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

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October 2016

## Preaching With Our Feet

*Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain*

*The Imperial Hotel Occupation as Prophetic Politics*

by Terry Easton

The Open Door Press

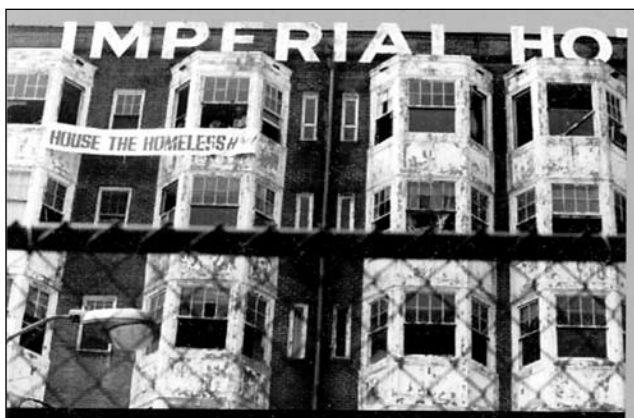
Reviewed by Rosalie Riegler

Can a book be tragic and hopeful at the same time? I think it can, just as life invariably is, and *Raising Our Voices* proves the point. In June 1990, members of the Open Door Community and their newly formed ally, People for Urban Justice (PUJ), planned a chain-cutting and trespass street action. For their site, they chose the Imperial Hotel, an abandoned former SRO (Single Room Occupancy) hotel. By preaching with their feet — acting their “no” instead of simply saying it — they wanted to call attention to the huge and underserved homeless population in Atlanta. In particular, they wanted to call out the corporate and government powers for developing Underground Atlanta and other commercial districts with federal funds that were intended for low income housing.

Some of the “Imperial Eight” who broke into the hotel knew the history and practice of nonviolent direct action; few had actually participated in such an action, and none of them had any idea what was in store for them that early June morning.

Atlanta wanted (still wants) to be known as a city friendly to tourism and other business interests. So it welcomed the Imperial Hotel as it rose in 1910. But the Imperial did not weather well, and in the Sixties was more famous for exotic dancers than for its stunning lobby. Developer John Portman purchased it in 1980 but soon abandoned it and chained the front door closed. Because it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it couldn’t be bulldozed, so he just ignored it.

Atlanta was no longer proud of the Imperial, but PUJ saw it as a prime location for a dramatic action that would



### Raising Our Voices, Breaking the Chain

The Imperial Hotel Occupation  
as Prophetic Politics

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voices raised. But the media didn’t come and their preaching with their feet wouldn’t be heard on the noon news.

Then came a Kairos moment: Ed Loring’s sudden and prophetic call, “Open the gates!” No time for the usual discussion and discernment. “Come on in!” The open doors of the Imperial welcomed Atlanta’s homeless. The protesters surged into the hotel, and they stayed, some of them for sixteen days. They were joined by other homeless men and

women and families, people who saw that even the primitive conditions of the Imperial were better than where they had been sleeping. For over two weeks, up to 75 people occupied the Imperial each day, with the Open Door and other groups bringing in food, bedding and supplies. (Eventually, the mayor provided portable toilets.) Murphy Davis and others provided music, and the strains of “We Shall Overcome” lent strength and solidarity to the group.

The occupiers renamed the hotel “Welcome House,” improvised facilities for privacy, cleaned up the lower floors,

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## To the Glory of God

### Black Jesus Discipleship on the Front Line in Hell

By Eduard Loring

Through no fault of my own I am 76 years old. I joy every day that I am alive and well. From the Black Church Tradition I learned to begin the morning with “Thank you God for getting me up this morning in my right mind.” I even pray that before I take my morning mental medicines! The ODC in Atlanta is completing her term of service to the homeless and the city streets. We shall continue (Murphy, David Payne, and I) to walk with the Black Jesus in Baltimore. Yet, more than continuation will spring forth in newness and mystery from the cracks in the concrete and the Cry of the Poor echoing among the row houses and abandoniums, as Brendan Walsh names them — he of Viva House, the Baltimore Catholic Worker. Abraham was 75 when Yahweh-Elohim said, “GO FROM YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR KINDRED AND YOUR FATHER’S HOUSE TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.” WHY MARYLAND? I HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE DEEP SOUTH WHERE STRANGE FRUIT HAS BLEED TO THE PITCHED GLEE OF WHITE MEN’S HATE. Maryland was a slave state, but thanks to the great God-chosen Abraham Lincoln, not a fractious member of the disunion movement. And Moses, the murderer and labor organizer, was 80 when Yahweh-Elohim called to him to begin the Abolitionist movement from the fire of a burning bush that burns to this day. So at 76 I am older than Abraham and younger than Moses. We do not believe Murphy will follow Sarah and give Hannah a sister.

Now hear this. Now hear this: In the sick state of Georgia where often hate trumps love, the ODC of Baltimore will continue her prison ministry as she is doing today and did just the other day with the Hardwick Prison Trip. We shall visit on Death Row several times a year. We shall continue prison support, writing letters and advocacy. We shall learn how to fight the death penalty in a state more human, that has abolished executions as it abolished slavery in 1865.

My article this issue is about Black Discipleship and radical obedience to the gospel mandate of Jesus, the Son of God and the Human One.

I have often written that the gospel is known with the clearest eyes of faith when the believer and community are under persecution of one sort or another. The gospels were written by people under fire, to people under fire with the assumption that the future followers, you and me, would be under fire. There was little sense, oh, a whiff of smoke here and there of coming capitulation to the Powers and Principalities named in Jesus’ temptations. And add on the control

**To the Glory of God** continued on page 8

The open doors of the Imperial welcomed Atlanta’s homeless.  
The protesters surged into the hotel, and they stayed,  
some of them for sixteen days.

focus attention on the plight of Atlanta’s homeless, particularly on the rapid decline in the availability of inexpensive rooms for day laborers in SROs.

PUJ members who drove down to the Imperial in the early dawn that June morning expected a speedy arrest for breaking the chains and entering the hotel. They only hoped they had time enough before the police came to hang a banner high up on the building. Tension filled the air, but so did hope and courage. The banner went up and it turned out to be too small for maximum impact, which was the first disappointment. Open Door supporters, many of them homeless, marched up and down in front of the hotel, signs blazing and

# Revolutionary Patience

By Catherine Meeks

Revolutionary patience is needed today. This term was coined by the German feminist liberation theologian Dorothee Sölle in the 1980s to describe a particular mindset: one that holds in tension a sense of “urgency which is consistent with the size of the problems and a resilience that meets setbacks and defeats with both the hope and determinism to remain in the struggle for the long haul.” It will not fall into despair no matter how bleak the situation looks.

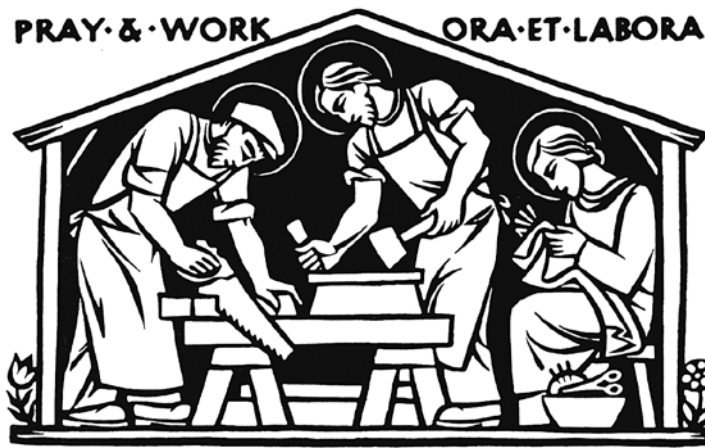
Though this term is a new one for me, the concept is not. I grew up in a household where my mother always counseled us, “When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hold on.” The basic message

**It is amazingly difficult to reflect upon how much work is yet to be done in this present moment where we find ourselves embracing so many challenges.**

that we gleaned from her words was that there was never a reason to lose hope. She would say, “Tomorrow is another day,” no matter what dire circumstances were facing her.

As a youngster these words did not mean that much to me, but now as a person who has lived for seven decades, I can clearly see the wisdom in the philosophy that undergirded my mother’s words. Along with having a better understanding of them, I am deeply grateful for the foundation that they laid for me as I have traveled all of these years as an advocate for social justice and liberation.

The great theologian Howard Thurman cautioned that the greatest challenge to the activist is despair. Of course it is very easy to see the truth of that observation as I take



Ade Bethune

into account the difficulty of working for racial healing and justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is amazingly difficult to reflect upon how much work is yet to be done in this present moment where we find ourselves embracing so many challenges. There is so much rage

which we can barely manage, and there are many unrelenting efforts to turn the wheel of justice back.

When my generation of social justice activists were working in the 60s and 70s, there was not any reason to believe that the gains made would be challenged on so many fronts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The biggest disappointment for many of us has been the attack on the Voting Rights Act. There was not any reason to believe that such a basic right would come under attack in such a short time and that there would be so much new energy put into trying to make sure that African Americans and other people of color would be discouraged from voting. This effort is the cause of great concern for many of us who

believed that when the laws were changed, they would settle the issue of white supremacy when it came to voting and other similar rights which were supposedly insured by the Constitution.

But today finds us in this place where so many basic rights are having to be defended and where there is an amazing upsurge of violence

being leveled at African Americans and other people of color. Very questionable police killings of African Americans and Latinos, poisoned water not only in Flint, Michigan but for Native Americans, an election season that is making it possible for many to believe that anything is acceptable to say about folks who have been designated as “other.”

Yes, we need revolutionary patience. We need to remember to tie a knot in the end of the rope and hold on. We cannot despair. We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of entertaining the possibility that a new day will not come. It must come. We have to recommit ourselves to the work of peace and justice and continue to stand against every force that aims to distract us from the goals of justice and peace. God’s grace makes it possible for us to do this. Let’s make revolutionary patience our watchword. ✦

*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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## 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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**Dan Berrigan by Bob Fitch,**  
please see *Great Cloud of Witnesses* on page 7.

### Newspaper

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**Nora Leslie:** Administration and Finance

**Sarah Humphrey:** Coordinator for Administration, Volunteers, Hardwick Prison Trip and Resident Volunteer Applications

**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry

# Resisting the White Christ

By Nibs Stroupe

Sometime this month the movie “Birth of a Nation” is scheduled to be released. It is about Nat Turner’s revolt against slavery in the Southampton region of Virginia. It will be very interesting to see how this powerful piece of American history is portrayed, but at the least, the revolt is part of a long river of resistance that has been flowing, occasionally surging, against slavery and oppression in this country. Throughout the history of the European presence in America, there has been African American, Native American, Hispanic and Asian resistance to whiteness being part of the Trinity. People have risen up in resistance, both violent and non-violent, to the idea that the “white Christ” elevates whiteness above all other racial classifications.

Last month we looked at the first “R” in combatting our captivity to racism: recognition that we are captives — all of us, but especially those of us classified as “white.” The next step is resistance. This idea of resistance has at least three levels. We must start with the truth that people classified as “non-white” have been resisting this demonic power of racial classification for centuries, understanding very well that the purpose of the system of race is not to classify the diverse family of humanity but rather to justify the hoarding of power and resources for those classified as “white.”

The next level is part of the step of recognition, but it must be repeated here because it is so important and so pervasive. Almost all of us classified as “white” resist the idea that we or our institutions are captured by the power of race. “There might be other white people who are racists, but not me — I don’t see color,” is often how the conversation moves. As my friend David Billings has put it in his fine book *Deep Denial: The Persistence of White Supremacy in US History and Life* that has just been released, we who are “white” are in deep denial.

Even if we who are white are able to admit this truth, we find it difficult to lessen its power over us and in us. This leads us to the third level of resistance, as we seek to turn this power around and begin to use it to regain our humanity rather than using it to diminish our humanity. We must begin to resist the power of race in our lives as individuals and as communities. It will be a powerful struggle in our souls and in our institutions. It will feel like Paul’s admonition to himself in Romans 7:14-25, where he describes himself as being at war with himself as he seeks to live as a child of God. He wants to live as God’s child but often finds himself obeying the call of the powers of the world. I have experienced this many times in my own life, and one instance leaps out at me from 20 years ago, as I rode the train into downtown Atlanta. At a stop in the “black” neighborhood, several young African American males got on the train, joking and clowning and speaking loudly. I noticed a bit of tension beginning to build in myself. At the same time, I noticed that someone who had gotten on the train had sat down behind me. This person was reeking of alcohol, and I found myself putting these two occurrences together. I thought to myself, “Black males really need to get their act together; they shouldn’t be dissipating their lives in this manner.” I pondered these things and solutions to them as we rode on the train together, believing that I was the only white person in that train car. Then, a couple of stops later, the man behind me got up and exited the train — he was a well-dressed white man. My racism was exposed to me, and I echoed Paul’s words in Romans 7:24: “Wretched man that I



Walker Evans - Street Scene, New Orleans, 1936 - www.myaajc.com

am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

That was one of the many consciousness-raising experiences that I have been blessed to have in these thirty years at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, and yet the power of race remains in me — not as strong, but still traces of it. I cannot seem to scour it out, and this idea of continuing the work of resistance resonates strongly in me. Why is it so deep in me and in so many of us classified as “white?” Two metaphors have emerged that have been helpful to me: demonic possession and addiction. Our modern ears recoil at the idea of demonic possession, an idea that has been used so often to harm many people, especially in the church. Yet it seems to describe the captivity to racism that afflicts so many of us who are white. I am indebted to Walter Wink’s pioneering

**Resisting** *continued on page 8*

## Resilience and Resistance What Keeps You Going?

By Peter Gathje

Thursday morning at Manna House, I went around and asked guests, “What keeps you going?”

“I just go one day to the next. I’m stubborn that way.”

“Jesus.” (This was said by at least six guests.)

“My buddies. They’ve got my back.”

“Lord, I don’t know. When I figure it out, I’ll let you know.”

“This here Maxwell House coffee.”

“The good Lord.” (This was said by eight or more guests.)

“Trying to survive.”

“Books I read.”

“The music I’m listening to. The songs I hear.”

“Prayers I say.”

“Coffee and my two feet.”

“The Word of the Day.”

“I’m too angry to give in.”

“H.O.P.E.” (Homeless Organizing for Power and Equality, a local group of homeless and formerly homeless people who advocate for justice for people on the streets).

“This place, Manna House.”

My question came from my own appreciation for the resilience of our guests. They keep going and as Kathleen says, “They bring us their best” in the face of ongoing suffer-

ing. The horrors of homelessness might be summed up by a guest who said Monday morning, “I don’t know why they don’t just line us up and shoot us. At least then it would be a quick death instead of this slow death on the streets.”

And he is well aware that homelessness is not the result of mere individual failure. “Somebody’s making money off of homelessness or there wouldn’t be homelessness.”

Or as an academic puts it, “Housing deprivation is produced to make literal room for the speculative urban consumer economies of neoliberalism. . . . This is an economy that extracts value from the abandonment of entire populations of people.” (See Craig Willse, “The Value of Homelessness: Managing Surplus Life in the United States”)

So my question. What keeps you going when you know in your soul and in your body that society is organized around making you and keeping you expendable?

The answers the guests gave point to places and powers where they can find resistance to this imposed systemic expendability. Personal traits like stubbornness, anger, and “my own two feet” that refuse to give in to the judgment. Buddies who together refuse to give in to the judgment. Faith that holds to a God who turns judgment away from those on the streets and toward those who put and keep people on the streets. Visions of another world through books and music and the Bible. Places of community where dignity is affirmed, sanctuary is given, the welcome of coffee is available, and

justice is sought.

There’s a wisdom in the Manna House guests that feeds their resilience and resistance. The guests at Manna House do not passively accept the suffering imposed upon them. They reject the humiliation and harassment and horrors of homelessness. They find ways to keep going; ways that affirm their worth, their dignity, their humanity. It is, to be sure, a constant struggle. It is not easy to hold onto hope and humanity in the face of powers that want you to despair and be dehumanized.

And so I think of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the founders of the Catholic Worker Movement. Dorothy Day saw the struggles of the poor caused by so much injustice and said, “God meant things to be much easier than we have made them.” And Peter Maurin gave the goal consistent with that God, “We want to build a society where it is easier for people to 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. He wrote Sharing the Bread of Life: Hospitality and Resistance at the Open Door Community (2006) and edited A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader 1982 – 2002. (pgathje@memphis-seminary.edu)*

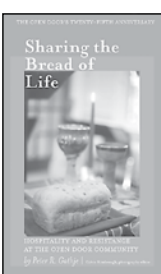
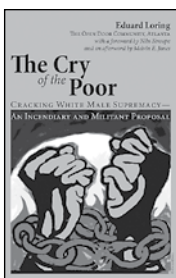


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By **Eduard Loring**  
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By **Peter R. Gathje**

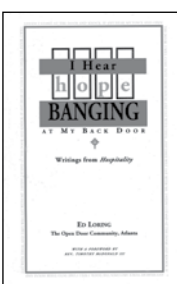
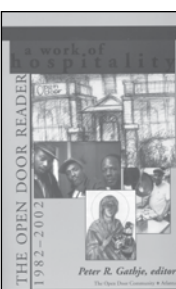
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## Moving Toward Abolition



# I Call the Living – I Mourn the Dead – I Break the Lightning

By **Mary Catherine Johnson**

It's 7 p.m. on the steps of the Georgia Capitol. I am surrounded by a crowd of people with bowed heads — people who have taken time from their busy lives to stand here in opposition to the execution that is scheduled to take place tonight. Until now we have been singing, praying and sharing stories about our brother on death row whose time has come to face the execution gurney. But now, the time the state has designated for our brother's death, we move into the stillness of silent prayer.

Suddenly, the silence is broken. Across the street at Central Presbyterian Church, a bell begins to toll. For more than twenty minutes, the sound of the bell fills the air of downtown Atlanta and obscures all the other sounds of the city. Each clang of the bell reverberates through my body and jolts my heart. I am aware that I am in the midst of a mystical moment — the type that Father Richard Rohr describes as “those attention grabbing events that overcome the gap between you and other people, events, or objects, and even God.” The sound of the bell bridges the gap between those of us standing in vigil at the Capitol and the prisoner strapped to the execution gurney in Jackson: We feel his agony, we hear his cries and we feel closer to him and to God.

As I experience the bell's vibrations and look at the people around me, I am reminded of the 2006 movie *Son of Man*, a retelling of the Jesus story in modern-day South Africa. In this extraordinary film, the powers are threatened by Jesus' radical messages of peace and opposition to their corruption and violence, so they secretly kill Jesus and bury him in an unmarked grave. But Jesus' mother and the other women of the community seek out the grave, exhume Jesus' body and display it on a cross in a prominent location in the city for all to see. What was concealed by the state is now revealed in the full light of day.

At the Capitol, the powerful clanging of the bell becomes the soundtrack for our enactment of the Jesus story, as we put another child of God — the executed prisoner — on display in a prominent location in the city for all to see. Zooming in front of us are hundreds of our distracted fellow citizens, rushing home from work or heading to the next baseball game at Turner Field. Looming behind us is the building where the legislative powers created the laws to legalize executions, as well as to classify as state secrets the identities of the medical professionals who make the lethal injection drugs, and those who administer them to prisoners. The state carries out its gruesome business of executions under a shroud of secrecy, with an arrogance that eclipses the humanity of some of its most vulnerable citizens, whom they have relegated to death row. But our presence on the steps of the Capitol, accompanied by that mighty tolling bell, exhumes the truth about our executed brother, and we display his full humanity for all to see. What was concealed by the state is now revealed in the full light of day.

## The Road from the Vigils to Abolition

Every execution that occurs in the U.S. is opposed and observed by activists who are dedicated to keeping the humanity of the executed prisoners and the attendant injustices of the death penalty in the full light of day. The exposure

that these activists enact at the execution vigils is carried into the following days and weeks, and is manifested in courtrooms, classrooms, churches and countless other public and private settings. As we tell the stories of the executed prisoners, as well as the stories of the ones still on death row, we are crafting the ultimate tale of a country that no longer has the death penalty.

This ongoing work by thousands of activists is bearing more tangible results than ever this year. In Georgia, we have seen attendance at statewide execution vigils consistently increase, and new voices from unexpected places, including conservative groups, are coming to the conversation about abolition. And despite escalated executions here in 2016, there has only been one case this year where the district attorney has declared intent to seek the death penalty.

Then there's a ray of hope in Texas, which normally leads the nation in executions. In August, for the *seventh* consecutive time, a scheduled execution was halted or postponed as a result of a stay, a rescheduled execution date, or the withdrawal of the death warrant, creating the longest stretch of time without an execution in Texas since 2008.

The month of August also brought other good news. North Carolina celebrated the milestone of a decade with no executions. The Delaware Supreme Court declared the state's capital sentencing procedures unconstitutional, leaving the state without a valid death penalty statute. A few weeks later, Delaware's Attorney General announced that he will not appeal the decision.



So much hope. Yet so much work is still to be done. Ed Loring of the Open Door Community has been known to say, “If we got a thousand people to attend our vigil at the Capitol, we could end the death penalty.” I'd really like to test his theory.

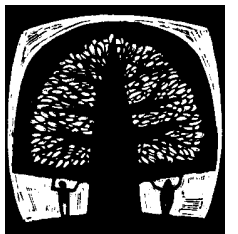
## Postscript

There are two prominent church bells in Switzerland that bear the following inscription: *I call the Living — I mourn the Dead — I break the Lightning*. It's the opening invocation from a poem called “Song of the Bell,” written by the German poet Friedrich Schiller. I can't think of a better description for the bell that rings across from the State Capitol during every execution vigil in Georgia. As we who vigil mourn the death that is occurring that night, we feel a simultaneous call to action that moves us ever closer to the abolition of the death penalty. And in those mystical moments accompanied by the sound of the bell, a world of possibility opens up, and that which destroys is deflected into that which lives. ✠

“Moving Toward Abolition” is a column that tracks the fight to end capital punishment. Mary Catherine Johnson lives at New Hope House, where she provides hospitality for Georgia's death row prisoners and their families. ([mcjohnson78@yahoo.com](mailto:mcjohnson78@yahoo.com))

# Connections

## Resurrection in Ordinary Time



Meinrad Craighead

By Meridith Owensby

My name is Meridith Owensby and I am the cofounder and a live-in community member at Lydia's House. I greet you on this, the third annual Women for Women celebration. We've been providing hospitality for just about 17 months, and I'm glad for the opportunity to share with you a bit about that experience.

When someone asks off-handedly, "What's life at Lydia's House like?" I've got a description ready. If I'm speaking to friends who aren't people of faith I say, "The worst sometimes comes to pass, but it doesn't stay." With those assembled tonight, who are believers in Christ, I can tell you this: We get to be present for resurrection Sunday, but not without living through Friday and Saturday.

To explain what I mean, let's begin with a reading from the Gospel of Luke, starting at the end of Chapter 23:

*Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to the crucifixion. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.*

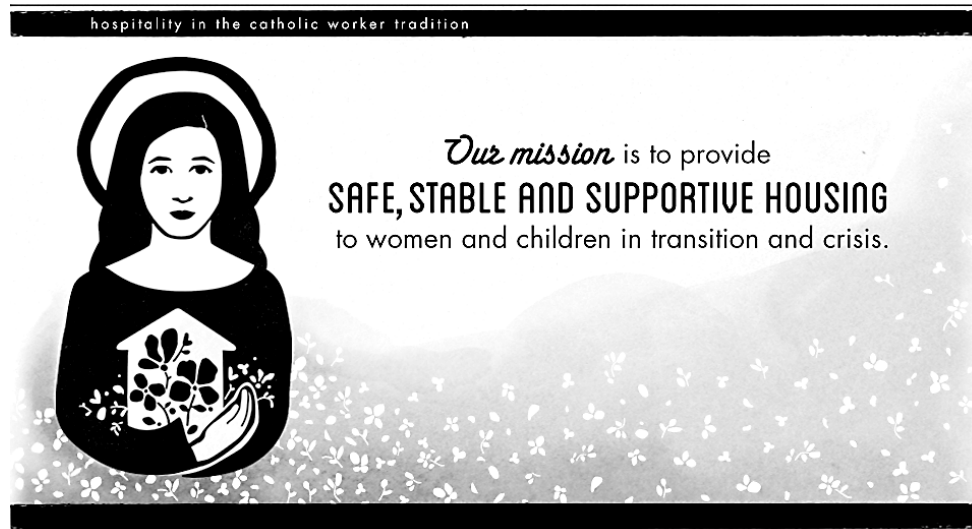
*The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.*

*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.*

The word of the Lord.

When you spend life alongside some of the poorest of God's children, scriptures come alive in a particular way. The story of Joseph and the women at the tomb has stood out to us lately. One could say guests come to us after Friday's crucifixion, and although Sunday joy does come, there's no rushing it. The Saturdays in between can feel long and uncertain indeed.

Women arrive at Lydia's House having experienced the worst forms of suffering. The stories we hear in interviews often leave me weeping in my car afterward. There is no place in this city for them to be. The eviction has happened. The suicide was attempted. The domestic violence transpired. The job was lost, the sickness laid them low, the depression was debilitating, the family cast them out. For our guests, Friday has hap-



pened. Crucifixion has taken its toll.

Like Joseph of Arimathea, the associates immediately care for these broken bodies. To begin, we offer meals: good, wholesome meals paid for with the donations received this time last year at this very event. We buy appropriate clothes and good quality shoes for each new guest. We arrange transportation to doctor's appointments, pick up prescriptions and make 2:00 a.m. emergency room trips when necessary. Twice I've accompanied a guest through labor, holding the hands of these young women while they cried out for their own mothers and the absent fathers-to-be. We've been through cancer scares, surgeries, and inpatient psychiatric stays. This is so much of our ministry that God saw fit to provide an Associate who's a doctor by training, who gives guidance and cares for our guests gently and well. We know what to do with broken bodies.

I say we know, but there's sometimes debate. Recently two guests shared their concerns about my regular running practice, noting correctly that it could be bad for my joints. I replied that it was a good way to manage stress and I didn't know what I'd do instead if I quit. One of them suggested, only half in jest, "You could take up smoking."

But smoking aside, even if we could bind up every wound, resurrection isn't inevitable or immediate. There's always a Saturday that follows the Friday, where the worst has happened but the shape of future hopes is anything but clear. As one guest lamented during the hardest, loneliest point of her labor, "This isn't how I thought it would be!" In this ambiguous Saturday waiting we are tempted toward preparing for the worst, toward acting like what happened on Friday is the last word.

I imagine that the women following Jesus felt the same, that the worst had happened and the only thing to do was to have a proper burial. Yet, scripture highlights a pause in the action that I find both illuminating and delightful. The women stopped getting ready for the funeral because of the timing of the Sabbath, falling the day after

Jesus' death.

I find this pause remarkable. These were devout women who worshipped God, and they believed Jesus was the Son of God. This Jesus they'd given their lives to had just been killed, so essentially the God of their understanding was dead. And yet, they kept God's commands regarding the Sabbath. They stopped what they were doing for the day, following the letter of the law regarding when work should be done and when it should cease. This strikes me as akin to carefully locking the door when the house is already on fire.

I must tell you that life at Lydia's House has taught me the wisdom of continuing to do the things that God has told us are good, most especially when Friday has come but Sunday's not yet here. In the midst of sorrowful Saturdays we continue the practiced pauses, even when frantic funeral preparations feel more appropriate. When heartbreak comes, as it often does, we immediately gather and pray. We keep breaking bread together, and I'm proud to say we've never missed a scheduled dinner, despite the interruptions that come on a daily basis. We keep holding worship, keep praying as a group every morning, keep believing in a God that is working for good in all things. And during those pauses, in those spaces, God has entered time and time again. Sunday comes, and it turns out funeral preparations were not even needed.

Let me tell you about the Sundays we have known, about the resurrections we have witnessed. We've celebrated birthdays, four-month job anniversaries, certification exam passage, sobriety anniversaries, and transitions into independent housing. Each goal achieved reminds us that resurrection is possible, that Sunday does come.

And when these Sundays show up we celebrate every bit of resurrection. One of our gifts is celebrating well, and there are many parts involved in our homemade liturgy, including prayer, off-key singing and hand-crafted merit badges. Each accomplishment is entered into our golden book of merit, and between guests and volunteers I'm proud to say we've had twenty-nine such celebrations.

We exclaim over Sunday when it comes, cheering on new life in women who once thought their futures needed only funeral preparations.

The Associates live with guests in a hard-to-define way, and sometimes we struggle to express how we fit together. One of the guests explained it well when she started a question to me this way: "I need you to be honest with me, friend to friend, maybe cousin to cousin, sister to sister, mother to daughter, woman to woman." Only after I agreed did she ask what was heavy on her heart, "Did you watch the next episode of Empire without me?" I had waited, let me assure you, and we later watched it together as the sisters in Christ that we are. And in these ways and countless others, our lives are intertwined.

I want to thank all of you gathered this evening for giving us the support we need to live this life. Because of you we are able to observe resurrection and resurrection-in-the-making, and I cannot tell you how transformative that has been to all of us. Be it Friday, Saturday or Sunday, there's no place else we'd rather be.

Thank you. ✦

*Meridith Owensby lived at the Open Door Community as a Resident Volunteer in 2003, and again from 2004 to 2005 after she graduated from Georgia Tech. She worked for several years with the Church of the Savior in Washington, DC and has now settled with the homeless poor in Cincinnati, Ohio. She preached this sermon during Eastertide 2016.*

### Live and Work With Us!

Would you like to live in intentional community, in solidarity with women and children experiencing homelessness? Lydia's House is currently looking for 2 associate volunteers to work alongside our core community and live in our main property. This is not a professional social work job, but rather a commitment to shared life and service. The term is a minimum of one year and applications are currently being accepted for a fall/ winter 2016 start. We ask that all applicants for the Associates Program be at least 25 years of age. We are seeking women of faith who desire to embrace life in a Christian community and commit to regular prayer. Married couples will also be considered. Volunteers should be passionate about living alongside the poor and living simply. For more information, visit our website at [www.stlydiashouse.org](http://www.stlydiashouse.org) or contact Mary Ellen Mitchell Eilerman at [maryellen@stlydiashouse.org](mailto:maryellen@stlydiashouse.org).





# Inch by Inch



By Murphy Davis

## At the Door

### *Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough*

Life is moving fast at the Open Door. When we made the difficult decision back in the spring to close 910 Ponce de Leon, the Kimbroughs began the process of applying for low-income senior housing in Nashville, and the Loring-Davises in Baltimore. The waiting list for such housing is usually very long. But much to everyone's surprise, Nelia and Calvin got a call in July that their unit would be ready for occupancy at the end of August!

As these things go, when your name comes up, you'd better take it because it might be a long time before a chance comes up again. So the Kimbroughs are already in the midst of their move. They will complete the move later in September (after Calvin finishes the layout for this issue of *Hospitality*!). We are all a bit surprised that we are actually dispersing so soon, but like my Great Aunt Mary Lily used to say, "If you set a date, it will surely come."

How different life will be for all of us as we say good-bye to our time as residential covenant partners. All blessings on Nelia and Calvin as they settle in their new home. *Right:* Nelia and Calvin during Holy Week 2016.



Mary Catherine Johnson



Calvin Kimbrough

### *David Christian*

Longtime community member David Christian is also preparing to make his move in mid-September. But the good news is that he is only moving down the street to Briarcliff Summit Apartments. When David shared this news on Facebook, Pete Gathje responded "When my books are moved, then I'm moved." We're sure the same will apply for David! He promises to be back on a regular basis for meals and a few House Duty slots. We are so thankful. *Left:* David at a Black Lives Matter Rally in December 2015.



Calvin Kimbrough

### *David Payne*

David long ago became a mainstay in the community — making the schedule, doing House Duty many times each week, welcoming our homeless friends, fixing things, driving on the Hardwick Trip, driving folks to medical appointments, and generally doing what's needed to keep it all rolling.

On September 12, Dick took David to the Grady Emergency Room to learn that he was having a major heart attack. The Grady ER team had two stents opening his blockages in nothing flat! After a night in the ICU and one day in a regular room, he was released and came home to us. Please pray for David as he recovers. *Left:* David leading a scripture reading during Holy Week 2016.

## Cloud of Witnesses: *We have lost many dear friends in recent months and note several here.*

### *Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel*

Our friend of many years died in her home in Tübingen, Germany on Tuesday, June 7. She was 89 years old. We met Elisabeth with her dear husband, Jürgen Moltmann, in the early 1980s when they were travelling back and forth between Tübingen and Emory University where Jürgen was Visiting Distinguished Professor of Theology. Elisabeth was a prominent feminist theologian and a pioneering figure in German feminism.

Elisabeth and Jürgen visited the Open Door Community every time they came to Atlanta, and in the fall of 2003 we enjoyed several days as their guests in Tübingen. I took the photograph on the right on the porch of their home on a spectacular October day after we had enjoyed tea and a vigorous theological debate with them. (That particular day it was "original blessing versus original sin.") When we joked about their theological arguments, Jürgen always added, "Yes, but you can be sure, there is never any theological dialogue before breakfast!"

Her many books and articles available in English include *I Am My Body*, *Rediscovering Friendship* and *The Women Around Jesus*. But I especially treasure their collaborative works (among them, *Passion for God: Theology in Two Voices*, *God: His and Hers*, *Humanity in God*, and *Love: The Foundation of Hope*) and their ongoing expression of love and respect for the lifelong vocation of the particular lived theological enterprise which they shared through their 64-year marriage.

We and others around the world miss her sorely and give thanks to God for her great contributions of disciplined scholarship, unshakeable commitment to the marginalized, and her feisty loving friendship. *Above:* Elisabeth and Jürgen at their home.



Murphy Davis



# Inch by Inch



## Cloud of Witnesses: *We have lost many dear friends in recent months and note several here.*

**Daniel Berrigan, SJ**

Hundreds of thousands of words have been written about Father Dan Berrigan since he died on April 30. As one of the many thousands whose life has been so deeply influenced by Dan and his brother, Philip Berrigan, and sister-in-law, Liz McAllister, I am still unable to write coherently about what Dan has meant to me and my family and to the world. From the 1960s forward, we read about his and Phil's witness against war at Catonsville, MD; then we read his writings — articles, books, poetry, personal letters; then in the 1980s we met him, became personal friends, comrades and co-conspirators; and finally we mourn him and give humble thanks. In fact, Ed and I, along with baby Hannah, first met Dan at Mary House, the New York Catholic Worker house within a few days and weeks following the first Plowshares action at the King of Prussia nuclear plant (for which he again spent time in Federal lock-up).

I suppose that first meeting sort of summed up what we learned again and again from Dan: that for faith to have integrity as gospel witness and truth, the sacraments of the church are inseparable from the sacrament of resistance against the power of death and violence and the sacrament of the street.

For all Dan's amazing courage to step forward, draw the line in the sand, and say NO — eyeball to eyeball with the Beast — he was so quiet, so unassuming, so present and available to his many friends, and so very funny — as one who missed few opportunities to appreciate the strange ironies of modern life.

We will be reflecting on Dan's life for the rest of our lives: struggling to appropriate his courage and stubborn hope — struggling to discern how he would have responded to the ongoing savage developments of our technocratic war-mongering culture — struggling to imagine what wry observations or dry wit he would offer to help us take our situation more seriously and ourselves less seriously.

In the meantime, I commend to you the many articles available in the Catholic Worker press and on the internet (by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, journalists and resisters of all sorts) and the funeral Mass for Dan on YouTube. If you haven't met him, please do. But watch out! You will never be the same. *Above: front - Murphy Davis, Dan Berrigan, Catherine Morris; back - Eduard Loring, Jeff Dietrich at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker Retreat, 2003.*



### Bob Fitch

Unlike Elisabeth and Daniel, who will be remembered largely for their words, Bob Fitch will be remembered for the images he has offered to the world. Interestingly, Bob captured with his camera some of the most memorable photographs of Dan Berrigan; Bob and Dan died one day apart.

Bob taught himself to use a camera and became one of the finest photojournalists of our era. He wanted to help the growing Civil Rights movement in the Southern U.S. and found that he could contribute by taking pictures. He became the official photographer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Because he was always a part of the movement (rather than just a reporter or observer), he was deeply trusted and had more personal access to people like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. than almost any other photographer. His images of Dr. King and the movement will live as long as anyone remembers that time in history, and they will always help to tell the story of the courage and cost of the struggle.

Bob never left his home in the movement. He photographed Cesar Chavez of the United Farmworkers; Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement; and thousands of the ordinary people who made up so many of the social justice movements of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before his retirement, Bob's work was for a number of years with the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California.

We were privileged to call Bob a friend. He visited us at the Open Door Community and Ed and I visited in his home in Watsonville, California (*Above left: 2010*). Several of his original photographs grace the walls of our home and are among the prized possessions of our community.

Thankfully, with the encouragement of Dr. Clayborne Carson, the founding director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University, Stanford collected some 275,000 photographs and negatives from Bob in 2014. Bob told me about this on the phone not long after the transfer; but he quickly added that he would not pass the photographs along without an assurance that they would always be available to the people of the movement. Thank you, Bob.

### Dennis Hoffarth

When you live in a very old building, you always need a good carpenter and fix-it person. Dennis Hoffarth was what you might call "overqualified" for the job. He was credentialed as an engineer and he was a master carpenter, but Dennis always worked, not to earn a lot of money, but to do the work that he loved and that had meaning for him in a wider context of the struggle for justice. And so it was that he spent a number of years with us in the 1980s and into the '90s as a carpenter.

Dennis built beautiful bookcases for the community library. He moved walls and put in braces where the old edifice leaned and sagged. He turned a hallway into a small kitchen. And when we dug out the basement (it was only crawl space but became about 1200 square feet of storage and laundry and food prep space), he engineered the supports to keep the upper stories from falling in on us.

And he refused to own a car. Once he was given a truck, but he got rid of it and continued to get everywhere he was going on a bicycle. When he had to transport building materials, we would see him coming up Ponce de Leon with a little bike trailer and a long load of lumber!

But Dennis also became a part of the community. He spent many Christmas times and other holidays with us. When he finally left us it was to become Director of the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, of which he was a cofounder. It's hard to overstate what Dennis accomplished during his years at that work. Atlanta has made great strides from being a very bicycle unfriendly city to one that has created more and more space for bicyclists.

His close friend Henry Slack wrote us the news: "[Dennis] moved to an eco-focused community in Missouri with Sharon Bagatelle. It was there that he had seizures back in February, went to hospital in May, and hospice in July. His body was carried to its final resting place by bicycle trailer and is buried among a grove of oak trees there. The Atlanta City Council may name a section of bike lane on Peachtree Street in his honor."

Thanks be that Dennis pedaled through our lives and helped to make ours a more livable city.

*Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

## To the Glory of God: Black Jesus Discipleship on the Front Line in Hell *continued from page 1*

of women, elder-power and even seeds of a bishop to control the Holy Spirit and her wildness. Empire was on the way. War, killing, wealth, segregation, racism, sexism, killing queers all became part of The Way when the cross was traded in for the sword. In the unUSA there are pockets of Christians under persecution. For example, many Catholic Workers — [Jeff Dietrich] and [Dennis Apel] among them — sit in prison today for pleading that we stop the five or ten wars we are waging. The cost of discipleship is the same price today as it was when the Empire hung our Jewish Jesus on the Roman cross and the vultures gyrated overhead with the carrion call dripping from their broken beaks.

A second consequence of trusting the Black Jesus for salvation: you ain't gonna have a whole lot of money. If you do find a calling that pays you more than you need while working for the common good, the gospel mandates us to give it to the poor. Professional religious folk in the upper-class denominations and the Roman Catholic Church cannot keep from getting rich. The Coke machines and the American flag abound in such churches as they often do in dirt poor, all-white Southern Baptist Churches. The unity is the unUSA, not the gospel of Jesus and him Black.

Finally, a disciple must be in proximity to the poor. Oh, The Holy One doesn't want you sleeping under the bridge; and maybe your home is in a nice neighborhood. But the "be with" and "be among" and touch and listen to the poor as a part of our daily servanthood is necessary to keep hope alive and the Church from becoming a servant of the state, a tool of the military industrial complex.

Murphy Davis and I have been visiting in the prisons and witnessing against the death penalty in the sick state of Georgia for 40 years. We are not today who we were that first day we loaded up our rickety old van and headed in the heat to Reidsville State Prison Reservation. We have learned that there is a hell on earth and the Christian life is almost an impossibility to put into practice in hell. We have had fine teachers, not only professors but more to the point: confessors. Among our male teachers: Billy Mitchell, Billy Neal Moore, Jerome Bowden, Thony Lee Green, 102340. Warren McCleskey, Jack Alderman, Wiley Dobbs, Jose High, Tim McCorcadale, William Norris, Harold McCallister. Dan and Phil Berrigan, who as upper-class priests, reduced the distance all their adult lives long.

All of these men have common threads before prison and inside the hell holes. They are **poor**. Mostly without disciples in proximity to them. Very few disciples visit in the poor sections of the city or in prison. What could Jesus have meant in Matthew 25:37? "Visit those in prison." They are all under **persecution** by the state for the prison is designed to be a hell on earth. This is why many of us say "all prisoners are political prisoners." But if one in prison lives by the love ethic of nonviolence, sharing food and

stamps, washing feet, passing the peace with an embrace, treating the racist guards with respect, or taking sides with the marginalized in the cell block — then the persecuted will

understanding that grace is about life lived on earth wherever you are, not just a free pass to heaven.

So now I share with you a testimony of



Graham County, North Carolina by Murphy Davis

crush those walking the Way and talking the Word. Money will be demanded. Sometimes sexual "favors." That is rape. Along with an immense number of insults. To practice the discipleship faith is to be considered weak and not a real man. Most Christians live in fear or turn to fundamentalism and believe Jesus came to die for our sins and that is all. Prison is even more violent than plantation slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

Finally, **proximity**. In a dorm or cell one is never alone. One is thrown into hell in the midst of guards and prisoners who hate being there. Like living in poverty or a night shelter on the outside. Ever tried to build a home or have a life in hell? In proximity with others in an institution run by The Evil One? Neither have I.

The strongest disciples of the Black Jesus are the practitioners of faith, hope and love in the prisons of the unUSA.

In July I got an epistle from a prisoner whom I have been writing for years. I have visited him once. Murphy and I hosted the visit with the father and mother of the woman this man murdered for a few dollars to buy crack cocaine. Among our thousands of visits over the years, our time with Melvin was one of the most loving and kind. Following repentance and confession of sin, forgiveness and words of love, Murphy and I witnessed one of the great occasions of reconciliation between a murderer and the family of the murdered. Again: the parents and the one who killed their daughter. "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." Yes, Martin King, we have seen and experienced the Beloved Community in the hell hole of a southern prison.

A recent letter from Melvin gave witness to deep changes and new life born not in a barn but in a cage. A few years ago, Melvin was a pious fundamentalist and his letters were abstract about his experience, and tiresome about God. But he has stuck with us at the ODC and has climbed up the rough side of the mountain in his love of God and

the gospel life in prison: under persecution, poor, and in proximity to the oppressed and the Evil One.

Hello! Rev. Ed and Mrs. Murphy,

Glad to hear from you. Things are better here for a while thank God and for your prayers. (2 smily faces) I had been facing a Bully or should I say a gang member who doesn't like peace, trying to entice me to get out of character, but I stay the course. Been praying for him and still am. It's lighten up a little. I still get all the ugly name calls, but he's no longer up in my face. He's a very angry person but people say that's how he is, so it's something going on — on the inside that he's been carrying around for awhile. Don't get me wrong I was afraid the first time he pulled a shank or what is equal to a sharp object, but I answer it back with a soft answer, I guess he thought I was crazy 'cause I just stood there and looked at him and didn't say anything. I'm glad he couldn't read my mind I was scared! Hey! But God keeps us close to Him in the midst of a lot of things bigger than us. God loves you all and I do too!

Love,  
Melvin

"Blessed are the peacemakers. They shall be known as the daughters and sons of God."

"And now Faith, Hope and Love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." ✠

(Ed. note: Jeff Dierrich and Dennis Apel have been released from federal prison and each has returned to their Catholic Worker homes in Los Angeles and Guadalupe.)

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

## Resisting *continued from page 3*

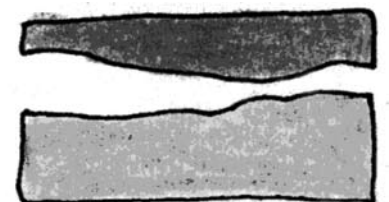
work in his series on "The Powers" for this insight that the biblical description of demonic possession is not an ancient relic but rather speaks to continuing human life, whether old or new.

I remember engaging the story of the man possessed by a demonic spirit in Luke 8:26-39. He was so possessed that his name has been lost — the NRSV calls him the Gerasene demoniac, having given up his humanity also. Jesus encounters him and asks his name, and the man replies, "Legion." Jesus finally heals him, but it is one of the most difficult healings in Jesus' ministry. The demons don't yield at first; they resist. As I read this story in light of the system of race, it seems easy to substitute the name "White" for "Legion," when we who are white are asked our names. Our perceptual apparatus and our view of ourselves and of others have been turned over to the power of race. We can be healed, as this man in Luke 8 was healed, but it won't be easy. It will be an ongoing struggle. This metaphor of demonic possession reminds us that the movement from being defined by the white Christ to being defined by the black Jesus will be a difficult journey.

The second metaphor is that of addiction — we who are classified as "white" are addicted to it. Just as addicts will do many strange things and will remain in deep denial about their addiction, so it is with many of us who cling to "whiteness" as one of our primary identities. Our addiction allows us to hold on to a certain view of the world, a view that is destructive to ourselves and to others, but a view that we maintain as strongly as we can. The key steps to move toward healing, in regard to addiction, is to come out of denial and to find a community of support. These steps are part of the process in moving toward healing in regard to our captivity to race as white people.

Both of these metaphors point to the depths of our captivity to race and to the white Christ, and they both call out to us for the need for movement on our part: coming out of denial and seeking community support. They also point to a fundamental truth about this second step on the road to recovery. The power of race is highly resistant to change, and thus we must be ready to acknowledge our captivity and to be ready to resist the wiles of the demonic and addictive power of race. This is no journey for the faint-hearted; it requires courage and discipline and endurance. Yet, as the Black Jesus once taught us, one of our great assets will be to develop the quality of the next step on the road to recovery: resilience. ✠

*Nibs Stroupe is the pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur and a longtime friend of the Open Door Community.*



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**Preaching With Our Feet** *continued from page 1*

registered guests and assigned rooms, and developed community governance, including an earnest Executive Committee. Both PUJ and people from the streets performed miracles of cooperation across lines of race and class. As John Scruggs pointed out, "When you're out on the street, you've got to share with everybody because they're going to share with you. That's the code."

Now the media came, and in great numbers, and Atlanta was embarrassed anew by the Imperial. Finally, the Mayor's office had to negotiate with the occupiers. Nelson Mandela was coming to town and a police raid on 100 homeless people, many of them people of color, would smear the reputation of Atlanta as the "City of Civil Rights."

So soon-to-be-mayor Shirley Jackson negotiated with the Welcome House Executive Committee, composed of people who had neither power nor experience.

One feels the sorrow of PUJ when they learned that the Executive Committee accepted weak promises of immediate jobs and emergency housing and agreed to leave the hotel. Jackson played her cards well, and her victory was a "growing up" moment for those who had worked all their lives to walk with those without power. To paraphrase Murphy Davis, "People who have nothing will take anything." Those from PUJ who refused to leave were arrested, but out of sight of the press, again disappointing those who had hoped that preaching with their feet would cause them to be heard.

Yes, a book can be both tragic and hopeful. The protest broke the chains of silence surrounding the homeless citizens of Atlanta, but the recriminations and feelings of failure about the action, especially by those in PUJ, were palpable and heart-sorrowing. But the action was born in courage and nourished by community. It cast a strong beam of media light on poverty in the midst of affluence. In the end, even though it took years, powerful business and government leaders were forced to begin to provide affordable housing for those in need.

And the Imperial Hotel itself? It became an affordable housing residence, developed first by a nonprofit called Progressive Redevelopment and then by Columbia Residential and National Church Residences. Beautifully renovated, the building reopened in 2014 with 90 LEED Gold-certified units for Atlanta residents in need of permanent supportive housing.

The lessons learned in *Raising Our Voices* are myriad, but surely one of them has to be that hope exists this side of the grave and that being a "fool for Christ" and acting in ways some consider unacceptable brings home the hope of the Gospel. ✠

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

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Calvin Kimbrough

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# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Saints at the Open Door,

Some weeks ago I read with compassion your news about the plans to close the Open Door, and open new doors. To embrace your words, I also was heartbroken as I read about your plans. Several weeks have passed since that reading. Another issue of *Hospitality* has arrived. I read it last week. Today I picked up the May-June issue to read your letter again, and again I visited the sadness and loss rooms in my soul. It is far too easy to overstay in those places.

After rereading your news, I turned the page and realized I had not read the whole issue. I then read Catherine Meeks's essay, "Holding to the Difficult." Her perspective is resonant for me. This morning I insisted that my twelve-year-old hike for 10 miles with his Boy Scout troop, an activity he did not want to do, because he would have preferred an unscripted day filled with less demanding content. As I age, life itself gets more difficult, and holding to the difficult is hard. Harder still, is training up a child to do the hard thing. The cultural tsunami flows in the opposite direction.

Difficulties pertaining to this letter: First, writing it is difficult for a variety of reasons. (energy, effort, focus) Second, feeling the loss, the disappointment, the thanksgiving, the hopefulness—feeling is demanding and difficult. While I have been blessed to avoid substance addiction, I can easily medicate with the rabbit hole of the internet, the housework, the paperwork, the "work work" and a variety of other distractions that numb feeling. Third, I am a more anxious person, and perceive time as short, which often shuts down thought and action. Truly today I am trying to hold to the difficult and write you to say: Thank you. Your life choices, your work, your words, your acts of defiance, kindness and [critique of] entitlement have challenged and deepened me. You have made a difference in countless lives, mine among them. Thank you for each and every 60-minute second of doing the difficult.

Our community will dim without the light you have shone through the windows of 910. I believe that as the sky is darker with the death of a star, it is brighter with the birth of a new star. The work will continue, and I am curious about what good work will be sowed anew from the countless seeds you all, in ways large and small, have sown.

In the meantime, my thanks again. I wish you improved health, good choices and the buoyancy that purpose and love create.

May the Lord bless and keep you,  
Martha Clinkscales  
Decatur, Georgia

Dear Ed,

Each day I pray for you and Murphy, and I know you are winding down in Atlanta, preparing to move to Baltimore. It is good that you will be active in your ministry in Maryland.

The far right and flag worshippers are having fits over Colin Kaepernick's sitting down while the national anthem was played. He was protesting the way Black people are treated in America. Jackie Robinson would not salute the flag or stand while the national anthem was played. He was a witness.

I can use a case of *The Cry of the Poor*. I sent a copy to Dr. William Barber of Goldsboro, NC, who spoke at the National Democratic Convention. I sent a copy to Drew Smith of PA and Obery Hendricks of NY. I met some men from Atlanta, and I shared the book with them. I met a driver of a shuttle bus, and we had a good conversation, and he asked me if I knew about James Cone, and I told him about the books he has written and gave him a copy of your book. I find opportunities to share the book all the time.

Blessings,  
Wendell Wentz  
Rockwall, Texas

Friends,

We are deeply affected to hear that the work of the Open Door will change form, and that the elders will disperse in the coming months. Vancouver, Nashville and Baltimore will soon hear the voices of the missionaries of justice and hope sent out from Atlanta. We have admired and been blessed continuously by your unfaltering compassion and courage as a community of faith.

The chapters of your work follow Saint Francis and Dorothy Day with real beauty and power. Who can ever know in advance what will follow from such noble, kind, faithful and tenacious ministries?

God grant all of you the dreams and visions,  
Clay Oglesbee  
Northfield, Minnesota

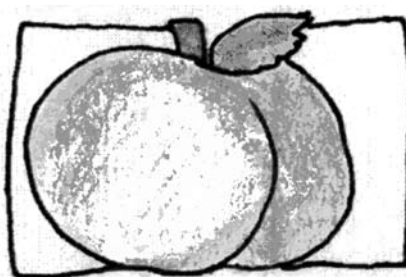
Dear Friends,

I am always touched by all the outreach you and Catholic Worker Communities do, as I read in your paper that I receive regularly. Please pray for vocations for our community to be able to reach out to more people in our corner of the U.S.

United in prayers,  
S. Renata Camenzind and all the Sisters  
Community of the Resurrection  
Casco, Maine

God bless you all Ed, Murphy and the volunteers and staff for the work you have done for the Lord. Your kindness and love represent what our faith lives upon. You have "been to the mountain top."

God Bless,  
Jerry Winfield  
James Island, South Carolina



Becca Conrad

Bob and I were sorry to hear about the end of an era! The Open Door has always been a beacon for us, pointing to a commitment to peace and justice. However, the beacon will still shine because of the influence you have had in so many lives and churches.

But I know you will receive many letters of praise and thankfulness, so I will not go on and on in that vein. I just want you to know how much you have meant to us personally as friends and partners in the life of the beloved community God has asked us to establish on this earth. Sometimes it seems that community is far off, but glimpses of it keep us going.

Memories of the Open Door that I love: the first Friday I was in charge of the lunch when two men got in a fistfight at the table and I used my fourth-grade teacher's voice to scold them into sitting down and behaving. Ralph, who always had the coffee ready when I arrived. The time we were staying at the house while you all went to Dayspring, and Bob scared one of the resident partners to death when he swept the Scrabble board to the floor because I was winning. I can't remember that lovely man's name, but he was a gentle giant as long as he could find nothing to drink. I remember singing "Let the Circle Be Unbroken" to the accompaniment of Murphy's guitar.

Lots of love,  
Phoebe and Bob Smith  
St. Johns, Florida

Dear Dick and Gladys,

We do not know each other, but I was with you in the Oberlin class of 1954. I entered in the class of '53.

I was very sad to read the latest issue of *Hospitality* and to learn of the direction the Open Door Community has to take. I've been receiving *Hospitality* for decades, for my older sister was considering going there. It's lucky for you that she didn't; she was a very difficult person, a survivor of childhood encephalitis, and she wore out and turned against everyone who tried to help her. But her heart was in the right place.

I was a militant atheist at Oberlin, and a socialist. My then husband, Tim Wohlforth, and I founded the Eugene V. Debs Club. I lived at Pyle Inn Co-op, where I met Tim.

Now, and for close to 40 years, I've been a nun in a Benedictine community; first at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, CT, and most of the time here at Our Lady of the Rock. You will be moving to the southern part of the state, so I just want you to know that when you get settled in Vancouver I'd love to have you come and visit us here. Our community is in exactly the same position as yours. We are seven, between the ages of 70 and 89. We are a contemplative community, focusing on corporate prayer (the Divine Office), farming and hospitality. We are in the same position as you: needing more and more help, declining health, not able to do all that we used to do; no younger people wanting to become permanent members of the community, so no continuity of leadership. We always have one to three young people as interns. Most of them are wonderful; but for some reason I don't understand they don't want to commit themselves to a Catholic contemplative farming community. They want to get married and become farmers, for the most part. Regina Laudis and the Seattle Archbishop, Peter Sartain, want this place and this community to have a future, and they are beginning to help us attract vocations and help with their formation. So we'll see what the Lord wants for us.

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker were a huge influence in drawing me to the Catholic Church. They led me to see how radical it is to try to live as Jesus wants us to live. So I am still a radical. At first I seriously considered a Catholic Worker kind of life, but it became clear that I was called to the contemplative life. But be assured, there is plenty of Martha in our lives!

Your community and ours differ in so many ways, but we both serve the same Lord. I deeply admire the Open Door and all the things you do. I am amazed, in fact. I keep you always in my prayers, and especially now, that all your works of mercy may continue in one form or another.

In Christ,  
Mother Felicitas, OSB  
Shaw Island, Washington

Murphy & Ed,

Saw your article about the house in the recent newsletter. The community and people of Atlanta, along with many of us around the country, owe you a big debt and enormous gratitude. Had to laugh about the line of serving "only" 300 homeless people at a dinner.

Brick and mortar were never the goals — the spirit will last for decades to come.

Much peace,  
Dick Dieter and Maggie Loudan  
Silver Spring, Maryland

*Attorney Dick Dieter and Maggie Loudan were the founders in 1977 of the Alderson (West Virginia) Hospitality House which provides lodging and friendship for visitors at the Alderson Federal Women's Prison. In 1990, Dick founded the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, DC, an indispensable source for all who would learn about the law and practice of the death penalty in America.*

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Murphy,

I was saddened to hear that the Open Door is closing. What is remarkable is not that an era is coming to an end, but that you and your cohorts have maintained this exemplary ministry for as long as you have. I cannot imagine the emotional stress that dealing with these issues and these people in need has placed on you for thirty-five years. Add in the health problems you have faced and overcome, and I want to express my appreciation for this long and near-incredible act of Christian witness.

I hope you don't view this ending as a failure in any sense. The essence of the Christian faith as I understand it, is willingness to give up one's life for one's friends. As true as this is for individuals, I believe this must also be true for Christian institutions as well. The institutional mindset is not to give up its life but to stay alive at almost any cost. Yet there comes a time when old institutions — ministries — should be willing to call it quits in order for new ministries to be born.

None of us knows what the new ministries, the new Church, will look like. We are called to go looking for them, even when we have reached the traditional age of retirement, and we will know them when we see them. I am waiting with great interest to see what you will be doing next.

As for me, I retired in 2006 [as Pastor of the Farmville, VA Presbyterian Church] and we are still in Farmville. Since retiring I have been doing interim pastorates nearby, which has been hugely satisfying.

Best wishes to you and all at 910,  
Joseph C. McCutchen  
Farmville, Virginia

Hello Rev. Ed and Rev. Murphy,

Well we just got another 21-day lockdown. Six Mexicans stabbed three Blacks really bad. Had a helicopter come to rush them to the hospital. It's getting wild again, maybe it will slow down when it gets a little colder. I know heat plays a role in people's behavior some times. I'm doing okay, just wanted to let you all know God is on your side. They are supposed to be giving us little JPay electronic notepads. We can email people; check out the website. I've emailed you all two letters, but it's something the outside party has to do first.

God loves you all; be sweet and enjoy life,  
A Prisoner of Georgia

Dear Murphy Davis,

What a ray of hope you bring to God's people! Thanks for sharing the ups and downs of John Wayne Conner. Too often we "give up" while you stick with it to the end. And really 'tis not the end, for anyone reading or hearing this story will have new hope about the ups and downs they may be coping with. Never know how a word, smile, or listening may be helping some sinking soul.

I pray God's love and hope forever sustains you and all of the group. New hope to you with every sunrise in the East! At 95 I'm still full of hope!

Sr. Dorothy Droessler,  
School Sisters of St. Francis  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Dear Followers of Christ,

It was so heartbreaking to read your letter in *Hospitality*. I'm really sorry the Open Door is closing, but do understand your need to do so. Circumstances call for change in our lives.

I hope to visit and meet you wonderful people before you leave there.

With gratitude for all you are and do,  
Sr. Maureen Nolan  
L'Arche Community  
Mobile, Alabama

Dear Ed,

How are you? I have just returned to the states after being in South Africa and it is remarkable to me how the race issues in both nations parallel each other (albeit in South Africa the violence is extreme). I wonder what will happen with these "lives matter" movements. I am skeptical because I think neither side knows just how much sacrifice is necessary for collective freedom. As a Black woman in the world in 2016, I feel that I have nothing to lose and yet maybe everything to lose. So why not stand up?

With love,  
Maryam Benganga  
New York, New York

Thank you for your letter telling me about your move to Baltimore. Thank you also for the two books, which I am finding stimulating. I give thanks to God for your ministry at the Open Door. I am grateful you will continue the paper as I find it challenging and moving.

I have come to a time of transition also, and moved to Monticello, GA to live with my daughter. I miss Atlanta, of course, but am happy to be here.

You will be in my prayers as you make this transition.

Peace,  
Belle Miller McMaster  
Monticello, Georgia

Dear Friends, Murphy and Ed,

All institutions have a beginning, then flourish, and then "die." Yours (and our Monastery) as well. You filled a serious gap in the Christian ministries of Atlanta for many years. Now it is time to move on. I *know* Baltimore will be the beneficiary of your presence and surely you will make your Christian presence felt there. Fortunately, we can keep in contact by email. So please keep me informed.

Thank you soooo much for your manifold Gospel activities all these years in Atlanta.

With love and gratitude,  
Fr. Tom Francis  
Monastery of the Holy Spirit  
Conyers, Georgia

Hang in there, as you have for 35 years. Hope your move to Baltimore gives you some rest and much peace.

In 1990 when I was a summer intern at the LACW, Murphy came and spoke of your work and I was so impressed with your death row ministry. We have high hopes for Prop 62 — death penalty abolition passing in November in California.

Much love,  
Patty Carmody  
Saugus, California

## poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

## Good Bones

Life is short, though I keep this from my children.  
Life is short, and I've shortened mine  
in a thousand delicious, ill-advised ways,  
a thousand deliciously ill-advised ways  
I'll keep from my children. The world is at least  
fifty percent terrible, and that's a conservative  
estimate, though I keep this from my children.  
For every bird there is a stone thrown at a bird.  
For every loved child, a child broken, bagged,  
sunk in a lake. Life is short and the world  
is at least half terrible, and for every kind  
stranger, there is one who would break you,  
though I keep this from my children. I am trying  
to sell them the world. Any decent realtor,  
walking you through a real shithole, chirps on  
about good bones: This place could be beautiful,  
right? You could make this place beautiful.

— Maggie Smith

*Maggie Smith is a poet and the author of Lamp of the Body (2005), The Well Speaks of Its Own Poison (2015), and of the forthcoming collection Weep Up. This poem, "Good Bones", has been shared widely in the wake of the Orlando massacre.*

*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](mailto:hospitalitypoetrycorner@gmail.com).



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Coffee & Sandwiches:** Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.  
**Soup Kitchen:** Wednesday, 9 a.m.  
**Women’s Showers:** Tuesday, 11 a.m.  
**Men’s Showers:** Wednesday, 9 a.m.  
**Harriet Tubman Foot Care Clinic:** Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
**Public Restroom:** Monday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.,  
Tuesday - Thursday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m. - 2 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  
**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!

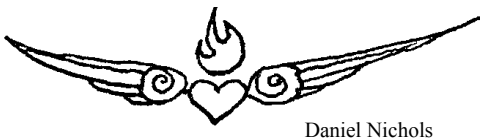
We gather for worship and Eucharist at 4 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.  
If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 404.874.9652 -ext 101.  
Please visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

October 2, 9, 16, and 23  
4 p.m. Worship at 910  
We will celebrate Eucharist at the dinner table. Please join us.

October 30  
4 p.m. Worship at 910  
Bishop Robert Wright preaching



## Clarification Meetings at the Open Door



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and  
scheduled topics, please call  
404.874.9652  
or visit  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

## Medical Needs List

### Open Door Medical Cart

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

### blankets



We need blankets for  
our friends that are  
washable and can be  
dried “hot.”

**Do you have a garden?** Can you share some fresh produce for the Open Door Welcome Table? *Thank you!*

### Living Needs

- ☐Your prayers for the  
Open Door Community
- ☐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

### Food Needs

- ☐fresh fruits &  
vegetables
- ☐hams & turkeys
- ☐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
- ☐Abolition of the  
Death Penalty