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

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August 2012

## Our Living, Loving, Good Shepherd God

By Connie Bonner

*Connie Bonner is the Pastor of the United Reformed Church in Barrhead, Scotland. She and her husband, Clive, have been beloved members of our extended community since she visited us while a theology student at Cambridge University in 2000. She preached this sermon during a recent visit to the Open Door.*

### Ezekiel 34:7-15:

*Now, you shepherds, listen to what I, the Lord, am telling you. As surely as I am the living God, you had better listen to me.*

*My sheep have been attacked by wild animals that killed and ate them because there was no shepherd. My shepherds did not try to find the sheep. They were taking care of themselves and not the sheep. So listen to me, you shepherds. I, the Sovereign Lord, declare that I am your enemy. I will take my sheep away from you and never again let you be their shepherds; never again will I let you take care only of yourselves. I will rescue my sheep from you and not let you eat them.*

*I, the Sovereign Lord, tell you that I myself will look for my sheep and take care of them, in the same way as shepherds take care of their sheep that were scattered and are brought together again. I will bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark, disastrous day. I will take them out of foreign countries, gather them together, and bring them back to their own land. I will lead them back to the mountains and the streams of Israel and will feed them in pleasant pastures. I will let them graze in safety in the mountain meadows and the valleys and in all the green pastures of the land. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will find them a place to rest.*

*I, the Sovereign Lord, have spoken.*

At my church in Annan, Scotland, a small town on the west coast of the Solway Firth, we lived through some distressing times. In quick succession there were two murders and several suicides of young people, all drug-related, which left the community stunned and violated.

At the churches' council, I heard of a group who were seeking a meeting place to share community news. I remembered another group from my training church that linked social services with teams of volunteers in the local villages. And I remembered our amazing table fellowship here at the Open Door. I sat and thought and prayed. I listened for God's word. What could I do — no, what could the people in my church do — no, what could the people in our churches do to meet the pain and distress all around?

We are called to work from the house of love. We couldn't allow this dark period of our town's history to silence all talk and chatter. I was tired of people slinking away early



Brian Kavanagh

from meetings, tired of people being fearful of walking home nights. I was supposed to shepherd these folk in their wild place. And I listened and asked people, "What are we good at here in this United Reformed Church?" Not much, they said. We're good at coffee mornings. We make good soup, and we can talk for Scotland. And "Soup and Chat" was born.

I knew from being married to a police officer — one who worked all his time without a gun — that rarely are the "bobbies on the beat" invited to meet with other agencies for support once the initial messy situation is cleared up. But they and the ambulance crews and the local doctors have stresses and ugliness to work through in murder cases. So the guest list for our free Soup and Chat lunches included a huge variety of local officials, health care workers, teachers, local clergy, police, fire and ambulance workers, and we created a safe drop-in space, a free lunch in our church hall, where news and views could be exchanged with a minimum of formality.

To our amazement it worked, and for a couple of years we facilitated a new beginning for our town. It was a small thing to do, but we did it well. A chink of light opened as we broke bread, dipped soup and shared information, news and ideas to help the hurting ones unpick the tangles of bureaucracy, and for a small space we felt the restoration of the pulse of life that our Good Shepherd promises us.

As there became less need for the Soup and Chat group, a casual remark — that there were no homeless in Annan

## Democracy and Capitalism A Troubled Pair

By Ronald E. Santoni

Recent political wrangling and madness in Washington, together with deteriorating conditions in our society, have led me to wonder (1) whether we are living in a democracy, and (2) whether we should retain any satisfaction — not to mention pride — in accommodating ourselves to the economic system of capitalism. I confess these concerns because, like many others, I feel sick at heart over what has been happening.

First, democracy. We pridefully proclaim it as ours because, we say, every citizen over the age of 18 is free to vote, and that meets democracy's essential condition. But do we overlook those who, by sheer circumstance — such as poverty, homelessness or imprisonment — are denied the right to vote? Or those who are, or predictably will be, turned away from voting booths because, as victims of right-wing ideologues, they cannot furnish what conniving politicians have deemed to be "proper" or "adequate" identification? Pity the poor immigrant or Black American — still outsiders in the "land of liberty" — who, looking different, are subjected to the humiliation of protracted security checks and rechecks! Is this compatible with democracy's fervent cry of freedom, equality and justice? And where is hospitality?

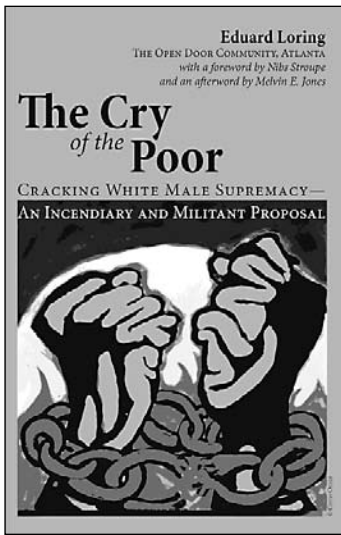
Next, consider another requirement of democracy: dialogue. Dialogue requires free and genuine exchange of ideas in the public sphere, and careful listening to and consideration of the views of others. Where is that today, when non-partisanship is viewed as weakness and members of the majority party sign a pledge never to vote for a tax increase — especially on the rich or super-rich — because such a vote may enhance President Obama's chance for re-election?

Such an approach hardly constitutes the reasonable disagreement or rational argument that democracy demands. Nor does it reflect equality, reciprocity or a concern for the commonweal at large.

In this regard, think also of the religious fundamentalism that now pervades the airwaves, television channels, religious proclamations, political discourse and so on. In its claim to undebatable or incontestable truths, in its willingness to sacrifice persons to unethical dogma, in its disregard for women's health, fundamentalism appears to ignore, even reject, the Enlightenment and the principles of Western democracy that grew out of it. (Rick Santorum is a ghost of the Middle Ages!) Once again, reasoned thought and debate seem to be suspended, and as a consequence, democracy is blemished and obfuscated. Shibboleths replace thought.

Our Living, Loving, continued on page 10

Democracy and Capitalism continued on page 8



## The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy —  
An Incendiary and Militant Proposal

**By Eduard Loring**

Open Door Community Press  
99 pages  
paperback  
\$10.00 suggested donation

*The genius of Loring's book is that it demonstrates the destructive lusts of greed and power that rage like a wildfire burning out of control, destroying everything in their path. Loring is crying for change — from the new world order to a new, inclusive social order with equality and justice for all.*  
— **Marcus Wellons**, #314289,  
Georgia death row

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## Bus Stop

The bus stop beckons.  
But not to wait for a ride;  
not to wait for a friend;  
not to wait for my mother,  
my father,  
my brother,  
my husband (long gone),  
or my son on his way home from school,  
like it used to be,  
so many,  
too many,  
years ago.

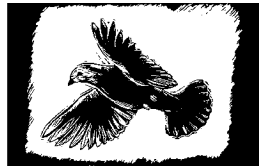
No, not any more,  
now ... it's different;  
it calls but for a whole new reason.  
A reason much more grim,  
a reason I wish was not so.  
But it calls, and I answer,  
wondering if one day  
I will no longer have to answer,  
that one lonely call,  
the call to this prison without walls,  
without bars,  
that restrains me just the same  
as the sweltering death camp called death row  
and the internment camps called  
immigrant detention centers.

Reluctantly  
I say "yes,"  
I will sleep here tonight,  
but not tomorrow.  
Knowing full well  
I will.  
As I did the night before  
and the night before that.  
"So it goes."

*Jason Ebinger is a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.*

*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).*

## poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

I try to convince myself that I can ignore  
this unfortunate reality,  
just as so many others do  
as they pass my battered body  
at 40, 50, 60 miles per hour.

Cigarette butts and empty cups,  
wet newspaper and a soiled diaper.  
This is my house,  
no, not my home.  
This is my shelter,  
not my sanctuary.  
I lie here, lifeless,  
my body only bruised, it will heal.  
My socks only wet, they will dry.  
My shirt only ripped, I can find a new one.  
But My Spirit ...  
My Soul ...  
My Dignity ...

I open my eyes,  
longingly,  
As sirens burst out of the night,  
into the light,  
into my life,  
then on to the next.  
I close them tight.  
Disappointed.

Where is my siren?  
When will they come for me?  
To save me or condemn me,  
at least  
to acknowledge me.

— **Jason Ebinger**

# 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.

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

### Open Door Community

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Calvin Kimbrough

*Flowers from Dayspring Farm brighten up  
our serving tables during the summer months.*

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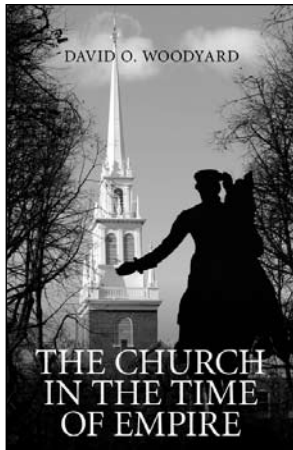
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# Lifting Up the Church as Resistance to Empire

## The Church in the Time of Empire

By David O. Woodyard

John Hunt Publishing  
167 pages



Reviewed by Nibs Stroupe

I am a child of the segregated South. I grew up with belief in the Lost Cause and in white supremacy, and I was taught these beliefs by good and decent white people.

One of the great ironies of white Southern heritage is that, although we were defeated by the United States in the Civil War, we have been staunch defenders and chief advocates of the other wars fought by the United States. Senator William Fulbright of my home state of Arkansas and Senator Albert Gore Sr. from my birth state of Tennessee were notable exceptions to this in relation to the Vietnam War, but for the most part, we white Southerners have been prime cheerleaders for the expansionist energies of the United States.

I have rejected much of my white Southern heritage, but I have found myself also retaining some of it, in that I find myself reluctant to speak of the United States as an empire. I am too ingrained with the ideas of equality and democracy in our American heritage. But Denison University theology professor David Woodyard, in his new book “The Church in the Time of Empire,” makes a convincing case that we are living in the age of American Empire.

It’s not just the fact that we are the only superpower left. It is the depth and breadth of American political, economic and military influence that cannot be denied. The ignominy of Iraq and the stalemate of Afghanistan notwithstanding, we live in the heart of an empire. Woodyard notes that most

Americans dismiss talk of an American Empire, but he lays out indisputable evidence for the claim.

He points out that empires have the capacity to assert themselves in the affairs of other nations and peoples, and that empires seek to suppress dissent with labels such as “traitor” and “unpatriotic.” He notes that we believe we have the right to assert our influence anywhere in the world. The question for empire is not “if” but “when.” And he points out that we fend off accusations of imperial qualities by citing “American exceptionalism,” a relatively new phrase in our political and national discourse, but one whose roots are in John Winthrop’s 1620 sermon lifting up “New England” as a city on a hill. And that brings us to the most dangerous part of American imperial discourse: the idea that we are the “new Israel,” God’s people chosen to deliver market capitalism to all peoples of the world.

What difference does it make to call us an empire? We know that we’re the only superpower, but we also believe that our motives are benevolent, our aspirations noble, and that we have the capacity to do great things for the world. Here Woodyard asks us to examine our national and international life, and in so doing we will find that we look a lot like the powerful empires that have dotted human history, empires whose only goal was domination.

In our minds, he writes, our power is seen as “innocent and necessary and absolute” (page 24), our national life is not subject to ambiguity, and many other national entities are often seen as deprived and maybe even depraved. The interests of America are seen as aligned with the purposes of God (page 34). In all of these, Woodyard argues that we have reached a tipping point where we have lost, or are losing, our ability to think critically about our nation, that we have turned ourselves over to the necessity and worldview of empire and domination, both externally and internally.

### Proclaiming an Alternative Reality

Woodyard lifts up the life of the church as one of the few institutions that may be able to offer resistance to empire. The church can offer an alternative view of reality, a view that enables us to see beyond and through the American Empire. As he notes, the church has been just as susceptible as others

to the claims of empire. American flags in so many sanctuaries; the feeble witness of the church in response to the Persian Gulf War, the Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan; the lack of critical discourse on the economic issues of our time; the “individualizing” of Christianity; the wrapping of rapacious greed in the shroud of Jesus — all of these and many other developments should give us pause whenever we hear someone lift up the American church as an alternative voice to empire.

Yet Woodyard provides ample evidence not only of the necessity of this but also the possibility of doing this — we as a church do have it in us! Many foundations of our faith and life give us hope.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus were political and politicizing events. This can be strange and disturbing to American Christian ears, where the slaveholders’ captivity of the Gospel has conditioned us to believe that Christianity is only about individuals getting into heaven. Woodyard emphasizes that the message of the early church was based on the life and teachings of Jesus, seeking to build community and to locate the authenticity of the people of God in “an environment saturated by the interests of the poor” (page 52). In such an environment, Jesus welcomed those from the margins and empowered them to find life in a poisonous atmosphere dominated by empire — at that time Roman.

The crucifixion then becomes not a Jewish rejection of Jesus but rather the empire’s seeking to crush this life-giving power of God. Given the history of virulent anti-Semitism within Christianity, it cannot be said often enough: the Jews didn’t kill Jesus, the Roman Empire did. The status of empire is a central part of Woodyard’s profound thesis that empire will always seek to crush the life-giving power of God, whether it is with a cross, with drones that deal death from the sky, in the privatization of life, or in providing mind-numbing and soul-searing entertainment.

In this context, the resurrection becomes a stunning political event in which God proclaims ultimate power over empire and the death that undergirds it. The resurrection proclaims an alternative reality, an alternative view of life

**Lifting Up the Church** *continued on page 8*

# Learning From David Woodyard, Learning From the Open Door

By Ashley Goff

On a Sunday in August 1994, I opened the front door to 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue for the first time. I crossed the threshold and was greeted by an effigy of a homeless man. I fixated on the figure, then glanced at myself in the large mirror on the wall behind him.

I walked up the steps and my eyes focused on a door covered with bumper stickers: “Poverty Is Violence,” “Feminism Spoken Here,” “No Justice, No Peace.” I turned the corner, walked into the worship space and was taken by the palpable, subversive energy of the room.

My first worship at the Open Door Community was a liminal moment in my life, a moment that has brought me to consider David Woodyard’s new book, “The Church in the Time of Empire,” in the light of my experience. Dr. Woodyard was my theology professor at Denison University in Ohio, and he continues to be a pastoral, prophetic and sacred presence in my life.

In his latest book, Dr. Woodyard proclaims that both empire and church define reality. The empire, he explains, has one way of defining reality and the church another. Public and hidden transcripts tell contesting stories about reality.

Empire is the public transcript. It aspires to remake the

world after its image of social, political and economic reality; it seeks, as Woodyard writes, to “control the dominant order.” Reality is based on the privileges and powers of the dominant order.

Church is the hidden transcript, or the subversive one, the reality to embrace various forms of resistance. Hidden transcripts, Woodyard maintains, “aspire to live God’s reality,” and the hidden transcript reveals that “the authentic church exists in an environment saturated by the interests of the poor.”

These public and hidden transcripts give voice to my own story and ministry of loyalty, extraction and resistance to empire.

My growing up in the church mirrored the privileges of my community in Upper Arlington, Ohio: white, bourgeois and suburban. Its ecclesiastical, homogenous nature sustained a Christian theology that endorsed the prevailing powers and all that was easy to present in polite and polished company. There was no talk of the poor or homeless. It was, in short, a reflection of the reality that Woodyard refers to as empire.

Woodyard and his colleagues in the Denison Department of Religion had a different take. They preached and taught liberation theology and its various contextual expressions through Black, feminist, Asian and earth-honoring

experiences. There, in my first Christian Ethics class, I discovered feminist methodology deconstructing oppression and constructing the Commonwealth of God.

In essence, I was learning that, as Woodyard puts it in the book, “theology is contextual language, defined by the human situation that gave birth to it,” and that liberation ethics and theology are relentlessly situational. As I situated God in the reality of oppression, I began to unlock my own story of privilege and preservation and began to envision myself in a new way, as a moral agent living with what Woodyard calls “newness and endless possibilities.”

As I look back, that Christian Ethics class was my first moment of extraction from empire. It was teaching me how to question what I had always known to be true.

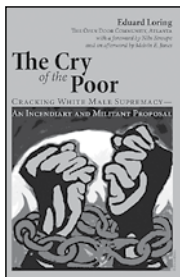
### ‘Ruined for Life’

I found this new way of thinking and moral agency life-giving and invigorating. But extraction from empire was not without consequences for me. At Denison I began a very painful process of disengaging from a life I had always known. I began re-evaluating family relationships and loyalty to my home and church community.

**Learning From** *continued on page 9*



# The Open Door Community Press Books



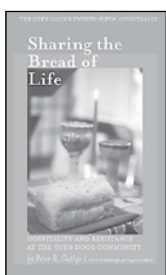
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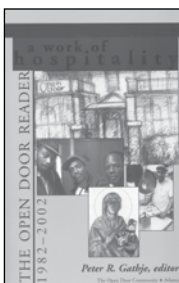
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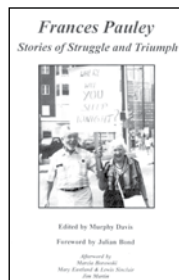
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## Moving Toward Abolition

# Georgia's 'Justice' System Murder by Bureaucrats



By **Mary Catherine Johnson**

Last month I wrote about the elation I felt following the commutation of Daniel Greene's death sentence to life without parole, and I now write with a similar feeling of hope and gratitude in my heart. Today, the 24th day of July, 2012, Warren Lee Hill is alive. Alleluia!

Yesterday the Georgia Supreme Court unanimously granted a stay of execution to Warren, just hours before his scheduled murder. He had already eaten what he thought would be his final meal.

From the moment Warren's death warrant was issued on July 6, outpourings of support for clemency came from across the globe. The New York Times editorial page, the NAACP, Amnesty International and former President Jimmy Carter, among others, issued appeals for mercy based on Warren's mental retardation, with an IQ of 70. But the Georgia court did not issue the stay for that reason. Rather, the court asked for briefs from attorneys as to whether the Georgia Department of Corrections' recent decision to switch its lethal-injection process from three drugs to one violates the state's Administrative Procedure Act, which requires a 30-day public comment period before a change in procedure is allowed. I am painfully aware that my joyful state of mind at the moment could have easily gone the other way, with July 24 instead bringing more shame and embarrassment to my home state of Georgia for its abominable legal practices.

Laudably, in 1988 Georgia became the first state to outlaw executions of the mentally retarded, following public outrage surrounding the 1986 electrocution of Jerome

([www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com)), recently wrote: "The most dangerous force in the industrialized world does not come from those who wield radical creeds, whether Islamic radicalism or Christian fundamentalism, but from legions of faceless bureaucrats who claw their way up layered corporate and governmental machines. They serve any system that meets their pathetic quota of needs."

When I read this I immediately thought of everyone involved in the execution process in Georgia, from the police to the district attorneys to the juries to the prison staff. If Warren's execution had gone forward, it would have come to fruition due to the complicity of many bureaucrats throughout our state.

## Georgia's 'Dr. Death'

Chief among them is Dr. Carlo A. Musso, the state's execution medical consultant, who is a member in good standing of the Medical Association of Georgia, an affiliate of the American Medical Association. Musso claims to be against capital punishment, taking part in executions only to ensure that the procedure is done right, in the most humane way possible — a rationalization that rings hollow in light of doctors' oath to "do no harm," as well as the \$18,000-per-execution fee that his services command.

In response to Warren Hill's impending execution, Dr. Ford Vox issued a scathing critique on The Atlantic Web site, calling Musso and MAG to account. Vox asks the essential question of why MAG maintains Musso as a member, when it adopted the AMA's ethics policy forbidding members to participate in executions in 2005, the same year Musso



Calvin Kimbrough

**David Christian** says "NOT IN MY NAME!" at a rally for the life of Warren Hill and the abolition of the death penalty.

Bowden, whose IQ was variously measured at 59 and 65. The U.S. Supreme Court did not follow until four years later, banning the execution of those with intellectual disability because their unique disability places them at "special risk of wrongful execution." But the high court left the standards for determining intellectual disability to the states, and that's where Georgia essentially negated its own groundbreaking law, becoming the only state in the country to impose the heaviest legal burden of proof of mental retardation: "beyond a reasonable doubt." Legal experts acknowledge that this is a nearly impossible obstacle to clear. It leaves those who are sentenced to death in Georgia unnecessarily limited recourse if they are mentally retarded. If Warren Hill lived in any other state, his established IQ of 70 would have automatically disqualified him from execution. Shame on Georgia for bringing this repulsive distinction into practice!

Chris Hedges, the brilliant columnist for Truthdig

became Georgia's highly compensated execution doctor. Is there a better example than Musso of someone serving a system to meet a "pathetic quota of needs"?

Carlo Musso is certainly not alone in taking part in the state-sanctioned murder of citizens who more often than not come from our poorest and most marginalized communities. Before Warren Hill could get to the moment when he would come into contact with Dr. Musso, his case had to clear the all-male, five-member, governor-appointed Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, which has the authority to commute death sentences. This board failed to show mercy for Troy Davis despite compelling evidence of his innocence, favoring instead demands from the victim's family that Troy be executed. Ten months later, in an act of utter hypocrisy, the board also denied clemency for Warren, defying even the victim's

**Georgia's 'Justice' System** continued on page 8



# Oh, Say Can You See?

By Eduard Loring

*Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light?*

The name of my study is the Ella Baker Room. She lives across the hall from the Berigan Apartment: Phil and Dan. To Ella's left is the Frederick Douglass Room, and to her right lives her sister, Rosa Parks.

We three sit in Ella's place. Two do not know the person who lived Ella's life. What is there in a name but the story of the human struggle? Ella was born, named, lived, died: What did she do in the conflagration and exhilaration of tagged time? Does she matter to you and me? She, dead, no longer speaks for herself.

We sit in a circle. Two on Bea Pask's beautiful oak chairs, one on the futon couch.

Then, squinting my eyes toward the futon a bit, I roll the dice, with the overwhelming question that reveals the core of the human heart: Do you believe in the death penalty?

She quickens. "Well, I know that the Bible says, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life,' but I . . ."

*Before she can finish I see him with the eyes of my heart, standing before our small*

*band of disciples. Born a boy, Agnes named him: Ed Weir. He is living today in the flood currents of time. What is there in HIS name? What is his message? What is our response?*

*He weeps before us; over the years golden and darkling he has left a trail of tears in our worship arena. He chokes, clears, stutters, halts, speaks. "I am wounded," he keens. "I have sat on death row with my brothers and in the courtroom with corrupting names like Jeff Davis County Courthouse. I have tasted the evil venom of death. I have heard the apathetic hate of prosecutors for whom death convictions are political capital. I have seen the dark-spitted drool drip from the white chin of the judge, who dozes off until the flash moment ascends from the septic tank: 'I hereby sentence you to death on April 4, every year, for there is always time, always fire, always death, and in short, I am afraid.' Many moons I listen to the jurors agree to vote to kill, for the Bible says, they proudly proclaim before Caesar and his gladiators, 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. Yes, we are Christians and we believe we can kill killers in Jesus' name.'"*

*Tears streaking his face, he turns toward Ella's door: Pants baggy, shirttail*

*Jesus Was a Victim of the Death Penalty*



Pax Christi USA

*hanging butt-low. His name continues with him. His heart is broken by demons who once drowned in pig-life (Mark 5:13) but today reside in Bible abuse.*

"... don't believe the Bible on that one," she of the futon finishes, now nameless, but no one can be nameless, yet she is slipping away from the two of us. A broken trinity.

"Have you heard the teachings of Jesus?" I ask. "They live in direct refusal of the Old Testament verses you quote."

*"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not violently resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if anyone forces*

*you to go one mile, go with him two miles.' (Matthew 5:38-41, adapted by Walter Wink)*

"Jesus obliterates the 'eye for an eye' for Christians," I say with an elder's understanding of the stranglehold that the blade-like fingers hold around the Eucharist-sipping throats of the majority of Christians in the Land of Liberty and Justice for All.

"Well, yes," she replies. "I agree with that, but I've always heard . . ."

Ella limps toward the door to let us go somewhere. She limps, for she is descending into the watery regions of no name. Even Black women have forgotten her, because they never knew her name.

Ed Weir weeps; Daniel Greene waits. And John Starbuck goes public with his advocacy for the man who killed his daughter, already has he forgiven the ones who murdered his father. John knows their names. And drones have hit the private markets.

*And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there! ♦*

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.



## Inch by Inch



Rita Corbin

An occasional column by Murphy Davis

June 29 marked 40 years since the U.S. Supreme Court struck down our state's death penalty statute in the case of *Furman v. Georgia*. Anthony Amsterdam led the arguments to the court and argued for a permanent end to the use of executions in the United States. But rather than striking the statute on the basis of the Eighth Amendment, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, the court struck down the Georgia law (and by extension those of several other states) on the basis of a persistent pattern of racial discrimination.

Ten years ago, Anthony Amsterdam issued the following statement on the 30th anniversary of the *Furman* case. I share it now because it is as relevant today as ever:

Thirty years ago in *Furman*, the U.S. Supreme Court tried to housebreak the *Tyrannosaurus rex* that is the American death penalty. Unsurprisingly, the effort failed badly, and the monster has continued to foul the house of American criminal justice ever since.

*Furman* did two things for us. It helped us to see more clearly the gap between the pious pretensions of a decent and egalitarian system of criminal justice and the kind of rotten system that has to be run and legally condoned in order to

make space for the penalty of death. And it made clear that there can be no workable compromise between the two systems. We will have decency or we will have death; to pretend that we can have both is self-delusion or hypocrisy.

The choice must be made; and I thank God for the clear-sightedness and courage of activist organizations and individual activists who will not leave [the] current state of hypocrisy unexposed or let the system rest until it makes the choice — and makes the right choice — once and for all.

We were pleased again this year to support the Abolitionist Action Committee in this summer's annual "Starvin' for Justice" Fast and Vigil outside the Supreme Court in Washington, from June 29 through July 2. This was the 19th consecutive year of bringing the message of death penalty abolition directly to the court. This year marks not only the 40th anniversary of the *Furman* decision but the 36th anniversary of *Gregg v. Georgia*, both of them challenging the Georgia death penalty statutes. This annual gathering is perhaps one of the most multi-organizational events in the abolition movement. This year, those present included exonerated death row prisoners, members of murder victims' families, leaders of state and

national anti-death penalty organizations, and more than 50 other anti-death penalty activists from a dozen or more states and several countries. (For more on the history and this year's actions, see [www.abolition.org](http://www.abolition.org).)

August 23 is the 85th anniversary of the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti in Massachusetts, an important event to remember in the long struggle to abolish executions. The men were largely believed to be innocent of the crime for which they were condemned, and a worldwide movement demanded justice for the two, who were prosecuted mainly because they were anarchists and foreigners.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, in her poem "Justice Denied in Massachusetts," mocked the passivity of the bourgeoisie in the face of this grave injustice. The last lines of the poem:

Let us sit here, sit still,  
Here in the sitting-room until we die;  
At the step of Death on the walk, rise  
and go;  
Leaving to our children's children the  
beautiful doorway,  
And this elm,  
And a blighted earth to till  
With a broken hoe.

### How Catholic?

It's amazing to watch the shameful political "debate" while the hate-filled 1-per-

centers and their minions become more and more brazen in their hatred of women, people of color, immigrants and the poor. Take it all away: the food stamps, the health care (especially safe and legal health care for women), the right to be anywhere free of police profiling, surveillance or shakedown . . . on and on it goes. We are so far over the edge and so far beyond any reality of participatory democracy that it's a wonder that so many continue to suffer the delusion that we will someday "return to normal."

We are a plutocracy owned and operated by a tiny corporate elite and their right-wing soldiers — signed, sealed and delivered. Our community struggles to live an alternative rooted in Dorothy Day's wisdom: "Love is the only solution." How irrelevant we are! Again to quote Dorothy: "We are fools for Christ and wish we were more so." (I have often said that I think this is the Catholic Worker prayer that is most often answered.)

But then it's hard, in this day of the misogynists in the Vatican, to want to claim anything that includes the name "Catholic." Of course it has always been clear that the Catholic Worker movement is in no way related to the Catholic hierarchy. Perhaps we should refer to the movement only without capitals, as "the catholic worker movement."

**Inch by Inch** continued on page 8



## 910 Women

For most of its 30 years, the Open Door Community has been a predominantly male household. Periodically, the women of 910 gather to talk about issues affecting women in our living together in this house. In May this wonderful group gathered for lunch. They included Partners, Resident Volunteers, Residents, employees and regular volunteers. *Back row, from left: Gladys Rustay, Linda Moore, Murphy Davis, Victoria Abbey, Nelia Kimbrough, Michelle Bach, Kristy Keheley, Marsha Lewis and Tiffany Griffin. Front row, from left: Karla Abdi, Sarah Humphrey, Barbara Schenk, Emma Stitt, Mary Catherine Johnson and Anne Wheeler.*



Zachary Crow

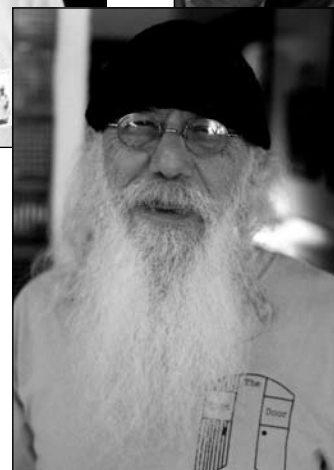
## Hannah and Jason are Married!

**Hannah Loring-Davis** and **Jason Buc** (now Hannah and Jason Murphy Buc) were married on May 12 at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. On June 2, we brought the ceremony "home" to the Open Door Community to celebrate with Atlanta friends. Here, "Aunt" **Nelia Kimbrough** presides at the blessing of their vows. Congratulations to Hannah and Jason!

## *In, Out & Around 910* Compiled and Photographed by Calvin Kimbrough

### Visitors From All Over

In early July, a group from Caldwell Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, came to the Open Door for a time of service and learning. *Below, from left: Tianna Butler, Doreen Byrd, John Chandler, Nancy Pugh, Leroy Stinson and Carol Williams. Middle right: Frans Zoer, from Amsterdam, Netherlands, joined us for a week during his recent trip to the United States (a letter from Frans is on page 11). Lower right: Allen Greenberg of Seattle, Washington, came by bus to spend a week working with us. Far right: Robbi and Chou Buller, who visit occasionally from their home at Jubilee Partners in Comer, Georgia, joined us for two Sundays at worship during a stay in Atlanta at the beginning of a time of sabbatical.*







*Above:* The Memorial Day picnic is served in the back yard at 910.  
*Left:* **Joel Buissereth**, a weekly volunteer, grills for our guests.

*Right:* **Mary Sinclair**, also a regular volunteer, serves hamburgers as our guests arrive.



*Above:* **Eddie Gutierrez, Wilma Wolf and Imelda Solano** prepare those ever-popular burgers. They're part of a group of soup makers who have come once a month for many years from Christ the King Catholic Church to fix soup for our weekly meals.

## Summertime Means Picnic Time

Every year when the weather warms up, we invite our friends from the streets to a picnic lunch on the three major holidays: Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Labor Day. We serve burgers (veggie or beef), coleslaw, baked beans, potato chips, watermelon and sweet iced tea in our back yard. It's also always a fine time of gathering with the many volunteers who come to help us serve.



*Above:* **Jane Ingols and Nelia Kimbrough** show how women occupy their space. Jane heads up a group from Peachtree Presbyterian Church who bring our Wednesday night supper once a month.

*Right:* Cancer survivors **Murphy Davis and Emily Winship** were very happy to see each other again. Emily has helped serve our holiday meals for many years.



*Right:* **Lulu Lacy, Tania Herbert, Jane Cronin and Oliver Roberts** are part of our Paideia School connection. The school is a few blocks down Ponce de Leon Avenue from us, and its students often join with us in our work at 910.



*Above:* **Gary Cannady, Ashley Williams, Murphy Davis and Tonya Kasonde** share a laugh. Murphy and Eduard became friends with Tonya where she waits tables in a neighborhood restaurant.  
*Left:* **Hanna, Gabe and Mark Harper** frequently drive over from Athens to help serve special meals. Mark, a former Resident Volunteer, is the Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens.



## Inch by Inch *continued from page 5*

But we are hoping that the guys in Rome went one step too far when they took on the American nuns. “Stop doing so much with the poor,” the doctrinal fellows instructed from their remote Vatican palace, “and take up the active offensive against women’s access to safe, medically regulated abortion and against homosexuals.”

A good group of American nuns took the rebuke by initiating a campaign called “Nuns on the Bus.” They are on a nine-state tour pressing the need for solidarity in our society and publicizing the harm the House Republican budget would bring to so many vulnerable families. Even The New York Times titled an editorial “Let Them Eat Cutbacks.” Go, nuns!

Another important struggle is the one to legislate a remedy for the U.S. Supreme Court’s horrendous *Citizens United* decision, which granted “personhood” to corporations. The decision has unleashed an unprecedented flood of corporate money that has only exaggerated the reality that political candidates are purchased and controlled by the Money Boys.

## Departed Friends

There have been many hard losses in recent months. We are so very grateful for several good friends who asked for memorial gifts to the Open Door Community when they died.

Janie Ward was an active member of First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville, Georgia, and a frequent volunteer to help serve our prison families each month. She had moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta to live near one of her daughters but continued to support our prison work. We will miss her sweet friendship.

Literally from the moment we opened, Rosalind and Emmet Herndon have supported the community with a monthly gift. Rosalind died in May, and her friends and family honored her life with gifts to serve our hungry, homeless and imprisoned friends.

## Democracy and Capitalism *continued from page 1*

As for capitalism, how can we accept it as practiced? It is profit-driven, excessive and unbounded. Moreover, it makes our claim to democracy look like pretense and sham. It encourages the rich to become richer while the poor struggle to survive. It unabashedly allows the number of “extremely poor” Americans (families in this country living on \$2 or less per person per day) to rise from 636,000 in 1996 to 1.5 million in 2011. It encourages a Republican-driven U.S. Supreme Court to determine, for political advantage, that a corporation is legally a person — the traditional meaning of words be damned! This is nothing short of disgraceful.

Violating “democracy,” capitalism feeds its own systemic violences — what philosopher Jürgen Habermas has described as “unconscionable social inequality” and “degrading marginalization.” People suffer

Thanks be to God for this faithful and generous friendship.

Dr. Elbert Tuttle Jr. and Ginny Tuttle were long and faithful friends. “Doc” Tuttle, who recently died at 90, was an esteemed Emory University physician deeply committed to his care of the poor at Grady Memorial Hospital. We’ll never forget when he joined us in the street actions on behalf of Grady’s funding — close to 80 years old, but dressed as usual in his long white coat and bow tie, marching with us on the street in front of the hospital and at County Commission meetings and speaking through a bullhorn about the importance of protecting Grady’s poorest patients from cruel cutbacks.

One of his daughters recalled, “People used to call him the oldest living ‘resident’ because he spent so much time at the hospital, when other doctors were figuring out how to not spend so much time at the hospital. He knew the patients and spent time with their families.”

Miss Ginny, who died two years ago, was also an activist. When she was physically less able to get out and volunteer, she continued to cook delicious creations. She would send “Doc” over (yes, always in his long starched white coat) to open the trunk and pull out the most delicious casseroles and other wonderful culinary creations. My favorite of the stories about Ginny was the time she took on the challenge of getting a bus for Emmaus House in the mid-1960s. She got everybody in town to save S&H Green Stamps and recruited armies of children to paste the stamps into their books. She bought the bus with thousands of books of Green Stamps. (This is a true story!)

They don’t make ‘em like Doc and Miss Ginny any more. We are so honored and thankful to remember them with love and thanksgiving. ✚

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

and children die because of the injustices endemic to capitalism. Letting people die of starvation or untreated disease, for example, is a predictable structural consequence of capitalist greed. Marx referred to this as “social murder.” He had a point. To which I add: and it violates the aspirations of authentic democracy.

Perhaps it is time to take seriously the words of the great Love Commandment of Judeo-Christianity: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Heeding this might keep democracy from dying. ✚

*Ronald E. Santoni is the Maria Theresa Barney Chair Emeritus of Philosophy at Denison University; a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University; a member of the High Table at King’s College, Cambridge University; a Royal Society of Canada Overseas*

## Lifting Up the Church *continued from page 3*

— a view of life that is not so much about what happens to us after death but rather a provocative story that describes what can happen to us while we live. It is the possibility of finding life in this life, even in the midst of the American Empire.

The church’s greatest potential in this time of empire is to offer authentic community in a sea of individualism. The American Empire, Woodyard writes, works hard “to create a world of disconnected but obedient selves who become ready agents of its agenda” (page 94). He reminds us that, whereas empire’s power depends on creating and sustaining private selves, the American church must return to its roots to lift up the reality that Jesus knew: we belong to God and to one another. Belonging to God subverts empire’s political claim to ultimacy. Belonging to one another subverts empire’s psychological claim over identity. Woodyard tells us that, in our time, the church should be “Rome in reverse,” a community immersed in a different way of viewing life and viewing ourselves. Our life as the people of God is based on a “failed life,” on a view of life that recognizes the cross and that widens the

margins and welcomes the unwelcomed.

Can the church in America do this? Woodyard leans toward some hope and possibility, but I remain skeptical. The American church seems to me to be so captured by individualism and wealth and militarism that I see little hope. I’d be glad to be wrong, though! I do hope that all of us will read Woodyard’s fine analysis of our life in empire, be inspired by his insights into how to live our lives as the people of God in the midst of empire, and thus be converted.

On this we agree: whether the American church continues its journey as “poor player that struts and frets our hour upon the stage and then is heard no more,” or whether we are transformed to be Jesus people, the power of God will prevail and the true church of the people of God will emerge.

So read this book. Prepare to be confronted and inspired. We need all the help we can get! ✚

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

## Georgia’s ‘Justice’ System *continued from page 4*

family, who had appealed to the board saying, “We do not want Mr. Hill to be executed and we believe a sentence of life without the possibility of parole is an appropriate and just resolution of this case.”

The board also ignored the preponderance of evidence about Warren’s intellectual disability, as well as statements under oath from jurors in his trial who said they would have sentenced him to life without parole if that option had been available to them. It is the explicit mandate of the parole board to act as a fail-safe for citizens of Georgia who have not received just decisions and treatment within the state’s criminal justice system. Clearly, the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles failed Warren Hill, and ultimately all of us, miserably.

At least for the time being, however, the myriad of reasons why Warren should not be executed have taken a back seat to the gruesome question of how to best legally murder our fellow citizens in Georgia. The state will no doubt argue that the new one-drug protocol of an overdose of pentobarbital is the most humane and efficient method of achieving a quick and relatively painless death. Efficient perhaps, but the level of pain is impossible to determine, and to call premeditated murder “humane” is offensive at the deepest of levels.

The Open Door Community continues to keep Warren Hill in our prayers, and if and when the public comment period for the new one-drug lethal injection procedure is in effect, you can rest assured that our voices will be among the loudest of those proclaiming that we will not accept this new procedure for state-sanctioned murder in our names. I invite readers to stay tuned to the Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Web site ([www.gfadp.org](http://www.gfadp.org)), the Open Door Web site (<http://opendoorcommunity.org>) and the Open Door’s Facebook page for updates on this important case.

We also continue to pray for Dr. Carlo Musso and his staff, the five members of the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles, and all of the others who participate in, and profit from, executions. May God open their hearts to practices that affirm the preciousness of life rather than contribute to the machinery of death. ✚



*Dr. Carlo Musso*

*“Moving Toward Abolition” is a monthly column that tracks the fight to end capital punishment. Mary Catherine Johnson is on the Boards of Directors of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty ([www.gfadp.org](http://www.gfadp.org)) and of New Hope House and is a volunteer at the Open Door Community. She can be emailed at [mcjohnson78@yahoo.com](mailto:mcjohnson78@yahoo.com).*

*Fellow at the University of Paris (Sorbonne); and an Associate Fellow of Berkeley College, Yale University. He and his wife Margo are associate members of the Open Door Community and members of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Granville, Ohio.*



## Learning From David Woodyard *continued from page 3*

I realized that my early sense of belonging was essentially based on my loyalty to the dominant order. The public transcript of empire, Woodyard explains, acts as a means of dominant control. I've also come to trust in the feminist mantra that the personal is political and that the impact of dominant, empire control impacts the personal.

My consciousness raised, I began to see how my self had been molded to empire. My interests, concerns, vision for the future, relationships, clothes, hair and body type had been shaped around the expectations and sustainability of empire. The extraction from empire was painful not only in the changing of my world view, but in how the change in the lens of life impacted how I saw myself.

As I began to pull away from my community, I lacked a sense of belonging and identity. My parents thought I was being brainwashed by Woodyard. I didn't know how to explain myself to my hometown friends who were becoming accountants, lawyers and doctors. For me, allegiance to empire had become a mind-numbing way to live. But liberation God-talk was creating a very scared, anxious young woman.

After Denison, through the suggestion of a good childhood friend, I joined the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. This was my way of seeing if I could live out liberation theology, if I could do the praxis. The corps placed me in Atlanta, where I lived with six others in the southwestern part of the city, working with the Task Force for the Homeless and worshipping at the Open Door.

The corps' motto is "ruined for life," and that's exactly what happened to me that year. I continued to unravel myself from empire-living by immersing myself in the reality of the poor, homeless and economically broken of Atlanta.

After Atlanta, I took my ruined self to Union Theological Seminary in New York City. There I continued the process of immersing myself in the hidden transcript of the church. I fell in love with the subversive, creative liturgy practiced in James Chapel.

I visited women at Rikers Island, in the borough holding cells and at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. I found companions who were extracting, questioning and resisting empire for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of the planet that God so loves. And after seminary, I found the Church of the Pilgrims (PCUSA) in Washington, D.C.

### A Church That Resists Empire

In his book, Woodyard calls the church "the continuation of the incarnation," and he says it is called to immerse itself in "the world's pain and resistance to those who inflict it." It has choices to make in how it lives out the questions he poses as: "How does the church become a hidden transcript? How does the church point to the cracks in empire's grasp? How does the church name the new ordering of life?"

At Church of the Pilgrims, we use language intentionally as we contest the public and hidden transcripts. We use the word "empire" when critiquing the oppressive forces in the world that defile and disfigure God's creation. We repeatedly proclaim the postures and positions of empire and its focus on the elite, on privilege and dominating power over against the Body of Christ with a biblical agenda of justice, dignity and solidarity.

Those are the words we use. Important words. In order to be part of the movement of God to create a world where,

as Woodyard writes, "social sin has been unmasked and the space for freedom has been enlarged," we need to resist empire in practical ways.

We do so also in worship, where, as Woodyard exhorts us, we "contest the reality of empire, where the gospel heritage discerns the penetration of imperialism in our national life, and in the very fabric of the church itself." Worship at Pilgrims "intervenes" in the reality of empire and reveals what is at stake in our worship life together.

We focus on keeping actions in worship that are meaningful to us right now, breaking through unquestioned habits done in the name of nostalgia rather than relevancy. We resist the temptation for worship to confirm implicitly or explicitly the prevailing order. Do the Advent candles have to be purple? Can we build a wailing wall for the sanctuary? Can we worship without the lights? Can we have Communion with no words spoken? Can we have fire in worship? Our worship is an embodied, sensory, powerful, relational, sacramental experience that responds to the question, "Whom do I belong to?"

### Taking Liturgy to the Streets

How we worship impacts our view of worship and how we live in the world. It takes a great deal of work for this type of worship to happen, and just as much energy to take our liturgical experiences to the streets. Our God is not a

"captured God," one confined to our premises. Pilgrims started an urban garden and compost bin, we protest with other Presbyterian churches at the Sudanese Embassy, and we march with the best of D.C. drag queens in the Washington LGBTQ Pride parade. We serve lunch to hungry neighbors every Sunday after church.

We participate in the Washington Interfaith Network, where we engage the "world as it is" with the prophetic drive to build the "world as it should be." On Monday evenings, we have a Bible study at the restaurant and bar across the street. Together, we witness how stories of ancient Israel and the early church were,

as Woodyard calls them, "agents of intrusion in the world that empire created and sustained."

We are intentional about being a "hidden transcript," living out the counter-memory that puts us in loyal opposition to empire. We do this as a multi-generational community, expecting that from the moment of birth to the end of life, we all have received the grace to subvert empire.

Woodyard has dedicated "The Church in the Time of Empire" to Ed Loring and Murphy Davis, declaring that they "live the lives empire fears." This is my hope at Church of the Pilgrims — that we create space and freedom for our God of the exodus and resurrection to agitate, heal and liberate us so that we, too, can live lives that empire fears.

May it be so. ✠

*Ashley Goff is the Minister of Spiritual Formation at the Church of the Pilgrims (PCUSA) in Washington, D.C., where she has served for 12 years. She has been a friend of the Open Door since she served in Atlanta with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in 1994-95 and worshipped and worked with our community. In 2000, Murphy Davis preached for Ashley's ordination service at First Congregational Church UCC in Washington. Ashley may be contacted at [ashley@churchofthepilgrims.org](mailto:ashley@churchofthepilgrims.org).*



Christina Barry

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

*Zachary Crow has come to spend a year at the Open Door Community as a Resident Volunteer. He is a recent graduate of Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas.*

**Live in a residential Christian community.**

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

**Join street actions and loud and loving nonviolent demonstrations.**

**Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.**

**Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.**

**You might come to the margins and find your center.**

**Contact: Sarah Humphrey**  
at [opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)  
or 770.246.7618

For information and application forms visit  
**[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)**

## Please Help!

The Open Door needs **2,000 sandwiches** to serve each week!

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

**Thank You!**



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volunteer  
needs  
at the  
**Open Door Community**

**Volunteers for Tuesday (9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) and Wednesday Soup Kitchen (9:30 a.m.-2:00 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 doctors 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 supper for our household on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings.

**For more information,**  
**contact Sarah Humphrey**  
**at [opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)**  
**or 770.246.7618**

## Our Living, Loving, Good Shepherd God *continued from page 1*

— sparked some stories. Plenty of young families live in unsuitable accommodations. Sometimes we have runaways, and refugees from Stansted Airport. And some contacts from Soup and Chat put together a new venture, now several years old. Kate's Kitchen feeds hot meals three times a week to more than 50 people, offers help for people who need forms filled in, and runs cookery classes for young families.

Jesus promises, "I will save those who follow me.... They will have life and have it abundantly."

### A Flock Scattered to the Wilds

Sheep are very much part of the life of the local community in Annan. About now the fields would be full of skipping lambs, and the shepherds would be glad and rejoicing in the abundant new life around them.

But other memories now lurk in the corners of the shepherds' minds, painful memories of a few years ago — of the horrid slaughter of all their livestock, the stinking bonfires of animal carcasses burning night and day as they fought to contain the spread of foot-and-mouth disease.

Now the land and the livestock are recovering. We forget so quickly the pain and suffering of small sections of our society. Instead, we trawl the newspapers for the next sensation. It might be the continuing hike in fuel prices, or details of "that dress" in the royal wedding, or even the death of Osama bin Laden, which at first scarcely mentioned the neglect of due process of law, and we omitted to call this murder. We skim along the surface of the pages, feeding our greedy hunger for complaint and thrill-seeking.

If we are the sheep that follow the Good Shepherd, our taste in headline living shows that we have some accounting to do if we are to pass through his gate into his promised everlasting life. Will we be so comfortable turning the pages of our lives when we stand accountable and face his passion for justice?

**We, a ragbag mix of people,  
 regardless of race or status,  
 are offered a place  
 in the Beloved Community  
 of our living, loving shepherd God.**

How dare we forget that not only is Jesus the Good Shepherd whom we trust and say we follow for our salvation, but that he is also the lamb who was slain? The shadow of his cross stretches out arms of love to all, showing us a way to live with compassion and in obedience to God's way.

The prophet Ezekiel speaks into the pain of the people of God who found themselves brutally defeated by the Babylonian Empire, lost because their holy city Jerusalem and their Temple had been destroyed in the process. But Ezekiel can still call them to account for the way they choose to live and bring them to the place where they may once again "walk in the statutes of life."

But it's a hard call.

"Listen to me, you shepherds. I, the Sovereign Lord, declare that I am your enemy. I will take my sheep away from you and never again let you be their shepherds."

This is a judgment against the leaders of the people. God is against the leaders who have not shown concern for the well-being of the sheep.

The flock have been scattered and have strayed into the lost and dangerous wild lands — the wild lands of individual self-seeking, where the race is to reach out and grab, where only the strongest survive, where the flock struggle for their very lives in the wilderness places of cat holes and hidden, shadowy doorways, where life is tough and shocking, where each person is numbed and silenced by the sheer struggle to stay alive.

Our wild and holy God will not be shocked into breaking promises of fullness of life for all. God's prophet will speak God's word to the people.

God is the faithful, generous, open one who will not be silent. Ezekiel shows us more of the character of God, who has the resources and potential to act and chooses, instead, the way of endless compassion, faithfulness and steadfast love, refusing to bring into play anything suggesting that "might is right."

We are shown another way. To go through the gate of life opened by Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we must plunge into our world of exile and pain. We are called to challenge all that numbs and wears us down. We are called to resist the frightening social controls that we discover lurking in secret to manipulate the silenced poor, whose bleeding feet and hungry bellies approach our Open Door for help, day in and day out. We discover this as we listen to their stories of the frustration of trudging to another closed clinic, of voice mailboxes that are persistently full and never available to hear of the needs of the hurting poor.



Cathie Bleck

Our holy, powerful God chooses the vulnerability of people to bring in his new order of life. This sovereign God sets aside harshness for the way of newness. We see hope in this prophecy from the past, where economic, political and military power could not survive, where getting, having, using and consuming are set aside. The only possibility spread before the leaders was the one where public power was worked out and administered according to need and justice, attending to well-being for all.

So how can we relinquish the old ways and speak a new world into being? How do we share in God's inexplicable generosity?

We do this in community, rooting ourselves into God's story. We, a ragbag mix of people, regardless of race or status, are offered a place in the Beloved Community of our living, loving shepherd God.

We need to learn that we are pursued by God's mercy and goodness. We need to remember our past and re-imagine our future.

*Listen to me*, says God. So let us listen. We listen with our hearts, our minds and our bodies, and new life rises out of crisis.

Together, in community, may we listen and learn and grow. For God works through people who are willing to be taught. Together, as we pay attention to the signs of God's kingdom, in common sharing, we will find love and truth restoring us to life. ✠



# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Friends at Open Door Community,

Every month when your newspaper comes I am grateful to remember the good work you are doing in Atlanta. And through your newspaper and books and writing, the good work you are doing around the country, including in our church community.

Enclosed is a gift from our Justice and Witness budget. We want to be a part of the way you are following our Radical Jesus. We want to grow up to be like Jesus, and like you.

Your Friends in the Northwest,  
Rev. Pamela Shepherd  
First Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Ashland, Oregon

*In July we were delighted to hear that the latest PET scan found Murphy's indolent lymphoma "relatively stable." We received this response from a friend in Amsterdam who visited us recently (a picture of Frans is on page 6):*

Dear Murphy,

It is time to congratulate you with the "PET scan"! Really good for you and for all folks around you who love you and appreciate your presence!

And though we are all nomads on life's journey, the "stabilitas loci" is an old religious virtue, and also counts for cancer cells. I do hope you will manage to persevere in this virtue.

[I shared your concern for] the execution of Warren Hill, which was delayed at the last moment as I found on the Internet. May civilization come to Georgia one day.

Know that you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

With love,  
Frans Zoer  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

I got news that I have received the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship [for my first year at St. Louis University]. This is very exciting because it will greatly reduce the amount of money I have to take out in loans. I feel more and more called to a life where I will not be making much (if any!) money, so I was (concerned) about the loans.

Jason Ebinger  
Wellington, New Zealand

*Jason, a former Resident Volunteer, returned from New Zealand in July and has again been spending lots of time with the community. He begins his new life as a college student in late August.*

God go with you. The Troy Davis matter was very much on our hearts and will remain so; we share very much your deep concern at the injustice of the death penalty.

Love to (all of you),  
Paul Heppleston  
England

Friends,

I recall meeting some of you at a Georgia government building on the morning of Jack Alderman's execution day. We were trying unsuccessfully to save his life by speaking on his behalf to the Board of Pardons and Paroles. I believe I remember correctly that Murphy's testimony was especially powerful and moving. I naively left for home confident that we had won the day.

I make the enclosed modest donation in memory of my friend, your friend, Jack.

Easter blessings on the Christ-like work you do.

In Him,  
Dick Rento  
Lavallette, New Jersey

Dear friends at the Open Door,

I became acquainted with your work through Jack Miller and his late wife Pauline Redmond, who with their sons Peter and Daniel visited the Open Door years ago. Since Pauline's death seven years ago, I have been blessed to become Jack's wife and move to his home in Millville.

With God's leading, we were able to turn my old house in Owatonna, Minnesota, into a hospitality house for women and children in June 2008. Based on your model and Dorothy Day's personalist approach, a group of volunteers and one very dedicated house mom have provided a temporary home to many struggling people, while proving to the community that there really is a need and a way to address that need.

But the need keeps growing and the house was overflowing. Again God provided, in the shape of an adjoining house bought from foreclosure by neighbor friends, which we are now renting. It opened March 1 and is already nearly filled. It is a huge step of faith, but how can we not go forward when God keeps opening doors?

As you have encouraged us, we hope our story encourages you. We certainly identify with your financial challenges and have to keep reminding ourselves that God will provide for however long God wants this work to continue.

Blessings and peace,  
Virginia and Jack Miller  
Millville, Minnesota

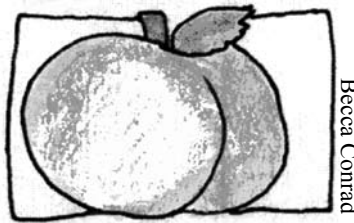
Dear Open Door Community,

It was sure wonderful to see you all. I am glad to have met some new volunteers as well.

Since I left you we had our big Faith & Resistance Retreat the weekend before the NATO Summit in Chicago. I was arrested along with seven other Catholic Workers from around the country. We were trying to have a conversation with the Obama campaign headquarters about our involvement in NATO and in Afghanistan, but by the time we reached the elevators they had shut down power to them and arrested us on the second-story balcony.

Our arrest got lots of good media coverage. We even had a picture on the front page of the Chicago Tribune.

Grace and Peace,  
Sam Yergler  
Champaign, Illinois



Hi Mary Catherine Johnson,

I am Bill, 86, from Orlando and I want to thank you for your willingness to take up such a neglected issue as the death penalty. I wish you success in raising understanding of all its negative effects.

I have been writing to prisoners for almost 20 years now, a few on death row. I was a volunteer for Key Life Ministry, answering general correspondence, when I met my first "lifer," Billy, in a Texas prison. Over the years we corresponded we grew together in our faith. He was finally paroled, too sick for prison life, and passed away this year. I am now getting ready to respond by mail to Rudolph, on death row in San Quentin, a fairly young man who may grow old in prison, as Billy did.

There are no easy answers. There is simply hope and faith in our loving God.

I look forward to reading your column. May God's peace be with you as you write.

Bill Thomas, M.D.  
Orlando, Florida

Rev. Eduard Loring,

Thanks for writing. It was a blessing to hear from you. You sent me a few things I want to thank you for.

Thanks for the picture of the Pine Street shelter. Maybe I can be a servant there one day, I hope, God willing. Y'all are carrying out God's will in a glorious way in that area. Y'all are living Bibles.

Thanks for the amazing portrait of your wife. It looks so realistic, like a camera shot. Whoever drew it did an awesome job.

Thanks also for the Black history card you sent. It humbles me to learn about the harsh obstacles my ancestors went through. If they didn't sacrifice or endure, who knows, I might not be writing you today. But the harsh obstacles that were overcome encourages me that I too can overcome.

A few days after your letter, I received your book "The Festival of Shelters." I finished reading it yesterday, and once again I'm astounded. Reverend Loring, God has blessed you with some powerful teachings. You aren't afraid to talk about things that go on that usually get swept under the rug, things commonly forgotten about and ignored, like white supremacy, racism, sexism, classism, capitalism, homophobia and consumerism. You talk about how we have these big houses and big cars, in which we drive right past the poor. The Festival of Shelters helps us remember that we were once homeless, in the wilderness. And that's where God told us not to forget about Him when "prosperity" came.

But many of us have forgotten, forgotten the journey through the wilderness, where conditions were bitter and harsh, where we had to remain heavily conscious of God, because God provided our necessities directly.

Your book explains the Festival of Shelters as a separation, a separation from the American culture, which promotes materialism, individualism, greed, selfishness and social status so well.

I'm not "sold out" for the Lord like I was in the past, but each time I read something you write, I get inspired to fully commit myself totally to God. I'll usually read something you wrote, smile and laugh to myself, reread it, talk to myself, then read it again. I do that because my spirit agrees with what you write. As I read "The Cry of the Poor" and "The Festival of Shelters," all I can remember saying was "yup, Amen, yes, that's right."

I also get inspired by the pictures in your book, as well as the ones printed in *Hospitality*. They show how y'all invite the poor in to eat. They show y'all in support of Troy Davis, sleeping outside in tents, worshipping the Lord in public, praying together in front of City Hall. Y'all practice biblical principles. It's more than words, words, words. Y'all take action. Y'all do the Word.

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

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

Respectfully,  
W. H.  
A Georgia Prison

Dear friends at the Open Door,

I guess it's time for me to pay up for all those free papers you send me. I pass them around as much as I can.

It's a double honor to send you this gift because, as someone who resists war taxes by living below the income-taxable level of income, I know that this money on my tax return would have gone to fight against our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. I trust that y'all will use it more wisely.

Love,  
A friend in Texas

# Open Door Community Ministries

**Soup Kitchen:** Tuesday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. – 12 noon

**Men’s Showers:** Tuesday, 10:45 a.m.

**Trusted Friends Showers & Lunch:** Thursday, 10 a.m.

**Women’s Showers:** Wednesday, 2:30 p.m.

**Harriet Tubman Free Women’s Clinic:**

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

**Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinics:**

Wednesday, 7 p.m.

**Mail Check:** Tuesday – Wednesday, during Soup Kitchen

Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 1 p.m.

**Use of Phone:** Tuesday – Thursday, during services

**Retreats:** Five times each year for our household, volunteers and supporters.

**Prison Ministry:** Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, Georgia, in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville; monthly Jackson (Death Row) Trip; pastoral visits in various jails and prisons.

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

**We gratefully accept donations at these times.**

**Sunday:** 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

**Monday:** 8:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday:** 8:30 until 9:30 a.m. and 2 until 8:30 p.m.

**Friday and Saturday:** We are closed. We are not able to offer hospitality or accept donations on these days.

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

## Join 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 770.246.7628.

Please visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

August 5	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Hiroshima & Nagasaki Remembrance Dick Rustay preaching	September 2	4 p.m. Worship at 910 the singing Labor Movement Calvin Kimbrough leading
August 12	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service music with Caroline Herring	September 9	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
August 19	No Worship at 910 Dayspring Care Week	September 16	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
August 26	No Worship at 910 Planning Retreat at Dayspring Farm	September 23	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service
		September 30	4 p.m. Worship at 910 Eucharistic Service



Susan van der Hijden

## Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We meet for clarification on selected Tuesday evenings from 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 770.246.7620 or visit

[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://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 salts  
anti-bacterial soap  
shoe inserts  
corn removal pads  
exfoliation cream (e.g., apricot scrub)  
pumice stones  
foot spa  
cuticle clippers  
latex gloves  
nail files (large)  
toenail clippers (large)  
medicated foot powder  
antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

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

## Needs of the Community



Chad Hyatt

### Living Needs

- ☐ jeans (30-34 waist)
- ☐ work shirts
- ☐ short & long sleeve shirts with collars
- ☐ belts (34" & up)
- ☐ men’s underwear
- ☐ women’s underwear
- ☐ socks
- ☐ reading glasses
- ☐ walking shoes (especially sizes 11-15)
- ☐ T-shirts (XL through 5XL)
- ☐ baseball caps
- ☐ trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

### Personal Needs

- ☐ shampoo (all sizes)
- ☐ lotion (all sizes)
- ☐ toothpaste (all sizes)
- ☐ lip balm
- ☐ soap (all sizes)
- ☐ disposable razors

### Food Needs

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

### Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ MARTA cards
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ futon sofa
- ☐ a scale for our medical clinic
- ☐ prayers for housing for all homeless people

**Pill containers:** Your generosity has supplied us with enough pill containers for the next several months. We ask that you **NOT** send any more until we again request them. **Thank You!**