning church. The flag represents the history, power and policies of the USA, not the history and practices of radical

A Personal Testimony continued on page 10

In, Out & Around 910

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough

Starvin' for Justice

The Open Door Community had a fine group representing us at the 22nd Annual Starvin' for Justice Fast and Vigil to Abolish the Death Penalty at the Supreme Court in Washington, June 29 (Furman v. Georgia, 1972) to July 2 (Gregg v. Georgia, 1976). These dates recall the Supreme Court decisions which first halted and then allowed resumption of the death penalty. Our group included Residents **David Payne**, **Melvin Jones**, and **Matthew Curry**, Partner **Terry Kennedy**, Novice **Mary Catherine Johnson**, Summer Interns **Maddie Gerig** and **Laura Miller**, **Jessi Stitt** (Emma Stitt's sister and a frequent visitor at the ODC) and **Steve Colwell** (a longtime friend of the Open Door who is a

leader in our movement to abolish the death penalty on Georgia). *Left, top to bottom* : Maddie, David, Melvin, Laura, Jessi, Mary Catherine, Matthew and Steve at the Community for Creative Non-Violence in D.C., where they slept. Terry speaks during one of the teach-ins. Laura hands out flyers. Matthew holds a banner while Melvin is interviewed.



Photographs by Mary Catherine Johnson



Maddie Gerig

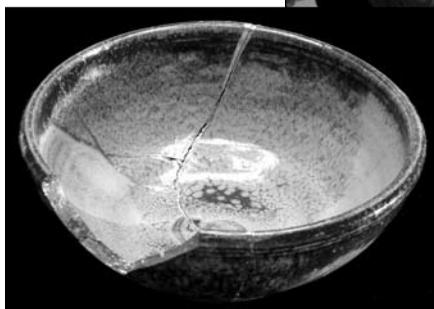
Mother Emanuel Nine: 2 Corinthians 6:4-10

On Sunday, June 21, following the massacre of the "Mother Emanuel Nine" in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, Nelia Kimbrough created a memorial table to sit in front of a poster created by Mary Catherine Johnson to honor the victims during our worship time. For each victim a mended soup bowl and a lighted candle were placed on the table. Red roses were strewn at the base of the table to recall the many memorials placed outside Emanuel AME Church. The Bible, placed under the bowl at the head of the table, was open to

2 Corinthians 6:4-10, one of the lectionary readings for the day.

The bowls were originally made by Bruce Bishop two years ago for use in serving soup to our friends from the streets. Over time a number of them have been broken as they were used to serve hundreds of bowls of soup. Nelia has been inspired by the Japanese tradition of mending broken vessels — Kintsugi (golden repair).

She joined the broken pieces of these nine bowls, outlining the breaks in gold. In "Mother Emanuel Nine" these broken and mended vessels represent each of the nine lives that were "broken" in this tragedy. Each of these lives is remembered as a sacred witness to the daily struggle to dismantle the evil of racism.



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

Visitors

from Iowa

In May **Jenny McBride** brought her Theology and Ethics of Martin Luther King Jr. May term travel class from Wartburg College to Atlanta and the Open Door Community. They served at our Soup Kitchen and Showers, helped with support work and joined in the work of our Wednesday Night Foot and Medical Clinics. Jenny is in the back row, second from the left in the photograph.

from Scotland

Far right: Our wonderful friends **Connie** and **Clive Bonner** have once again come from Scotland. They are spending three months with us this summer. One delightful part of their visits is that Connie makes beautiful bread for our weekly Eucharist.



from Indiana

Right: **Maddie Gerig** came with her friend Laura Miller from Goshen College for the summer. She is living and working with us and completing an internship at Mudfire Clayworks here in Atlanta.



Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough

from Germany

Right: **Imre Balzer** has journeyed from Berlin to spend a month with us. His mother, Iris Balzer, and his uncle, Dietrich Gerstner, visited here in 2007. Dietrich is also a former Open Door Resident Volunteer (1986 to 1988) and a founder of the Brot & Rosen (Bread and Roses) Catholic Worker in Hamburg.



from New Zealand and Pennsylvania

Jack Leason (*above right*), from the Catholic Worker in Otaki in the Wellington area, and **Elliot Martin** (*right*), a recent graduate from Eastern University, joined up with our group at the Starvin' for Justice Vigil and joined the work at 910 in July.



Our Showers Are Flowing, Our Funds Are Dripping

Our new shower room is finished and in use! It was blessed during our worship service on Sunday, July 12. Our friends blessed it with their presence the following Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It is one of several large maintenance projects we have completed this year. We are thankful to all for your many donations. We *need your continuing support* to cover our weekly operating expenses for the rest of this year.

Pew on Pew: The Pew Report on the Empty Pews *continued from page 1*

said and what Mitch Snyder said and what Dorothy Day said.

There were no pews; we sat on folding chairs and when we put them away we had 1,500 empty square feet. We did not need a fellowship hall for fellowship. We did not need a new wing for the children from McLendon Gardens, which is now destroyed by liberal developers and yuppies. Where have all the Black children gone? Gone to prison, every one.

We needed no building fund to host the statewide and national anti-death penalty meetings at Clifton Presbyterian Church. And when we read the gospel to the poor through the Prophets, John the Baptist, the Black Jesus and James, we began to open the doors to the homeless. Mitch Snyder challenged us, and Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement guided us. If we had had pews, the history of Atlanta would not be what it is today. I would not be who I am today. There would be no Open Door Community. Damn the pews! Why, without pews you do not even need a \$70 million jet plane or a big SUV or a fancy vacation house. "Pew on pews," I have always said. The devil is in the pew while the Black Jesus is on the streets and in the prisons. There is growing evidence among my friends and peers that Jesus is also a member of a garden club. But is that the white Jesus of Ted Cruz or the Black Jesus of Pope Francis?

Last week Open Door residents Gladys C, Matt and I spent a long weekend at Dayspring Farm, working in a yard and house that has been too little attended to recently. On Friday morning Matt found an old box turtle. He put the turtle in a large container with water and lettuce and we watched it until Sunday morning when we returned her to the very spot where Matt picked her up.

every dehumanizing system so that we may all be fully human.

Stopping, looking and listening to the grating noises of the caged turtle, I began to realize what was so weak and unhelpful about the recent report from the Pew Research Center, *America's Changing Religious Landscape* (May 15, 2015). This report described the declining membership among Christian churches, with the exception of African American churches, which grew one percent. All of the sociological data and interpretation of the report was mostly shallow as a cow pond in August in South Georgia, where even mosquitoes can't breed. And I read and listen to lots of analysis.

So I would like to offer you my take on the situation from where

I sat beside a homeless turtle that was incarcerated on our front porch at Dayspring Farm. There are two gospels, at least in America: the Gospel of the Poor and the gospel of the mainline, well-to-do rich churches, lined with beautifully crafted pews. The gospel of the mainline church asks this question: "What is the meaning of life?" The Gospel of the Poor knows that the meaning of life is radical discipleship of the Black Jesus, which calls us to be of service to all people.

As the Pew report notes, the higher the education and

Capitalism, wealth and Empire are antithetical to the Gospel of the Black Jesus of the poor and marginalized. Is there any wonder that more and more people are singing "There must be some way out of here" / Said the joker to the thief, / "There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief?" Meanwhile, church membership declines year after year.

The Gospel of the Poor asks the question "Why is there no justice?" rather than "What is the meaning of life?" The followers of the Black Jesus already know that the meaning of life is in the fight for justice — liberty and equality — for all. But why is there no justice? It is because we have rich people, capitalism, corporations and Wall Street. The fundamental cause of poverty in

churches and those who practice religionless Christianity are a part of that movement. But not the church alone. Whereas most mainline churches oppose labor unions and workers' rights, radical Christians work with labor movements, with Socialists and the Democratic Socialists of America, with Black Lives Matter, and with the new organization, The Daughters and Sons of Slaveholders for Freedom, Equality and the Tearing Down of Confederate Flags and Statues.

Very few of these small communities have large buildings. Almost none have pews. The Pew report missed the point. Mainline Christian churches and theology — an opiate for the masses and a proslavery gospel for the worker and prisoner — are in hospice care. Thank God. Because of their wealth and ties to bankers and military and prison industrial complexes and the one percent for whom the church is important to bless the status quo, they will remain around for a long time. Books shall continue to pour forth on saving the mainline: better liturgy, early worship where you don't have to wear a noose or necktie, or worship in a bar with the limit of two beers per saved soul.

But until the Gospel of the Poor and the question "Why is there no justice?" — in a world where the caged turtle strains for liberation and the caged bird sings for freedom and the hungry child under the bridge cries for milk — are at the center of the Beloved Community/Kingdom of God, which is on the margins, Christianity will continue its decline.

Not far from the Open Door Community, Scott Boulevard Baptist Church is being dismantled so some new business venture can replace the church, as a new Walmart rises across the street. And the congregation? Long gone. What will happen to all of those pews? And don't let it slip your mind; Pope Francis said last week, "The rich will be judged."

Pew. ✦

Eduard Nuessner Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

**If we had had pews, the history of Atlanta would not be what it is today.
I would not be who I am today. There would be no Open Door Community.
Damn the pews!**

Then we returned to the Open Door Community to Footwashing and Eucharist.

What I saw and heard over the two days of sharing space with the turtle was clawing and neck-stretching to get free — Freedom and Liberty from captivity. Nothing could stop this passion, this struggle against a wall she could not climb or break through. Freedom. Willing to die, to exhaust herself for freedom and return to the place and life that our Creator, The Holy One, intended for her. She was not fully a turtle while in captivity, forced to live a life that made her less than what God intended. As I listened and watched, my heart was pained, for I know it is not only animals and reptiles that cannot live as their created purpose calls while in captivity, but also human beings. The Black Jesus Movement is a radical movement for all of creation to be whole in its created intentionality. The Gospel of the Poor is to fight like hell against every dehumanizing jerk and

income level, the less participation in faith and church. Of course. Have they not read the Prophets? Do they not know that Jesus teaches to give up possessions so everyone will have enough? Do these sociologists not know the radical demands of choosing life over death? Have they not heard of Martin Luther King Jr.'s warning that if people, churches and nations do not fight like hell — fight like our turtle trying to get out of a bucket — to oppose militarism, materialism and racism, then those people, those denominations and that nation are nearing spiritual death. Yes. Providential judgment takes the capacity for faith away from millions. "We built it," said Presidential candidate Mitt Romney in 2012, with a hubris that set the ghosts of slavery ships on fire. So many mainline denominations, seminaries and secular groups of the well-heeled are spiritually dead. Why do you think ISIS beheads Christians?

the North American context is wealth. And we know that mainline churches have wealth galore. And we know that the rich have to have guns for their homes and nuclear weapons for their country to protect the junk stored in their barns and year-round, temperature-controlled Pilgrim Warehouses. Some Christians live in walled (gated) sections or even towns — all white, shiny and bright.

Church membership used to help the rich get richer and the politicians get votes and the ladder-climbers to get up another rung — but this is less and less so. Why go to church if you don't need God? Why be a disciple unless you are a radical who knows that "the only solution is love and that love comes with community"? (Dorothy Day)

The poor have to have a movement for justice. Many Black churches, the small radical discipleship communities which Robert Bella and Jürgen Moltmann see as the future of the Christian Movement, house



Calvin Kimbrough

Labor Day Picnic Monday, September 7



**Volunteer to serve
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Mary Magdalene's Witness *continued from page 1*

my own journey that I believe are very liberating. Let me ask, what you have heard about Mary Magdalene? Did you hear that she was a prostitute that Jesus healed, a woman filled with many demons who was healed by Jesus? If you paid attention to things such as *The DaVinci Code*, you were invited into a discussion about her as the wife of Jesus.

While modern scholarship has pretty much vacated the idea of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute, it seems rather clear that she was a very broken person indeed who was healed. There is a powerful line in the Episcopal Liturgy that says "Almighty God, whose blessed [child] restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and mind and called her to be a witness of the resurrection." A powerful testimony to her healing.

So she, the converted sinner, comes to a gathering with her beautiful alabaster jar filled with oils and spices and she anoints Jesus with them. She is showing her love and gratitude in a manner that is mocked by some who are present, probably because of their own inability to have such devotion. She bears witness to her healing by her expression of love and devotion. Later in the journey she bears witness by staying at the cross even when all of the others are gone. Then there she is again, as Matthew tells us, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained standing in front of the tomb."

Mary Magdalene understood Jesus and loved him without fear or reservation and without being bound by others' inability to see Jesus.



Mary Magdalene, Our Lady of Fire by Tonya Torres

All four of the gospels identify Mary Magdalene as the first witness to Jesus' resurrection. We listened to the most extensive account, which is found in John's Gospel.

Since Mary Magdalene was the first to witness the resurrection, she earned the title of apostle to the apostles, but she is not spoken of in that way on most occasions. And she not only is the first witness, she is sent by Jesus to commission the others to go and tell the good news of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene is a witness to the life of Jesus, and seems to understand what he is teaching better than many others who were followers of Jesus. This is made clear in the non-canonical Gospel of Mary Magdalene that is found in the books omitted by the men who put together the Bible as we know it. There are several gospels that were part of the books found in a collection of scrolls that were hidden in Egypt and are called the Nag Hammadi. They are helpful in learning more about Jesus and his journey with the apostles.

I am convinced that much of the discussion about Mary Magdalene as the wife of Jesus reflects the fact that it is very difficult to understand the unity of heart, mind and soul that

seemed to exist between them. According to the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, Peter and some of the other apostles were not so happy for her to be around. They found her relationship with Jesus problematic, as was her ability to understand Jesus in ways that they did not. Sadly, our culture is caught in a similar dilemma. Transcendent relationships between men and women are often mistaken for sexual liaisons when they are not. However, it is important to understand that spirituality and sexuality are kinfolk, and the effort to separate them led to the effort to divorce the body from the spirit and the feminine from God.

So the development of male-centered religion with a focus on keeping the feminine out has led us to so much of the scandal that we see in the Catholic Church and so much promiscuous behavior in other religious arenas. Jesus did not separate himself in this manner. He understood that a whole person had to embody the feminine and masculine. He did not live with hierarchies and splits that we have come to accept as normal. Mary Magdalene understood Jesus and loved him without fear or reservation and without being bound by others' inability to see Jesus. She was at the Cross, she was at the burial, she was at the tomb. She was the first witness to the Resurrection.

So let me ask you how Mary Magdalene's witness challenges you? Do you need to reorganize any of your ideas in order to make room for Jesus to share the space in your heart that Jesus wishes to have? Are you like Peter or Mary Magdalene when it comes to affirming your connection to Jesus? Denials can be made in many ways. Are you standing nearby the Crucifixion or far away? Are you going to the burial with Jesus and holding vigil in the ways that you embrace your daily life as you allow that which needs to die a chance to die? And what about the witness to the resurrection? What life needs to be born anew in you today? What are you holding on to that needs to be set free? What are the places that Jesus is seeking to liberate?

All of us have a capacity similar to Mary Magdalene — the capacity to see. To see beyond the constructions that divide us into unhelpful categories. To get beyond our personas and false sense of self. To be united with Love as Jesus imaged it. That life is possible only if we open our eyes, ears, hearts and minds and allow this new energy into our lives that seeks us as a loving parent. I want to live in this Mary Magdalene type of energy. I want the church to learn more about this way of being and to embody it more.

I want to see women courageously take up the mantle of affirming the feminine face of God, not by trying to be better at being male than men, but by truly asking what is feminine power and how is it different from masculine power and what would it be like for women to find their way to embrace Jesus as Mary Magdalene did, so that new life would be created and many of the old ways of doing things would be infused with new light, new love and new energy.

Transformation is waiting. We can be more than we are. Won't you join the journey with new hope, new energy and a new determination to be one with Jesus as Mary Magdalene was one with Jesus and as Jesus is one with Mother God. ✦

Catherine Meeks preached this sermon at the Open Door Community on Sunday, May 31, 2015. Catherine is a community and wellness activist and an active member of the Open Door. 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.

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Calvin Kimbrough

Come and learn to provide foot care for our friends from the streets at the Harriet Tubman Foot Clinic. Volunteer Jami Edwards might be your teacher.

Live in a residential Christian community.

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volunteer
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,
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A Personl Testimony *continued from page 5*

discipleship. (Nota bene: often there is a Coca-Cola machine inside the churches. This is obedience to the corporate state; even when churches proclaim health and earth-care they provide brown sugar water for their members at just 75 cents per can. When I was growing up in Bamberg, SC, we saw Coke machines in the drug stores with “for whites only” across the big red and white idols of capitalism and obesity. Cost? Six cents per returnable bottle.

Now as to Christianity being a “cover” for the violence of the state: every state is based on violence. The root of political power is the capacity of the state to kill its own citizens. Even secular states use religion as a cover. Note the Pledge of Allegiance, U.S. currency and the state license plates which call us to trust in God. This God is an American white supremacist and filled with the violence of bombs and drones. This God of America is the anti-Christ of radical discipleship. Nonetheless there is no place without state violence to secure the state. Even the Cooperative Commonwealth which we join with Bernie Sanders to build will use coercion and violence when deemed necessary for security — what Malcom X called self defense — writ large.

Among Jesus’ aims and purposes was tearing the temple down and ridding the world of religious elites and priests. Anywhere there is a state religion, including the religio-secular state of Netanyahu in Israel, and the evangelicals who want to build a theocratic state in the white supremacist-ruled state of South Carolina, it has nothing to do with Jesus the prophet from Nazareth. Christianity among these abusers is an ideological screen to hide the aims of the takeover of land, labor and wealth from the people of God. Religion is an opiate of the masses. Radical discipleship is a way of life. Radical discipleship is not a religion. Radical discipleship is the religionless Christianity Dietrich Bonhoeffer called for from his Nazi prison cell not long before his execution by the Nazis, a state blessed and sanctioned by the German Evangelical Church.

Now the good news for folk like me, a believer and a disciple of the crucified/risen Jesus, is that small groups of radical disciples following their revolutionary servant-leader have always existed on the margins of state religion. Emperors, popes, dictators, Wall Street, the FBI and Creflo Dollar have not been able to extinguish this way of life — this truth. ✠

Heather Gray is the producer of “Just Peace” on WRFG-Atlanta 89.3 FM covering local, regional, national and international news. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia and can be reached at hmcgray@earthlink.net.

Eduard Nuessner Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Radical Hospitality *continued from page 5*

hearts, in the way we see the world and in the language we use for prayer and worship.

Over the last 40-plus years, Jeff has been writing from this generational perspective and context. His writings are grounded in the Works of Mercy practiced at LACW’s House of Hospitality and “Hippie Kitchen,” in his everyday community life, and in the public witness and direct actions that sometimes land him in jail.

In his opening chapter, “Who is my neighbor?” Jeff ties William Stringfellow’s “surrogate victims,” Paul Valley’s “Bad Samaritans” and Rene Girard’s “scapegoat mechanism” to the biblical story of the Good Samaritan. He is at his best when he makes Scripture come alive through real stories of the LACW and the guests they serve. In his essay “The Story of Jacob and the Homeless with a Stone for a Pillow,” he illustrates the connections among the patriarch Jacob, Jesus and the realities of street life in Los Angeles. And he is not afraid to share from his family history, as he did in his essay “Wrestling and Reconciling,” in which he says of his brother’s suicide, “I know that it is not my fault, but I also realize that in some essential way I am to blame. Families are weird. . . . It is this very weirdness of families, according to scripture, that is the root cause of violence and death in the world.” My personal favorite is “It’s a Wonderful Life.” Jeff tells his own story of being a Catholic Worker intermixed with his account of Dorothy Day’s life. He begins his essay with “I am lucky” and ends it with “I am not lucky. Actually, I am blessed.” I feel much the same about my life as a Catholic Worker.

Jeff ends his book with a list and description of Beliefs and Values. SPIRITUALITY: Eucharistic Spirituality, the Mystical Body, Incarnation, Redemptive Suffering, Prayer, Reconciliation, Gospel, Beauty and Seamless Garment. ACTIVISM: Resistance, Prophetic Witness, Non-violence/Pacifism, Biblical Anarchism and Radical Discipleship. SOCIAL INTERACTION: Community, Celebration, Stewardship, Personalism, Hospitality, Reconciliation, Work, Service and Voluntary Simplicity.

It’s a great list. Thank you, Jeff Dietrich, for your life, your years of service in the Movement and for your writings that leave a testimony of a generation of Dorothy Day’s offspring. ✠

Frank Cordaro is a peace activist and co-founder of the Des Moines, Iowa Catholic Worker. He frequently attends protests and gives lectures at school and community events in Nebraska and Iowa. He was a Roman Catholic priest from 1985 until leaving the priesthood in 2003 for personal reasons. Frank and his partner Jessica Reznicek came to stay with us at the Open Door for a month this past spring.

New Hope House Hoping for New Housemates!

New Hope House, Georgia’s house of hospitality for families of death row prisoners and a sister community of the Open Door, is in need of an individual or a couple to move in and assist Ed and Lora Weir with their ministry. Ed and Lora have been lovingly caring for New Hope House for many years, and would welcome the chance to work with others who share their fierce opposition to the death penalty and desire to nourish a community of people affected by the injustices of capital punishment.

Ed and Lora invite interested people to contact them at 770.358.8931 or lorashain@hotmail.com.

An exciting and fulfilling ministry is awaiting you at New Hope House!

New Hope House offers:

- a quiet, peaceful location in the central Georgia woods, just minutes from the prison where death row is located;
- a furnished, private apartment within a duplex, with Ed and Lora next door — perfect for a single person or a couple;
- hospitality to families of death row prisoners during visitation days and scheduled executions;
- visitation on Georgia’s death row;
- accompaniment for the defendant’s family members at death penalty trials throughout the state;
- opportunities to assist with bookkeeping and administrative tasks.

Grace and Peaces of Mail

As long as the Black community is being persecuted, the Black church is being persecuted. Who opens the space for grieving Black women who lose Black sons to the merciless state? The Black church. Who provides food and space and comfort to those bereaved? The Black church. Who are the Black sons? The Black church. Who are the Black daughters?

The Black church. Who are the poor? The Black church. Who are the sick? The Black church. Who is gay? The Black church. The Black church is crying. The Black church is hurting. The Black church is bearing witness as best as we know how. The Black church is scarred. The Black church is broken. We just don't know how to heal our wounds; we don't know how to put the broken pieces back together. As the old folks say, "We's coming back this a'way." Any more persecution would tear our walls down, and we, I, would not want that. It is all that we have. The worst of the Black, capitalist, respectable, heteronormative, patriarchal, homophobic preachin' gospel is being preached to the poorest, the gayest the most thuggish, the most womanish; but you've gotta believe the latter is rising up. Where do you think we are seeking refuge? The "white" church? Most certainly not. We find refuge where we were finding it before: in the kitchens of Black church mothers, in the streets where most of the Black church has found itself at some point, in my own parents' home at times, at the Open Door Community where members of the Black church gather to pray and feed the homeless and be fed. (I immediately think about Horace because that brotha' can pray!)

The Black church is inseparable (no matter how much our leaders try to separate us) from the Black community. It may be the "faces" of the Black church that have not paid their allegiance. But as for those of us who identify as believers and remain undaunted in the fight to stay alive non-violently even when nonviolence fails us, and still love the oppressor even as he spitefully uses us, we are the Black church. We are all either fighting to end injustice or facing it every time we dare to leave our homes. We are the Black church and we are all being persecuted. We are believers.

Now, my faith and my allegiance are pretty shaky, I must admit. I am angry. I am hurt. I am sick of privileged white people who have also come to India and taken up too much damn space. I am not nonviolent and am not as loving and sympathetic as I should be to them. I carry a pocket knife. I do plan on registering a gun when I return to the states. Not to carry but merely because I am scared for my life and all Black lives. I am no saint. Not at this point in my 20-year life. I'd like to think that I'm getting there. And if you'd like to question my allegiance, I will say that I, too, am the Black church.

India is amazing. India is extremely poor and extremely rich. I'm dealing with the caste and the class system as best I know how: to listen, to ask questions, to place myself in as many spaces as possible and make the time to love and care for my Black self.

Tabatha Holley
India

Tabatha Holley, from Dawson, Georgia, is entering her Senoir year at Spelman College. She spent her 2015 Spring Semester studying in New Delhi, India.



Michelle Dick

I am an inmate here at the Wabash Valley Correctional facility in Carlisle, Indiana. I am blessed to receive your publication of *Hospitality*. I am so informed and encouraged by each issue.

I am a mentor in our prison's Special Needs Unit. As a mentor I am on call 24/7 for whenever one of the men has a crisis and needs someone to support them. We meet with the guys we are responsible for weekly, we attend groups with them, arts and crafts, recreation, and we eat together in the chow hall. The mentor program is truly counter-cultural here. Most prisons do not give the necessary care to those who have mental health issues. Our program has changed the way the incarcerated community views this much-neglected issue.

I am writing to inquire about obtaining a few books that you publish. I enjoy reading books about how others are building the Kingdom of God and being a voice for the voiceless. Being a mentor and accompanying the severely marginalized as a marginalized individual myself has been extremely transformative.

Sincerely,
An Indiana prisoner

Dear Open Door,

When I received your appeal to refurbish your shower room, I thought of how grateful I am each night when I sit in my shower and bask in the lovely warmth and thank God for that pleasure. Everybody should be able to enjoy the same thing. Here is my contribution toward that end!

In peace,
Nancy Woods
Demarest, New Jersey

Dear friends of the Open Door,

I ignore much of the news from Washington, D.C., but it is impossible for me to dismiss this week's revelation of an end-times budget for human need and an increase for apocalyptic military spending. I am defenseless.

Thoreau says the wealthy person who gives a dollop of charity is called a philanthropist while those who give all are called fools. My desire is for the God of compassion and hope who seeks to cure our warring madness, pushing us to give all in service to others in need.

Why are we so willing to open the veins of strangers and our own military while leaving untreated the bleeding wounds of the poor? Because we want to swim in the climate controlled, smart phoned, short attention span pool of consumer culture?

Thank you for your gospel of an alternative vision. Your love in action illuminates the old, old story.

Stan Williams
Tallahassee, Florida

Murphy,

Thanks for your warm, sensitive and loving article on Ralph Dukes [*Hospitality* January-February 2015]. The purpose and outreach of the Community jumps off the pages and into the heart of the reader.

I am grateful for you, Ed, and many more who have witnessed for a life-loving Lord in your ministries there.

Grace, peace and gratitude,
Woody McKay
[Retired Presbyterian Minister]
Hoschton, Georgia

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

Some Things Are Clear

Some things are clear,
Some things are not.
I suppose I'm the one
That God forgot.

I shuffle along
These dirty streets,
Remembering that once,
I slept on sheets.

But now some cardboard
Is my bed,
My rolled up jacket
Rests my head.

If Jesus ever comes again,
And walks and talks with other men,
I hope I'm one that he will see,
And I will ask him, "Are you me?"

— Roger F. Cooper



David Klein

Roger Cooper is a Lutheran minister, retired psychologist, former seminary professor, and longtime friend of the Open Door. He is active in the Friedrich Hölderlin Society and travels regularly to Germany for its meetings.

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.

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.

August 2 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance
 Dick Rustay preaching
 August 9 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service
 August 16 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service
 August 23 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service
 August 30 No Worship at 910
 Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm

September 6 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 the Singing Labor Movement
 Calvin Kimbrough leading
 September 13 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service
 September 20 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service
 September 27 4 p.m. Worship at 910
 Eucharistic Service



Julie Lonneman

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.

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



Autumn Dennis

we need

**T-Shirts
 2XL-5XL**

Do you have a garden? Can you share some fresh produce for the Open Door Welcome Table? **Thank you!**
Pill containers: We are once again in need of pill containers. **Thank you!**

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

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

- blankets
- backpacks
- MARTA cards
- reading glasses
- trash bags
 (30 gallon, .85 mil)
- postage stamps
- a home for every
homeless person:
 every woman,
 man and child