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Open Door: A Prophetic Discipleship Community Honoring The Black Jesus, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr.

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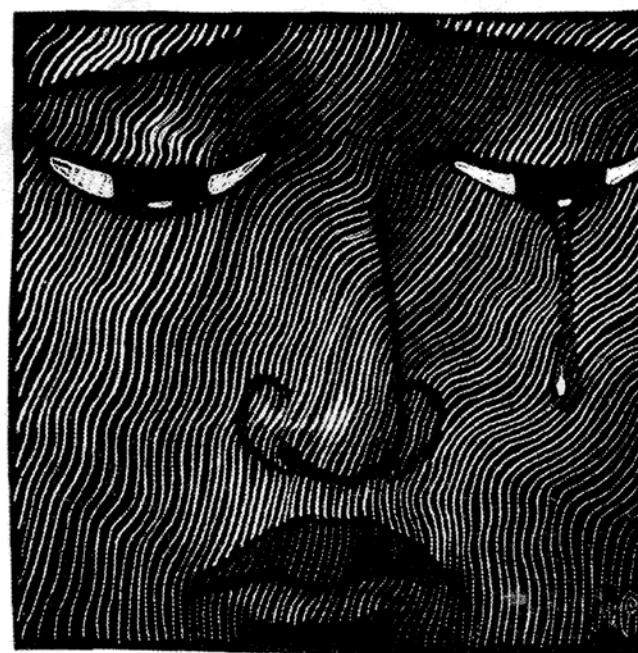
To Be a Mother or Not. Who Decides?

By Murphy Davis

As I write, we are not so far past the second Sunday in May which was, of course, Mother's Day. The restaurant and flower enterprises did quite well, as they always do — the spending in the U.S. was estimated to come to about \$125 million — an average of \$196 per person. Sounds like a culture that really honors motherhood, right?

Well, not so fast. How is it that in 2019, women are *twice* as likely as their mothers were to die before, during and after childbirth? The U.S. has the highest rate of maternal death in the industrialized world, and it is growing still. That puts us in the unenviable company of Afghanistan, Lesotho and Swaziland as countries with rising rates. The rates for African American women in the U.S. are three to four times higher than for white women. The growing death rates are, not surprisingly, much worse in some parts of the country than in others. Think about it a minute — hmm. Might the spiraling maternal death rates correspond to some other measures of well-being in the various states? Access to health care? More specifically, access to reproductive health care? Poverty rates? Proximity of hospitals and emergency care in rural areas? The overall status of women? Of course — all of the above.

There are states that have been specifically targeting women's health care for budget cuts for a number of years, and it comes as no surprise that these states are among those with the highest maternal death rates. Planned Parenthood has been providing general and reproductive health care for more



Michelle Dick

aim has been to undercut Planned Parenthood's funding and eliminate their services. So far, the attacks have not accomplished all of the desired results, but it continues to be an ugly fight. Planned Parenthood has stood up to the campaign of misinformation and continued to provide comprehensive and compassionate care.

To attack and/or de-fund Planned Parenthood is to attack a valuable institution that has provided high quality health care to many women who would not otherwise have

To attack and/or de-fund Planned Parenthood is to attack a valuable institution that has provided high quality health care to many women who would not otherwise have access.

than 100 years. Nurse and educator Margaret Sanger (along with her sister and a friend) opened the door of the first family planning clinic in Brooklyn in 1916 based on the radical notion that women should control their own bodies and their own destinies. The clinic was quickly shut down and Sanger was briefly imprisoned, but the movement grew. Sanger traveled the country to promote health education, and in 1923, she founded the American Birth Control League. The League was later combined with another organization to form Planned Parenthood. Since then, the organization has worked through hundreds of clinics across the country to provide basic screenings for high blood pressure, cancer (especially breast and ovarian cancers) and other diseases; vaccinations for mothers and children are an invaluable service as well as providing education and assistance in family planning. Because their services have included pregnancy termination (though abortion is only a minor part of what they do), Planned Parenthood was targeted by the political far right for a program of attacks, disinformation, fabricated videos and other propaganda. The

access. But the health of women and their children is not all that is at stake; to take away preventative care from women and children is to imperil the health of entire communities. The right-wing agenda has been largely successful in twisting public perception and making access to routine life-sustaining care less and less available to the most vulnerable women among us. Attacks on free-standing abortion clinics have included burdensome and unnecessary laws that restrict how they might help women in dire circumstances. While abortion care is glibly dismissed by many as a "choice," those whose lives are ruined by an unplanned pregnancy are rarely discussed in public arenas. Every abortion clinic can tell of patients who include victims of brutal rapes and incest. Dr. George Tiller, who was murdered on a Sunday morning in his Lutheran Church in Wichita, Kansas, was the only doctor who was willing to help in 2009 when presented with a nine-year-old girl who was impregnated by her own father and eighteen weeks pregnant. To carry a pregnancy to full term would have ripped this little girl's body apart, and that doesn't

even begin to consider the psychological terror of bearing her father's child at the age of nine. Still, one doctor after another refused to help.

Now the right has accomplished some of its main goals in the passage of draconian laws essentially banning abortions in Georgia, Alabama and Missouri. The Georgia "fetal heartbeat" law allows life in prison and even the death penalty for women who would get an abortion after about six weeks of pregnancy. (Six weeks is a period of time before many women even realize that they are pregnant.) The Alabama law would punish a doctor with life in prison for providing a pregnancy termination to her/his patient.

To Be a Mother or Not *continued on page 7*

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

Motherhood

Don't knock on my door, little child,
I cannot let you in;
You know not what a world this is,
Of cruelty and sin.
Wait in the still eternity
Until I come to you.
The world is cruel, cruel, child,
I cannot let you through.

Don't knock at my heart, little one,
I cannot bear the pain
Of turning deaf ears to your call,
Time and time again.
You do not know the monster men
Inhabiting the earth.
Be still, be still, my precious child,
I cannot give you birth.

— Georgia Douglas Johnson

Born Black in Atlanta, Georgia during The Lynching Season, Ms. Johnson died in Washington, D.C. (1880-1966). She was a gifted musician, poet and playwright. She also worked for the Department of Labor. "Motherhood" was first published in The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races, October 1922, p. 265.

Introducing Mary Catherine Johnson

Board Member of the Open Door Community

By Lee Carroll

In 2016, when several key partners in the Open Door Community “retired,” it was decided that the organization would continue as a much smaller residential community of three people (Ed Loring, Murphy Davis and David Payne), and that it would relocate from Atlanta to Baltimore. A new external Board of Directors was created to guide the organization into the future. This is the third in a series of short articles introducing readers to the current Board of Directors. These brief “spiritual biographies” describe the theological journeys of individual directors and how their stories have come together to help continue the legacy of the Open Door. In this edition we introduce board colleague Mary Catherine Johnson.

One way to introduce Mary Catherine Johnson is to say simply that she is the director of New Hope House, a prison ministry based near Barnesville, Georgia, that serves Georgia’s death row prisoners and their families. Her work involves going to capital trials in Georgia, visiting prisoners on death row and hosting families when they visit imprisoned loved ones or sit through a death watch. That in itself suggests a bold and unusual vocation, but what was the path she followed in becoming engaged in such critical, challenging work?

Mary Catherine grew up in Macon, Georgia, as the daughter of caring and generous parents. As devout Roman Catholics, they were never overly pious, but they modeled generosity and serving others. As a good Catholic, she attended Catholic schools which were influential in her religious upbringing. Unfortunately, the god intro-

duced in school was a legalistic, fear-provoking, punitive God. The suffering of Jesus was emphasized far more than resurrection. But there, in keeping with Catholic tradition, she was first encouraged to think critically about the death penalty.

During high school she thought that she might pursue a career in politics at the local level. But as a student at Vanderbilt University she took an elective course in art history and quickly discovered a new passion that led her to working in the world of art. Following college, she worked for 14 years with the International Sculpture Center in Washington, D.C. and New Jersey. In 2006, she returned South to accept a position with the Visual Arts Department and Gallery at Emory University in Atlanta.

Throughout her years in college and her career in art, Mary Catherine enjoyed her work (she still finds that art brings a balance to her life), but she sensed a void in her life. The punitive god of her high school years seemed increasingly irrelevant. To fill this void, she turned to what she learned from her parents: serving others. She became involved in anti-death penalty work, and it was at one memorable meeting of Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GFADP) that she met Murphy Davis, one of the founders of the Open Door Community. She still remembers Murphy describing the work of the Open Door with homeless and imprisoned people, and then asking, “Why don’t you come to the Open Door tomorrow?”

Mary Catherine did! She took the next day off from work and served in the Open Door’s soup kitchen. Following the meal, she participated in the community’s tradition of engaging in theological reflections about their day. And in those moments she found herself



Mary Catherine Johnson

thinking, “*This is a God thing! This is what life with God should be like!*”

Although still working at Emory, she found herself being drawn to the work of the Open Door and their practices of serving others and worshiping a God of justice and compassion. The void in her life was being filled with generative new meanings. And when Ed Loring, another founding partner, encouraged Mary Catherine to quit her job and join the Open Door Community, and promised to walk with her, she accepted eagerly.

She had long assumed that she would need a paying job to cover her living expenses, and that she would meet her spiritual needs by volunteering to serve others. Then she discovered another option: serving in the non-profit sphere where she could find meaning and earn a living in the same place! So Mary Catherine went to work fulltime with the Open Door Community where she served on the Leadership Team, was

managing editor of *Hospitality*, coordinated a weekly Soup Kitchen, and became deeply involved in prison ministry and resistance to the death penalty.

That two-year experience paved the way for her in 2015 to become the Director of New Hope House, founded in 1989- by Ed and MaryRuth Weir. In that capacity, she dreams of the day when the death penalty will be abolished (something she is persuaded will happen), and she can devote more time to helping heal those impacted by violent crimes — both perpetrators and victims. She finds particular meaning in an image suggested by Sister Helen Prejean, one of her role models, that depicts Jesus with two outstretched arms — one embracing criminals and the other embracing their victims.

She points out that as our society fails to address the root causes of poverty, many poor people resort to addiction, abusing loved ones, or criminal activity to cope, even to survive. So she believes poverty and the death penalty are closely related; both are violent forms of oppression currently sanctioned by political leaders.

“Many people tell me that I should take the Gospel to death row prisoners,” Mary Catherine reflects, “but the truth is, I inevitably find that Jesus is already there, welcoming me!” ♦

Lee Carroll is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Associate Professor Emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA. He is the current chair of the Board of Directors of the Open Door Community.



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



David Payne

Tyrone Cole and Beth Dellow serving during the Welcome Table at the Upton Underground Railroad Station on June 12.

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Please join us on **Facebook** for the continuing journey of the **Open Door Community** in **Baltimore**. Thank you. David, Eduard and Murphy.

Scotty Morrow and the Fabric of the Beloved Community

By Mary Catherine Johnson

I chose a sheer, light green piece of fabric from the bag of multi-colored headscarves that was being circulated by an employee of the mosque. I initially reached for a bright pink cloth, but decided against it. I wasn't quite sure why, but selecting the right scarf felt very important in that moment. As I examined the makeup and lipstick stains on my scarf, and smelled its light scent of perfume, I thought of all of the other women who had worn that scarf before me. Had they also been at that mosque for a funeral as I was that day? Were their tears a part of the scarf as mine soon would be? Suddenly that scarf felt so very precious — a connection to all the women who carry the pain and grief of their departed loved ones.

After securing my chosen scarf in place, I moved through the group of women who surrounded me, helping them tie their scarves of choice onto their heads. These were the women with whom I'd spent a lot of time over the past week — the family and friends of Georgia death row prisoner Scotty Morrow, who had been executed on May 2. I helped Scotty's sister tie the bright pink scarf around her face, smiling as I realized that particular scarf had reached the right person. Her face glowed with wisdom and beauty, surrounded by soft pink light, as her eyes conveyed the exhaustion, pain and suffering from the days leading up to Scotty's execution.

We watched in silence as the hearse arrived with Scotty's body. As I heard the other women sob, I also began to cry, using the ends of my green headscarf to wipe away my tears. As hard as it was to accept the violent and unnecessary way that Scotty had died, we all felt some degree of comfort knowing that this was exactly what Scotty wanted if he did not receive a stay of execution — a traditional Muslim funeral

One of the Muslim women whispered to us that they believe that Scotty's soul was staying close to his body at that point, so he was with us and could hear us.

and burial. He had converted to Islam while in prison, and it had become a deep and abiding faith practice that brought him closer to God and helped him stay calm and focused, especially in his last days.

We continued to watch in silence as the men of Scotty's family carried his body from the hearse to the courtyard behind the mosque, where an imam said prayers over his body. There were none of the flowers, music, or other types of ceremonial fixtures like a coffin that I was accustomed to at Christian funerals; it was just us — the mourners — and Scotty's body wrapped in a linen shroud. One of the Muslim women whispered to us that they believe that Scotty's soul was staying close to his body at that point, so he was with us and could hear us. Her words, combined with the sight of Scotty's body wrapped in a simple piece of fabric, established a level of intimacy that I had not expected to feel that day at a service that was so foreign to me. As I felt Scotty's presence, I reflected on the many ways that he had touched my life. He was a person of profound integrity and humility, and my visits with him often put me in a state of awe over his willingness to search for and confront difficult questions and answers concerning remorse and forgiveness for the harm he had caused in his life. I always came away from our visits feeling energized and hopeful that true healing was possible.

After the prayers in the courtyard concluded, we all drove to the Muslim cemetery for Scotty's burial. The other women and I watched from a distance as the men carried Scotty's body to a hole in the ground. Some of the



Lee Carroll

Vigil for Life at the Death of Scotty Morrow, May 2 at the Georgia Capitol in Atlanta.

men jumped into the grave with him, uncovering his face and positioning his body so that he faced toward Mecca. I watched in amazement as all of this happened, once again struck by the extraordinary intimacy of the care and handling of Scotty's body. Then the men began the process of covering Scotty's body with dirt, which one of the Muslim women explained was related to verse 20:55 of the Qur'an, "From this very earth We created you and to the same earth We shall

Mary Catherine Johnson is the Director of New Hope House, a ministry that serves the prisoners on Georgia's death row and their families by providing hospitality for the families at a guesthouse near the prison where death row is located, attending death penalty trials and hearings to support the defendants and their families, and visiting on death row. (mcjohnson78@yahoo.com)

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As I returned my green scarf to the mosque's bag of colorful fabrics after the funeral, I felt securely tied to something life-fulfilling and community-building. Thank you, Scotty, for your example and your witness, and for bringing us all together in such a powerful and intimate way. I will carry you with me always. ♦

Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil

A Series on the Gospel, Part 2

By Eduard Loring

*What we cannot tell the truth about —
Housing: The Church Problem Explored.
The Gospel Problem Defined: Which Side Are You On?*

By way of continued introduction, I wish to explore two problems within the Bible. First, the contradictions in the Word, which at least give us a choice of which option to believe and affirm. Then, on what basis is the choice made? Let's begin with a hard example for many of us who are non-violent, anti-war peace makers who work to turn over and demolish the white supremacist, white nationalist American Empire.

On the one hand, several Hebrew prophets vision a world of nonviolence. Encapsulated in the precious Hebrew word *Shalom* is the fulfillment of the Beloved Community/ Kingdom of God. Peace and justice for all.

Everyone will live in peace
among their own vineyards and fig trees,
and no one will make them afraid.

(Micah 4:4 GNB)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye of Peace and Harmony
The Holy One shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

(Isaiah 2:4 NRSV)

She shall judge between many peoples,
and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

(Micah: 4:3 NRSV. Adapted against patriarchy)

On the other hand, there is a prophetic mandate for war, revenge and the divine promise of victory for the masters of war. Ouch. Hurts, doesn't it? But then think of the war monger's obedience to the passage quoted below from the Prophet Joel. Not to mention its use as a biblical basis for

**Faith is a free ticket to heaven no matter that your body is worked,
raped and sold down river to Georgia or Alabama, or even worse.**

ROTC and chaplains, paid by Beelzebub, the state, to comfort the dying soldiers and promise them they are heaven bound. Today our military budget is approximately 54 % of all the whole budget.

Never forget, the hub of the wheel for white supremacist theology is John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that she gave her only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." The centrality of the abuse of this passage lies in the ability of Ted Cruz and Franklin Graham to have Jesus saving souls and simultaneously advocating for war and hate. A demon of pro-slavery theology: The Christian (sic) monster-master, so the Word of God was proclaimed, was sanctioned to own a person's body and labor, but give them the gospel of salvation. Faith is a free ticket to heaven no matter that your body is worked, raped and sold down river to Georgia or Alabama, or even worse.

Listen to this Prophetic Proclamation.

Proclaim this among the nations:

Prepare war, stir up the warriors.
Let all the soldiers draw near,
let them come up.
Beat your plowshares into swords,
and your pruning hooks into spears;
let the weakling say, "I am a warrior."

(Joel 3:9-10 NRSV)

Joel's word in Holy Writ is to the majority. The Word of God, right? This proclamation applies not only to John Bolton, Michael Pompeo and 45, but also to churches which display the American flag in their building and/or on their grounds. Joel's "Thus saith the God of Hosts" confession of faith is a Word accepted by the majority of American Christians whether they know the verses or not. The Bible does give us a choice: Peace or War, Slave owning or Abolition, Heaven or hell (should you so believe in the angry God who

will send humans to everlasting torment for unbelief), white supremacy or equality, abortion or forced pregnancy, inclusion of all genders or damn to hell non-binary conforming children of God. In fact, the greatest African American leader of the 19th century, Frederick Douglass, came to believe that only revolutionary violence could unhinge the Slave Power from the blood-soaked soil of the South. He believed in the God of Justice who would send every slaveholder, slave-seller, overseer, slave spy and poor white patroller and even antislavery people who were anti-Black white racists like the majority of whites North and South to eternal torment for the horrific sins of slavery.

For ages in our short history, Black Liberationists also used the prophetic calls to violence as a means to establish freedom from slavery and white supremacy. Self-defense, armed and unarmed; rebellion and war are biblical means attempted and accomplished by the Prophets of Black Liberation in their drive for freedom and full social equality. Remember, even Harriet Tubman carried a pistol under her dress. War and war only freed the slaves and ended chattel slavery in the USA. Our broken 13th Amendment states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Formally abolishing chattel (thingification) slavery in the United States, the 13th Amendment was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified by the states on

December 6, 1865.

The 13th amendment does have a loophole for slavery. Prison slavery "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Here is the constitutional basis for mass incarceration. A form of housing where millions are housed; and detention centers where, in stink and filth, immigrants wait, ill-fed and sick. The slaves in the USA were Black, and white supremacy extended

its hate to include all people of color. Mass incarceration exists to control people of color by the shrinking white majority. Prison, like slavery, is based on violence, sexual exploitation, lies, dehumanization, corporate profits and the aims and purposes of white supremacy.

The anti-slavery movement in America learned in the 1850s that violence and ultimately war was the only solution to slavery. By 1861 even white pacifists like William Lloyd Garrison were following Frederick

Douglass in calling for war to free the slaves.

The American Peace Society was formed by William Ladd in 1828. The pacifist organization was opposed to war between nation states and thus "the Society ... did not oppose the American Civil War, regarding the Union's war as a 'police action' against the 'criminals' of the Confederacy."

Yes, Joel's accounting of the will of God has a stronger and longer role in American history than our beloved Isaiah and Micah passages hope for. God's Word seemingly provides justification for whites to control people of color and build an Empire; for people of color to maintain armed self-defense and to throw off the bonds of oppression.

Remember: Gabriel Prosser, Toussaint Louverture, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, The Civil War, Ida B. Wells, last phase of SNCC, Malcolm X, Black Panthers proclaimed violence as a means for freedom.

And then came Martin.

Martin Luther King Jr. denied the Word of God from Joel, claimed Isaiah and Micah. He lived a life of nonviolence and embodied the Black Jesus. One year to the day after he called the nation to stop the filthy little war in Vietnam, he was a dead man. Two years or so after Jesus preached non-violent resistance and love, he was a dead man. Robert Kennedy, picking up King's call to peace and nonviolence, ran for the nomination for president for the Democratic Party. A few months later he was a dead man. Heather Heyer went to Charlottesville to protest violent white supremacy. She is a dead woman.

So there we have it. To tell the truth and shame the devil about housing all depends on your choices as you read the Word of God. But can we tell the Black Jesus truth in the

Tell the Truth *continued on page 6*



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Voices & Views from Iraqi Kurdistan: May 24, 2019

By Weldon D. Nisly,

Greetings dear family and friends!

It is hard to believe only 10 days remain of my 10-week stint on the Christian Peacemaking Team / Iraqi Kurdistan (CPT / IK) team this spring (March 24-June 5). I am eager to be home again with family and enjoy summer in Seattle.

This article offers recent vignettes of life here.

Ramadan

Ramadan is an Islamic holy season that is every day everywhere in Iraqi Kurdistan. This year Ramadan is from May 5 to June 3. The call to prayer sounds from every mosque several times daily, including the Iibrihimi (Abraham) Mosque just down the street from our CPT home. The first call to prayer welcomes the rising sun before 4:00 a.m. and the last honors the setting sun about 8 p.m.

Muslims stream to Mosque to pray while fasting from sunrise to sunset. At sundown families feast together then gather on the street or visit extended family and friends. Many Muslims sleep during the day and many shops open late afternoon and long into the night.

I ponder what it would mean if Christians around the world were devoted to prayer and fasting from sunrise to sunset for a month. Imagine the transformation in us and the Church with a month of daily prayer and fasting and nightly feasting and hospitality.

As I write, I hear the Friday noon call to prayer and sermon over the Iibrihimi Mosque's loudspeakers, this being Islam's primary worship of the week. Imagine hearing the call to prayer and sermon as you view the Mosque from the roof of the CPT house.

Deir Maryam Monastery, Sulaimani

"Christ is risen!" proclaimed Fr. Jens. "Christ is risen indeed!" echoed the Easter assembly. It was 3:00 a.m. Easter Sunday. Twenty Christians from various countries assembled in the Deir Marayam Al-Adhra Monastery (Chaldean Catholic) for the Easter worship English service. Rebekah Dowling and I listened to the 2:15 a.m. call of the alarm clock to awaken and attend Easter worship in the monastery. Easter worship was followed by a Kurdish breakfast of lentil soup, bread, eggs and tea at the monastery. Back at the CPT house, Rebekah and I made Easter brunch that we enjoyed with our teammates and friends.

The Al-Khalil Community in Deir Maryam Al-Adhra (Virgin Mary Monastery) is a small Christian monastic community of eight men and women who live a big vision. It was founded by Fr. Paolo Dall'Oglio in Syria in 1982, based on a 6th-century Syriac monastic tradition of prayer, hand labor and hospitality, committed to Islamic and Christian reconciliation. Fr. Paolo was exiled by the Syrian government in 2012, then kidnapped by ISIS in July 2013 and was never heard from again. A portrait of Fr. Paolo is displayed in the monastery illuminated by the light of Christ symbolized by a candle. The monastery continues to embody Fr. Paolo's vision as a "place for Dialogue, Culture, Research and Inter-Religious Learning." In early May, the monastery held a multi-faith dialogue for peace conference.

The monastery recently opened a new women's guest house. Rebekah and I attended the opening blessing of the guest house along with about 300 of the monastery's friends, including local Muslim and Christian leaders and the regional governor.

Gulistan Saeed

CPT met with Gulistan Saeed, a Member of Parliament in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil. We met her on May 21 on behalf of the families of six men from the mountain village of Deraluk who were bombed by Turkish warplanes. Four bodies have been found but two are still missing.

CPT has been working with these families to find their missing loved ones, including meeting with regional political leaders. These efforts have been met with political passing-the-buck responses. In Gulistan Saeed, CPT has found a compassionate person who cares about human suffering from



Photographs by Weldon Nisly

Above: *The Iibrihimi Mosque's tower rises over the neighborhood.*

Right: *Father Jens welcomes the guests to Easter worship.*

Below (from left): *CPT / IK team members Rosemarie Milazzo (U.S.), Kamaran Osman (Kurdistan), Weldon Nisly (U.S.), Rebekah Dowling (Australia), and Gulistan Saeed, meeting in the KRG Parliament, Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan.*



bombing and a political leader who cares about human rights violations. She told us that as a mother and grandmother she can imagine the grief of losing a family member and as a Member of Parliament, it is her responsibility.

A few years ago, after 25 years as a human rights and women's rights activist, Gulistan Saeed decided to seek change within the political system. Elected as a Member of Parliament of the KRG, she was granted her request to serve on the human rights committee.

Gulistan welcomed the CPT / IK team to the KRG Parliament and listened as we shared the Deraluk families' sorrow and request for assistance. She promised to take their case to her committee and to an independent Kurdish human rights committee to help the families find their missing loved ones. She also expressed eagerness to work with CPT on future human rights cases and encouraged CPT to bring these Deraluk families to Erbil to meet with other Members of Par-

liament. She recommended that CPT and the families have a press conference to help the people of Iraqi Kurdistan and the world hear the traumatic impact of Turkey's cross-border bombing of civilians.

In a poignant moment, Gulistan Saeed reminded us that Kurdish people, even Kurdish politicians, have little influence on Turkey. Speaking especially to Rosemarie and me as U.S. citizens, she said that the United States could exert stronger political pressure on Turkey than other nations and urged us to talk to our government. We explained that another CPT teammate from the U. S., Julie Brown, was in Washington, D.C. a few days earlier, meeting with State Department officials to deliver messages from our Kurdish partners affected by

Turkey's bombardment and to call on the U.S. to put pressure on Turkey to stop cross-border bombing in Iraqi Kurdistan. We promised Gulistan Saeed that we will continue to seek support from politicians in the U.S. to call for Turkey to stop bombing civilians.

We lamented that the United States leads the world in imposing militarized responses to political conflicts and defining the war on terrorism, which Turkey uses to justify bombing civilians in Iraqi Kurdistan. Confronting U.S. warring madness is always challenging. The current chaos presuming to lead with bellicose bullying and brazen warmongering makes this task seem more futile but also makes Just Peacebuilding more essential.

For the people of the Middle East, where history spans the biblical narrative to the 21st century, issuing genocidal threats and implementing military escalation is not distant empty rhetoric. It is life-threatening militarized meanness and madness. Yet life and love here go on for those who are attuned to the endless warring madness of distant powers while living daily life with a well-honed spiritual detachment.

Our CPT / IK team is closely monitoring the warring madness, yet goes on with daily life committed to "Building partnerships to transform violence and oppression" while basking in the beauty of the streams and mountains of Kurdistan and enjoying the hospitality of our Kurdish friends.

Peace will never come by building walls and waging war. Peace will only come through building relationships across boundaries and building bridges across barriers that needlessly divide us and seek to destroy all that God has and is creating. We are co-creators with God in Christ who is our peace. (Paul's Letter to the Ephesians).

Together in the Jesus uprising! ♣

After 40 years of Mennonite Church ministry that included community, pastoral and peace ministries, Weldon Nisly currently devotes himself to Contemplative JustPeace building and work with Christian Peacemaker Teams. He is a Benedictine Oblate. His life is dedicated to the abolition of war. Weldon serves half-time on the CPT Iraqi Kurdistan team and also was on the CPT Palestine team in Hebron in September-October 2017 and August-September 2018.

The Gift of Vulnerability

By Joyce Hollyday

The jangle of an incoming text woke me from a deep sleep. “We’re in trouble,” it began. It was 5:16 a.m. California time. I was 2,000 miles from home, jet-lagged and groggy. I managed to send a reply to Michael along the lines of “Be there as soon as I can.”

Michael Galovic and Tamara Puffer met almost 25 years ago at the Open Door Community. He was a Resident Volunteer there when she showed up to help out in the Soup Kitchen with the youth group from a suburban Atlanta Presbyterian church where she served as the associate pastor. Tamara kept coming back. Her time at the Open Door reshaped her theology and calling, and she began seeking a position where she could serve marginalized people like the homeless ones and former prisoners who were revealing Jesus to her there in transformative ways.

In August 1996, just three months after they married, both Tamara and Michael sustained brain injuries in a car accident, Tamara’s the more serious. I was in Atlanta then, just starting my second year of seminary at Emory and spending a lot of time at the Open Door. I remember the shock of the news and the prayers that went up from many corners.

One of the great joys of my life is working with people to bring their life journeys into print, and Tamara’s, I knew, is among the most extraordinary.

Tamara spent two weeks in an induced coma and then, though she wasn’t fully aware of it at the time, woke up to a totally different life. She had to relearn how to walk and speak and write. A former professional violinist, she no longer possessed the mental focus or manual dexterity to play, and she had to climb out of an abyss of despair to accept that she would never again serve a church as its minister.

Tamara and I caught up with each other again years later when we were both living in Asheville, North Carolina. She asked if I would help her write a book. One of the great joys of my life is working with people to bring their life journeys into print, and Tamara’s, I knew, is among the most extraordinary. I felt honored by the invitation.

It took us three years to birth *Forgetting the Former Things*. During Tamara’s long rehabilitation after the accident, on nights when dread had kept her from falling asleep, words from the 43rd chapter of Isaiah echoed through her mind: “Do not remember the former things. . . . I am about to do a new thing.” The book title is a double entendre that speaks of both the memory challenges that result from brain injury and the need to let go of what once was in order to be open to re-imagining one’s life.

Throughout our work, I was moved by Tamara’s heart, courage and perseverance. The challenge of writing a book seemed at times overwhelming, and more than once she considered giving up, but always she found the strength to keep on. We can all rejoice that she did. *Forgetting the Former Things* is a rare tapestry of first-person faith journey woven with gritty theological reflection and persistent hope.

In June 2017, with the book almost finished, we were at Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles, where we were scheduled to lead a workshop at the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability. Travel is particularly difficult for many people with brain injuries, and the “trouble” came to Tamara as a result of the stress, disorientation and overstimulation of a cross-country trip via two of the world’s busiest airports, compounded by jet lag and lack of sleep. Michael’s early-morning text was the beginning of a grueling, heartbreak day that ended with Tamara being taken by police and emergency medical workers to a behavioral health hospital.

Forgetting the Former Things

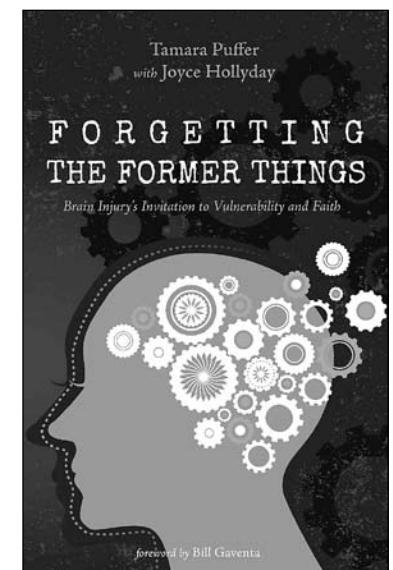
Brain Injury’s Invitation to Vulnerability and Faith

By Tamara Puffer with Joyce Hollyday

Wipf and Stock Publishers

Feb 11, 2019

132 pages



“This is the worst thing that could have happened,” I lamented to Michael, both of us raw from concern and exhaustion. I thought of all the time spent planning our workshop, and Tamara’s excitement and anticipation of it, now all lost. Three days later I was shocked when she announced upon her release from the hospital that she wanted to offer the workshop at a rescheduled time. She went right to work modifying it to incorporate the recent trauma.

My fear that the experience was a setback that would derail completion of *Forgetting the Former Things* evaporated when Tamara instead gave it a prominent place in the book. She wrote that, in a world of fast food and instant communication, of cutthroat competition and the illusion of self-sufficiency, where busyness and stress are considered normal, “Those of us who ‘can’t keep up’ can be teachers. . . . Those of us with disabilities offer the world the gift of our vulner-

life-shattering moment I had gone from feeling like someone in control — with a clear career path, the privilege of choice and a measure of power — to being an invisible person on the sidelines, merely trying to cope with each challenge as it came and get through each hour as it unfolded. I wasn’t simply feeling called to ministry among the marginalized. I was the marginalized.”

After California, Tamara began embracing a calling that she has named “minister of vulnerability.” At the workshop there, and wherever she and I have spoken to crowds about her recently published book, her story moves others to share their own. As they pour out their deepest fears and longings, often with great emotion, I think about how much this world needs Tamara Puffer’s ministry. And I whisper a prayer of thanks for her courage. ♦

Joyce Hollyday, a writer and pastor living in Vermont, has been a friend of the Open Door for four decades. Her blog can be found at www.joycehollyday.com.



Freedom, a sculpture by Zenos Frudakis

Tell the Truth and Shame the Devil *continued from page 4*

Church? I think not, for I have never heard it. Where do you live? Why do you live there? What are the consequences for others that you live where you do? What is the difference between your liberal intentions and your white supremacist outcomes?

The Word of God gives us choices. Which side are you on? Are you Pro-War or Anti-War? Are you for violence or non-violence? Do you believe the first will be first and number one? Or do you believe the last shall be first? Do you support Alabama and Georgia and their giant steps toward ending abortion? Or are you thankful for the state of Maryland,

where even with the demolition of Roe v Wade, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh’s daughters will be able to keep the state off their bodies?

And what about Jesus and housing? Was Jesus born in a barn? Or a house? Come back in August and make your choice. We have a choice! ♦

Eduard Nuessner Loring is an Activist/Advocate/Ally at the Open Door Community in Baltimore. Pronouns: he, him, his. (edloring@opendoorcommunity.org)

To Be a Mother or Not. Who Decides? *continued from page 1*

These laws should be called forced pregnancy laws rather than anti-abortion — and certainly not “pro-life.” Governor Kay Ivey signed the Alabama law into effect with a pious oration about respect for all life; two days later she signed off on the execution of Christopher Lee Price, an adult human being who had spent many years on Alabama’s death row. A few weeks earlier, Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia droned on and on about how much courage he and others showed in passing this hideous law to ban all abortions with no exceptions for rape or incest. (These folks would never abide by such a law if their daughters or granddaughters were in need.) This month Kemp is proposing to purge 17,000 to 30,000 elderly and disabled Georgians from access to Medicaid. What does it mean to want to preserve the life of a fetus and take away life-sustaining medical care from the most vulnerable adults among us? Georgia has never expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and this causes thousands of premature and unnecessary deaths every year. Now Mr. Kemp wants to take away more, which will cause many more deaths. Pro-life? I don’t think so.

The conversation that we are failing to have is that, in the era that maternal deaths are growing, we are creating hateful laws that will make it all worse. More women will die. We can outlaw abortion, but we will not stop abortion. When abortion is illegal it is not medically regulated. What this means is that some women will be involuntarily sterilized or otherwise injured, and some women will die. We have already lived through an era of back alley abortions and it is very ugly. Most people my age remember and knew women who tried to abort themselves or who depended on medically unregulated abortionists. And many of us know women who died. Do the extremists give a damn about the lives of these women? Do they care about the death of women? Do the extremists know anything about the desperation that drives some women to seek abortion? Many women are coming forward in the press to tell their stories (some of them for the first time) about rapes and seeking abortions earlier in their lives.

This battle is far from over. With the addition of Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court, the aspiration of the extreme right wing is to get one of the new laws before the Court and let them reverse Roe v. Wade. This might very well happen. If it does, we will open a door to new levels of suffering among women who have lost the capacity to make crucial and life-altering decisions about their own lives. Abortions will go on, but at what price?

What I am writing will be painful to some people whom I love very much. I have friends and longtime co-workers who believe deeply in the Seamless Garment — a branch of the pro-life movement that opposes war, the death penalty and abortion. I do not believe that most of them would support the kinds of laws that have recently passed in the U.S.

What does it mean to want to preserve the life of a fetus and take away life-sustaining medical care from the most vulnerable adults among us?

But this movement that is roaring through our body politic is not driven by this set of beliefs. This is the minority rule, led by right-wing white supremacist Republican men who are war-mongering supporters of the death penalty and violent police actions, and who oppose anything at all that would help the poor, minority people, disabled people, or women. The current direction of this political movement will mean more death for more people, especially women. The clear opposite is that the majority female legislature of Nevada (the first in U.S. history) has just made their state a safe harbor for legal and medically regulated abortions. Vox news service wrote: “Supporters of the bill in Nevada, which has the country’s first majority-women legislature, characterized the bill as a step in the right direction as the rest of the country moves in the wrong one.”

There are alternatives to the ugly future of more maternal death. If we really do honor motherhood — if we really do honor life — there is so much we can do to provide health and well-being where health and well-being are threatened.

Instead of using all this energy to make things worse, we could work to make things better. As the rate of maternal death began to rise several years ago, one state in the U.S. took action: California. Through a coordinated effort, medical centers, nurse-midwife groups, ob-gyns and public health officials have produced manuals, collected data and changed the way that birthing centers and delivery rooms are set up. (A simple example is that the blood banks have been re-located closer to delivery rooms so that if a woman begins to hemorrhage during birth, precious time is not wasted while someone sprints to the other end of a hospital to bring life-saving blood.) Because of the many changes, women giving birth in California are much more likely to live through the period before, during and after giving birth. California is now

working with other states to train and reorganize the medical processes around birthing to increase safety and health for women and their children. California alone has rates of maternal well-being more in line with Western Europe than a third world country. Georgia, Alabama and Missouri are more like third world countries.

Becoming a mother nearly 40 years ago was the most precious experience of my life. And becoming a grandmother is not equaled by any other joy I know. But it is often not the experience of women who go into pregnancy when they live in grinding poverty or with critical untreated health problems or lack of pre-natal care — or when they have been raped or victimized by incest. We can use our political energy and will to make things better or to make things worse for each other. Which would you prefer? ♦

Murphy Davis is an Activist Pastor and writer with the Open Door Community in Baltimore. (murphydavis@bellsouth.net)

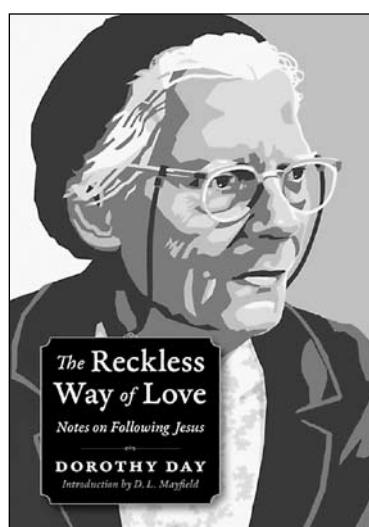
Listen With Your Heart

By Rosalie Riegle

Those who learn of Dorothy Day — either by meeting her as Murphy Davis and Ed Loring did back in 1980, or as we do now through her writings and the work of those who write about her — often find in her exactly what they need at the time. When I met Dorothy, we were in the throes of that ghastly Vietnam War, and she kept me and thousands of other anti-war activists on the path of nonviolence in our protests. Later, I fell in love with her conversion, her coming to the Church through joy; and still later, living in a house of hospitality, I learned from her patience and was guided by her sensible and sometimes surprising stories of what it’s like to see Jesus in the face of the poor.

Reading *The Reckless Way of Love* is exactly what I need in this stage of my life, when I’m slowing down a bit and becoming more comfortable with silence. Editor Carolyn Kurtz has accomplished something no one else has done: With grace and thoughtful care, she has chosen selections from Dorothy’s voluminous writings that show how she grew closer to God during her many years leading the movement and living with the forgotten.

Dorothy’s courageous public persona is muted and, instead, we learn of her interior life, with selections chosen primarily from two big beautiful books edited by Robert Ellsberg, her letters in *All the Way to Heaven* and her diaries in *The Duty of Delight*. The slim volume published by our



Bruderhof friends at Plough Publishing distills the spiritual essence of these diaries and letters, as well as selections from Dorothy’s words written for publication. The book is clearly organized and sensibly annotated, so it’s easy to find the original sources. One caveat is her use of the Robert Coles book, *A Radical Devotion*. While the words he reports are inspiring, scholars now cast doubt on his methodology.

The Restless Way of Love is small enough to carry and is organized into five sections, so it’s easy to return to the words one needs at the moment and I’ve found it a wonderful companion to the psalms during morning prayer. In “A Way of Faith,” we hear her praying to help her unbelief, to

The Reckless Way of Love

Notes on Following Jesus

by Dorothy Day, Edited by Carolyn Kurtz

Plough Publishing House

149 pages

live by faith, to take heart when all looks dark, and to remember that “all will be well,” as Julian of Norwich writes. “A Way of Love” reminds us to love our neighbor as God loves us and “A Way of Prayer” asks Jesus to teach us to pray both in petition and thanksgiving.

“A Way of Love” speaks of the relationships between love, suffering and loss and the mysterious beauty of it all. The final section, “A Way of Community” speaks to everyone, whether living in community or mostly alone, calling to mind Dorothy’s unflinching recognition that community is always flawed but also that “all will be fed” with food for the body and solace to the soul.

St. Benedict in his famous Rule invites his readers to “listen with the ear of the heart.” *The Reckless Way of Love* makes it easy to listen to Dorothy’s “notes on following Jesus” with a heart that can grow more courageous and compassionate through the years, as Dorothy’s did. Read it, again and again. ♦

Rosalie Riegle, a grandmother of seven, volunteers at Su Casa Catholic Worker in Chicago. She is the compiler of several oral histories, including Dorothy Day: Portraits by Those Who Knew Her.

The Box

By Eduard Loring

Now the rain is pouring as God cries for the murderous stupidity of white people and the history we have made. How could the Belgians do what they did to the Congolese? Profit, of course, but with such cruelty? Such disregard for human suffering and life? Where does the seed of whiteness come from? What fruits have we to offer that are wholesome to eat and bring strength to the human body, the body politic, the polis, the common good? Do we really need reconciliation at this point in white history or is there a greater work before we utter such words of golden coin? Repentance? What are the fruits of repentance in the Body of Christ and American culture? Want to know what I think? The first work is to establish justice and the place to begin is in the economic order.

How do we protect women in white supremacist, evangelical, roman catholic, Republican America? Fifty women a month are shot and killed by their partners. And now a white supremacist, evangelical, roman catholic, Republican American wants to outlaw abortion. Another woman killer. Why not read and put into practice The Sermon on the Mount, a sermon by Jesus Christ?

What do we writers in *Hospitality* mean when we speak of the death-dealing force of "white innocence"? Well, we have a new and clear example in a work just published. Number 3 on the NYT Best Seller list (May 19-25) is David McCullough's *The Pioneers*. McCullough forgets the horror of continued Native American annihilation and the later rise of the KKK as Free Blacks move into Ohio. The white reader of this book will find a false image of themselves. The reader of color will find the same old same old. The old narrative of white superiority. The times demand a New Narrative. Follow Brian Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative, David Blight and Ta Nehisi Coates, James Baldwin, Nibs Stroupe and Catherine Meeks and most particularly the Black Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels (for the most part). ♦

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Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Editor,

I finally got around to reading Ed's article in the May issue, "Chilled to the Bone." It brings back many memories of two Chicago Holy Weeks and five or six Holy Weeks in Atlanta, vigiling with the homeless on the streets. Finding a place out of the wind, with some cardboard underneath, makes all the difference on a cold night.

The "swarmed like bees" that Ed experienced in 1983 for the blankets is usually an early lesson learned when serving on the streets — it is important to plan ahead and distribute items in an orderly way.

1983 was the year we started the 250 bed Franciscan House of Mary and Joseph on Chicago's west side (210 beds for men, 40 beds for women). Although I've been away from Chicago 30 years now, the shelter is still open every night — coordinated by the Franciscans.

I still believe in the importance of easy access shelter, as for many homeless, each night has its own challenges. Glad to know that Open Door continues to reach out in Baltimore, after serving so well and lovingly over four decades in Atlanta.

Yours in Christ and Francis,

David Buer, ofm

Elfrida, Arizona

Brother David now lives in ministry on the U.S./Mexican border in Arizona.

With immense gratitude for all you have been and are doing for the poor, for convicts, for PEACE. I read *Hospitality* from cover to cover.

United in the Heart of Jesus,

Clare Pratt RSC

Atherton, California



Susan MacMurdy

Dear Ed,

During the middle '90s, I volunteered at the Open Door both for the meals and for the visits to Milledgeville. I gained so much from that time and from reading *Hospitality* over the years. Indeed, I just received the latest edition. However, I am moving overseas next week and I presume that the cost of mailing overseas would be quite prohibitive. So for now, I must ask you to remove me from the mailing list. When I return in a few years, I will reconnect and continue to learn from and support the ministry of the Open Door Community.

Thank you for all you are and do.

In divine love and friendship,

John Salatti

West Babylon, New York



Rita Corbin

Some Biblical Support for Humility

By Peter Gathje

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks, receives;

and the one who seeks, finds;
and to the one who knocks,

the door will be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8)

But at Manna House

we are not Jesus,
though we try to follow him.

So ask,
and we will give it to you,
if you are on the list for socks and hygiene, or for a shower,
and if we have it.

So seek,
and you will find it,
if we have it to share.
Knock,
and the door will be opened to you
if it is Monday, Tuesday or Thursday
during our regular hours.

For not everyone who asks, receives.

You have to be on the list.

And not everyone who seeks, finds.

Because we only offer a limited number of services.

And, not everyone who knocks,
will have the door opened.

Unless it is during our regular hours of hospitality. ♦

Peter Gathje is Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Memphis Theological Seminary, and 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@memphisseminary.edu)

Open Door Community Needs:

- Granola bars
- Stamps to write prisoners
- Prisoner support and prisoner family support

And now the great warm and hot weather needs:

- Tee shirts Sm/med/large/1X/2X. Lots and lots of them. We recently received a box from a partner-in-mission who went from thrift store to thrift store purchasing tee shirts for our guests. Thank you.
- White crew socks are particularly popular.
- Soon we will reduce the coffee and add iced tea and lemonade. One-gallon jugs are our need. In the summer we can serve up to 12 gallons a week.
- We always need financial support. Without you, the Open Door Community would not exist.

If you'd like to help,
Murphy, David, Ed, Simon, Erica and Tyrone thank you all.