

HOSPITALITY

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April 2007

Clarence Jordan, Koinonia, and The Open Door Community

By Steve Clemens

Editor's note: The following is adapted from remarks by Steve Clemens, July 16, 2006, at the Open Door Community's 25th anniversary celebration. Steve and Christine met and married during their days of living in the Koinonia Community, she for 20 years, he for 16. They have two sons, Micah and Zack. During their last several years at Koinonia, Steve served as Coordinator of the Community. They now live in Minneapolis, MN, where they are part of the St. Martin's Community. Steve has served several terms in federal prison for his nonviolent resistance against war and violence.

Clarence's Biography

Clarence Jordan was born in 1912 into a fairly prominent, well-to-do, white Southern family in Talbotton, Georgia. His brother went on to serve on the Supreme Court of Georgia and his nephew, Hamilton Jordan, served as Chief of Staff for President Carter. So Clarence came from this good Georgia stock. But something changed in him.

In "The Cotton Patch Evidence," which is a biography of both the Koinonia Community and Clarence, Dallas Lee talks about an experience Clarence had when he was twelve. He recalled singing "Love Lifted Me" at the local Baptist church on Sunday. Then, when he went home that night, he heard screams coming from the jail (his house was only a block or so away from the county jail). It was a man (almost certainly a black man) being pulled on "the stretcher," a rack with a pulley and chain. They were stretching him out and then beating him. Young Clarence knew that the warden of the jail, the man beating the prisoner, was a member of the choir at that Baptist church. The dissonance between the sweet strains of "Love Lifted Me" and the screams of the tortured prisoner made a mark on the conscience of that young boy.

At age 17, Clarence enrolled in the agriculture school at the University of Georgia. Like fellow members of the white, male, ruling class, Jordan signed up to become an officer in the ROTC unit — that's the heritage of the old Confederacy. Just before graduating with an officer's commission in the cavalry, he was practicing riding his horse and shooting and stabbing at cardboard and straw dummies. Clarence realized he couldn't keep doing this, because he recalled from his Sunday School teachings the words of Jesus to love our enemies. Again, the dissonance caused him to resign his ROTC commission and heed a call to seminary. So he graduated from the university and enrolled in the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. While there, he



Koinonia Community Photograph

started doing work in the African-American community and in churches in Louisville. He fell in love and married Florence Krueger, a local librarian, and they had four children: Jan, Jim, Eleanor, and Lenny.

Clarence also fell in love with Greek, *koiné* Greek, or "street Greek": the everyday language in which most of the New Testament was written. When he was teaching or preaching, Clarence carried his Greek New Testament and he'd just translate it on the spot. He stayed in Louisville to earn his doctorate in Greek, studying it to more fully understand the message of Jesus and the early group of disciples and believers. But he didn't remain a scholar in that ivory tower because, while at seminary, he had to do some practicum assignments; he ended up working in African-American churches, started meeting people, saw their needs, and had his heart changed. In 1942, during World War II, he met Martin and Mabel England, American Baptist missionaries to Burma who had returned to the U.S. because of the war. Clarence and Martin shared ideas and wondered aloud what it might be like to live in a way that replicated the life of the early church — committed to nonviolence, economic sharing, and racial reconciliation. They were excited about the Sermon on the Mount. They said, "We gotta try this out."

After looking for a potential site to practice their ideals, they purchased a rundown farm in Sumter County in southwest Georgia, about two-and-a-half hours south of Atlanta at today's driving speeds. They purchased it "on faith." Joyce Hollyday's "Clarence Jordan: Essential Writings" contains Clarence's re-telling. (*Editor's note: We highly recommend Hollyday's volume — published by Orbis Press, 2003 — as an introduction to Clarence Jordan.*)

When we started that thing, we were supposed to pay the fellow twenty-five hundred dollars down. And Martin England, who was a missionary under the

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to Burma — he and I agreed on the common purse — we were going to pool everything — and I had the idea Martin was loaded. I don't know why I should think that — [he] being an American Baptist missionary. But he talked, "Let's do this" and "Let's do that," and I said, "Yeah, let's do," and I thought he had the money.

So when we finally pooled our common assets, we had fifty-seven dollars and thirteen cents—and both of us had resigned our jobs. But on the first day of November 1942, right on the button, we walked in that real estate office and put down that twenty-five hundred dollars. A fellow brought it to us, said the Lord had sent him with it. I didn't question him, where he'd been talking to the Lord or anything like that. We'd take it right quick, before the Lord changed his mind (Hollyday, pp. 18-19).

So Clarence and Florence, Martin and Mabel, and their kids moved to Sumter County. For the first five, six, seven, eight years, Clarence was still the "golden boy" — in demand as a preacher in the local churches. Clarence could talk and talk, but when he "put flesh" on those words, there was a different reaction. One Sunday, in 1950, a man from India was visiting Koinonia, so Florence and Clarence took him to church with them. Since the dark-skinned foreigner was a convert to Christianity because of the work of Baptist missionaries, the Jordans didn't think it would raise any issues with the members at Rehoboth Baptist Church, just up the road from the farm community. But the people at Rehoboth said, "We don't allow 'colored people' to worship with us."

The church felt the Koinonians were trying to "integrate" their fellowship and voted the next week to expel Clarence and Florence from that Baptist church. Tensions kept rising. The reason they were kicked out of the church was not just that they brought a man of color into worship; it was because the word started getting around — "Hey, this guy not only talks this Christianity stuff, but they're eatin' together at Koinonia. These black and white folk are eatin' together and workin' together."

That was the radical thing. Clarence could talk all he wanted about racial reconciliation — that didn't matter — but when they started eatin' together — that was a *big* issue.

In 1956, Clarence "sponsored" two black students to attend a business college in Atlanta. When the newspaper carried the story that this white man from outside Americus was trying to "integrate" the university

Koinonia, continued on page 8

Denmark and Scotland: Two Responses

Editor's note: Hospitality received these two responses to "Hunger and Eating," by Eduard-the-Agitator Loring, which appeared in the March 2007 issue.

Dr. Jens Norby is a retired professor of biophysics, physiology and biochemistry from The Medical Faculty, University of Aarhus, in Århus, Denmark. Along with his wife Grete, Jens has visited the Open Door Community many times while visiting their daughter Charlotta Norby and her husband Steve Bright, both attorneys with the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta. Charlotta has been a faithful volunteer with our community for many years and we are grateful for our friendship with her and her family. We welcome Jens to the pages of Hospitality.

Dear Brother Eduard-the-Agitator,

This is an attempt to answer, or rather comment on, your questions and statements in your recent article. My answer is not a result of any scientific knowledge about the issues concerned. I read the papers and other texts; my wife and I participate attentively in some of the debates, on TV for example, and make our observations from a long life in this country (spiced with intellectually profitable stays abroad). I am a member of a Center Party — only a small fraction of those actually voting for a particular party are members.

Without knowing the precise definition and the exact political meaning of the term "Democratic Socialism," I believe that the political and social system in Denmark adheres closely to those ideas (doctrines) and are generally practised like that.

You know that health care and public welfare, including benefits for those without home and work, is extensive in Denmark. The health issues are generally

free of charge: hospitals — there are private hospitals but my family and I have never used one — general and special practitioners (doctors), ambulances, etc. Dental care and glasses are subsidized — the lower the income, the greater the subsidy. Welfare also concerns child care (where you pay some, but a place in the kindergarten is guaranteed), free schools (private schools are heavily subsidized, 90 percent), free university education, care for the elderly both in their home and in protected living or nursing homes, where you are also guaranteed a space.

A new welfare reform was agreed upon last fall in Danish Parliament, by five parties comprising close to 90 percent of the seats. This shows certain important basic agreements across the political spectrum. Seventy percent of the Danes prefer better schools, child care and care for the elderly *instead of tax decrease*. With two years to the next election, welfare is a very hot issue and there is a political battle developing between government and opposition — in spite of the fact that welfare is high and, as mentioned, there has just been a reform. Things can always be made better: "Quality" is a keyword. It is noteworthy that both sides want the public sector to play a decisive and more pronounced role with better use of civil servants. The "right-wing" parties used to favor the public sector, but that has changed. Precipitated by the shift of a prominent left-wing politician to an important government party, the evident opinion of many Danes is



Julie Lonneman

and other life-threatening or disabling diseases. Inclusion of Scandinavian and German hospitals and doctors make these goals possible. These services are free of charge for the patients, like all other charges in the hospitals.

You mention the relationship in Scotland between the Presbyterian Church and the Socialist/Labor Party. Neither God nor Religion is a part of the political discussion or decision-making (as regards legislative, executive or judiciary matters) in Denmark. No church or mosque (e.g. Lutheran or Islamic) is aligned with any political party or football team.

In regard to the new Symphony Hall in Atlanta, I understand that the public expenses are estimated to be \$300 million, and now you ask yourself (and I join you in asking): "How many children's lives could we save with that?"

For a recent comparison, a new opera house in Copenhagen (\$400 million) was donated to the Danish state (and Copenhagen) by the richest private enterprise in the country, the world-renowned shipping company Mærsk. At the same time, Danish Radio (public radio and TV) is moving into a new complex built for \$600 million and paid for by the Danish state, in other words, by

that the traditional left/right division no longer exists in Danish politics and state of affairs.

There is a politically guaranteed health rule that only a short time must elapse between the diagnosis, examination and treatment of cancer

taxpayers. The question of whether this money should rather have been used for saving children's lives or health here or in the developing countries, by Mærsk or by the State of Denmark, has never been an issue, to my knowledge. The general public (or many of them) acknowledge the performing arts and accept that the operation of the opera, theatres and Denmark's radio (we pay a fee to watch TV) is subsidized by a great deal of state money. So in fact people want both the saving of children's lives *and* access to the performing arts.

But in Denmark, we do a pretty good job of caring for the children. And we can afford to do both. So in your situation, it should be a both/and rather than either/or. That is for democracy to decide. Who will go to the opera, the symphony hall, or The Royal Danish Theater? For the vast majority, I believe that it is not a question of economic priority. Perhaps the less well-to-do will not go as often as the rich?

We had a GNP of close to \$150 billion last year with a record-high surplus of close to \$15 billion, i.e., "lots of money in the bank." We are paying off our debts, we do not want lower taxes, and we are the most content people in the world (I guess that shows). Is Georgia poor or is it just mismanaged?

I would say to Dave: It seems to me that your current system could improve and that the struggle is worthwhile.

With best wishes for the future,
Father Jens-The-Pacifier

Rev. Dr. Norman Shanks is the Pastor of the Govan Old Parish in Glasgow, Scotland, and he served as Leader of the Iona Community from 1995-2002. He

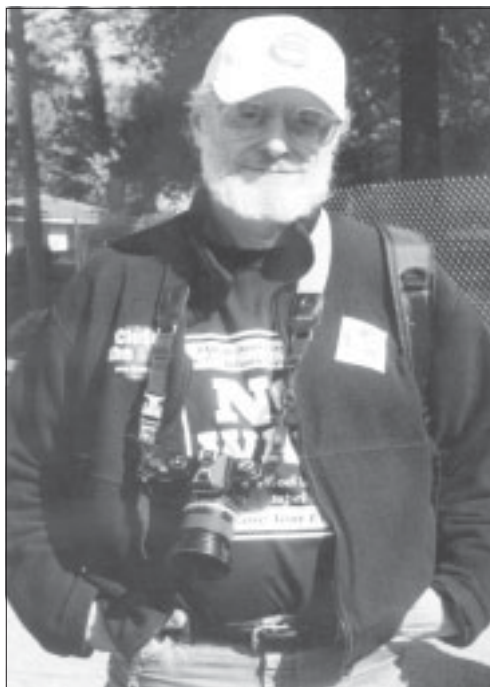
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HOSPITALITY

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Hey, Hey, Hey

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and White Racism

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Part I

By Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring

Editor's note: On Jan. 12, 2007, as a part of King Week in Atlanta, Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring, a Partner at the Open Door Community, spoke at the Social Forum at First Iconium Baptist Church on Dr. King and white racism. The following is adapted from his remarks. Eduard dedicates this article to Molly Ivins, a discernor of the signs of the times, who died Jan. 31, 2007.

"These are revolutionary times. Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism and militarism."

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Hello. My name is Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring. I am a recovering white racist.

In the fateful year of 1441, the world shook, and Western culture along with the Christian church rattled and whirled. And tonight they are slowly and with great effort attempting, by little and by little, to rebuild from the shattering of their moral and economic foundations.

On a dying day, Antonio Gonzales kidnapped 12 Africans. He took them as a gift to his emperor — Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal — who, in turn, gave them to his Pope, Eugenius IV. The Pope said, "Thank you." And the world has never been the same.

What if? Oh, what if the Vicar of Christ had said, "No, thank you. Set these human beings, made in the image of God, free right now"? What if the Pope and the church had believed that Moses and Miriam way down in Egyptland 2,500 years earlier had something to say to folk in their day, or to us in our day? What if the gospel, which is liberty to captives and goodnews to the poor, had been informing the church when the "thank you" was spoken for human flesh stolen from their homes like the Cherokees of north Georgia?

Ah, but the Pope would not say no, nor later most Protestants, nor the democratic revolutions of the 18th century, nor the rise of capitalism, secular ethics and law. No one would say no, except a few radicals on the margins of Empire — and they were persecuted by the big church. Therefore, we are here tonight to talk about white racism, because all the folk who could not say no were and are white. I am deeply sorry and I carry in my heart and in my flesh the wound of racism, the horrible and bitter fruit which continues into this night to set our teeth on edge as we attempt to wash the black blood from our hands — and find new hearts rooted in justice, the remaking of the church and society, affirmative action, reconciliation, and the freedom movement of "Black and White" together. Thank you, Dr. King. I love you and your marginalized living radical legacy with all my heart, soul, and strength.

1441 was the year of the death of the white soul. Or, if not the death, at least the year that our white souls were put on ice. 1526 is the year of America's downfall, which is not only expressed in our white racism woven into every fabric of our democratic and economic garments, but in the way we are falling down tonight in Iraq. The way we killed and killed and killed the tan folk of Vietnam even unto our own defeat. The way we dropped the atom bomb upon the yellow folk of Japan, directed by a Southern Baptist Christian president. In 1526, on the earth that today goes by the name of South Carolina — the state today which is No. 1 in America for the

number of hungry people and first for the number of hate groups — slavery was introduced, welcomed, and established in America. God forbid. Racism was born, draconian, malignant like a cancer of the eyes and ears, turning white people into hateful little mindless monads of misery. And in a couple of hundred years, the best minds of the mainline churches were defending slavery as the will of the God of Miriam, Moses, and Jesus — and proving it on the basis of the Bible and the words of a drunk man that God has cursed Africans and their offspring and that curse is for all time to come. Africans and African Americans are to be the white folks' slaves. Wow. What pain and shame. What have we done? What have we done? What shall we do? What shall we do?

The two greatest tragedies of American history are, first and foremost, the slavery of Black folk and the institutionalization of slavery into every aspect of American life and culture. Second, oh what a tragedy it is that no whites, no Europeans, were enslaved. If we had just put, say, 25,000 white folk into slavery, then we would have no white racism. Slavery and race would not have been combined to form the cruellest and most damaging system of slavery in the Western world until Hitler's "Arbeit Macht Frei" work camps for Jews, homosexuals, labor organizers, communists, and the handful of Christians who said "no." And our present-day labor pools have the stench of both slavery and death camps when you enter the little rooms where black men, mostly, stand and starve for work.

So here we are tonight. A little group of folk working with a great chorus of ancestors and other progressives around this city and this nation to undo racism and the fundamental flaw of the Western world and the Christian Church. Sometimes I — who adore Jesus, The Human One, and find my life's meaning in the one-eyed gospels and Paul's revolutionary interpretation of the radical Jesus — get the bread of the Eucharist stuck in my throat and strangle on the juice of communion. Help us, O God. Help us.

Dr. King still sings without stammer: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." In our shared garment of destiny, we know that evil is in our midst, is well fed and well rested, is ready and waiting for us like a bully is waiting for the small child at the bus stop. Evil is everywhere and in our lives. The powers and principalities have adjusted to 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka*, 1964 The Civil Rights Act, and the 1965 The Voting Rights Act. So what is new?

Racism is domination, death, oppression, white hate (and apathy) over, against, on top of, and in the ditch with Black folk. White racism is white power, pogrom, the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot/Massacre, money in Buckhead, violence in the Fulton County Jail, Black on Black homicide, privilege, Democratic and Republican Parties, historical analysis, dirty lying preachers, police power, prisons, the death penalty, hunger, Grady Hospital always teetering on the brink of disaster, Milton County, homelessness, Central Atlanta Progress, and Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital choking on the fumes of the fires of for-profit medicine burning the flesh of our children. It's bell curves, a MARTA ride at \$1.75 before a one-mile walk home because rich moguls want to keep it hard for poor and Blacks to get easily to their neighborhoods after the garbage truck has departed, poverty . . . American History from the top down or from the bottom up. This is white racism.

What'd you say? What'd you say? What is white



Robert Hodgell

racism? Belittlement. Death from the cradle to the school to the prison to the labor pool to the streets to the prison to picking cotton at Reidsville Maximum Security State Prison to the streets to Grady to death.

And Juan Williams and Bill Cosby telling you (excepting Condoleezza White Rice and Clarence Thomas, who pulled themselves up with affirmative action and silk stockings adorning the white soles of their feet) that you are lazy, no good, stinking, and a disgrace — while the powers are planning to get you into the military so you can kill for the gas needed to fuel SUV's and first-class flights to Bermuda for breakfast served by real Africans in white coats and white gloves.

What the hell do you mean, "What is white racism?" It is you and I.

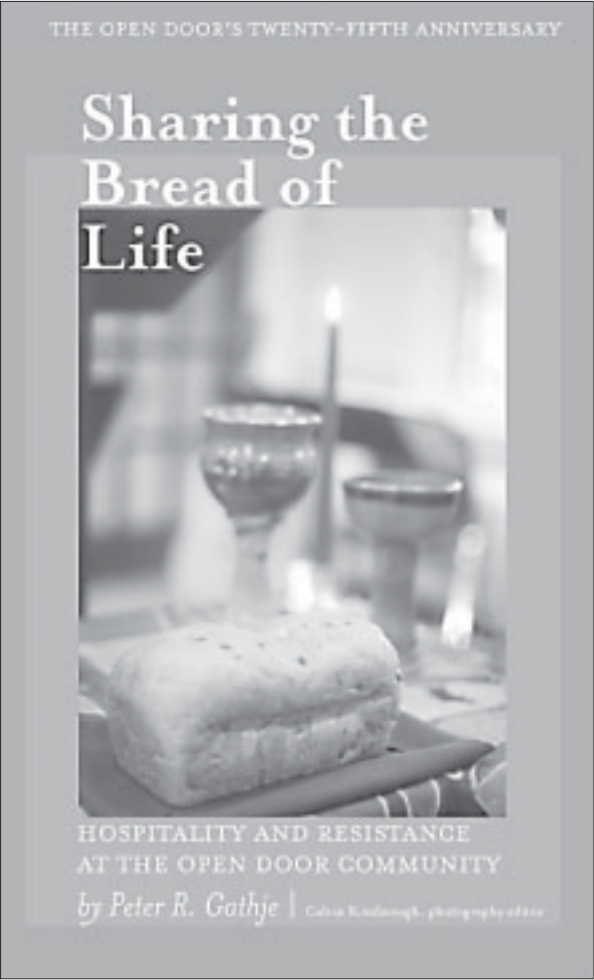
And in Atlanta you can't pee, ask for bread, find housing, picnic in the parks (AJ and his big boys took the benches out of Woodruff Park to keep the Black poor out. From 1886-1964, this was called Jim Crow), or get through the security guards at the big-steeple churches unless you are Black and white-like and moneyed.

That is white racism. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had

Hey, Hey, Hey, *continued on page 4*

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Sharing the Bread of Life Hospitality and Resistance At the Open Door Community

By Peter R. Gathje

Thank you for the wonderful book, “Sharing the Bread of Life” by Peter Gathje. It is great! Will you please tell him how much it has been enjoyed? In spite of being connected to you all over a long period of time, and feeling we knew a good deal about the ministry, his book filled us in so well on all the beginnings and the growth parts of the story, with which we were less familiar. It was also so good to read many names we recognized and to know those dear friends are still serving at the “OD.”

*Love to all,
Mason and Bobbie Ellison
West Hartford, Connecticut*

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Hey, Hey, Hey, *continued from page 3*

his head splattered to pieces, shot down on the way to supper, about the time teachers from white segregationist Christian academies and Westminster School were getting home for the evening Holy Week prayers. King was murdered because he said:

NO to white racism
NO to war
NO to capitalism and consumerism

and

YES to Sisterhood and Brotherhood
YES to Negotiation and Peace in Vietnam
YES to Democratic Socialism
YES to the Garbage Strikers in Memphis
YES to the mule trains, walkers and buses heading
To D.C. for the Poor People’s Campaign

Of course he was shot down with his hands in his pockets after playing pillow fight with Andy Young.

In Marks, Mississippi, King wept like Jesus in Jerusalem. Standing on the dirt floor of a sharecropper’s shack where there was no share for the cropper, he smelled racism. He saw, heard, tasted, touched, and felt in his guts below his belt white racism. He wept, turned toward Memphis. Perhaps he vomited.

Racism is rooted in white power over people of color, especially economic domination and oppression. White racism is not so much prejudice but injustice. Racism is a structure, a system, a principality, a benefit and privilege for white people. Often whites are blind, deaf, and apathetic to the hell and suffering that bleeds red blood upon them. Often white racism is expressed in public policy, like tax cuts and denuding the Peach Care insurance for poor families. Sometimes, when the third round of cocktail glasses are empty, or the blacks have left the office or construction site, or Trent Lott is tipsy at Strom Thurmond’s last birthday party, the demonic and crippling ideology of white supremacy raises its horny head and crossed eyes and blathers that blacks are monkeys, inferior, dumb, inept, sex machines, and unable. Keep your eyes on Obama.

Not long after King’s transforming experience in Marks, Mississippi, he received a telephone call while in his office sitting among his Southern Christian Leadership Conference associates. Silence gripped the room as all turned their attention to the audible side of the conversation. Rev. Jim Lawson, expelled from Vanderbilt Divinity School for acting like Jesus in the Temple although with less violence to people and property, was a teacher and inspiration in King’s life. Lawson had deepened King’s understanding and practice of Gandhi + Jesus = non-violent direction action = the revolutionary dimension of the civil rights movement. (And now that we are once more igniting the fires under ourselves for the fulfillment of the Poor People’s Campaign, this formula is the basis for the “revolution of values” and the “remaking of the soul of America” as a home of Democratic Socialism and a land of hospitality for all.)

Lawson articulated the cry of the poor, which contains the call of Jesus, The Human One, which King heard and which made him offer his body as a living sacrifice. Help, Lawson pleaded. We need you to come to Memphis and help us with the garbage workers’ strike. Two human beings had been smashed in the back of the garbage truck. One while eating lunch, because he could not find a place where he would not be abused for being Black. The city refuses to recognize the sanitation union. Help.

His comforters heard the cry. Responding as they had when King stepped out against war: “No, no, no, don’t go!”

Said Martin: “I got to go. We got to go.”
“What about the Poor People’s Campaign?”

“This is just what the Poor People’s Campaign is about. Memphis will be our testing ground.”
“Don’t go! We don’t have enough time. We don’t have enough people. We don’t have enough money. Please don’t go.”
“I got to go.” He pauses. Sees strange fruit swaying in the Georgia forests, hears the scream of a man being compacted as garbage. Hears fang-faced white men say he is garbage. *“I want to go!”*
He went. Radical, ready for a revolution of values, for an Economic Bill of Rights, for the end to the ravages in Vietnam, for a new political order based on equality. He went. Ready and able into white racist America head-on.

He was put to death
Like Jesus, The Human One, Gandhi, Medgar
Evers, Jonathan Daniels
By a white man
By a white system
By white hatred and the irrational fears that whites
have of themselves
That neither the Ku Klux Klan in the South,
The A-bomb in Japan, nor
Napalm in Vietnam can calm.
By a system of white supremacy
By white racism.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., pioneer of love and non-violence, man of justice and peace, refuser of the exclusion of whites from his vision of the movement, husband, father, lover, Black Baptist preacher, and sharp pool player, without savings but loved to sleep in silk pajamas, a drum major for justice who wanted to be remembered as a human being who had helped somebody: he was put to death. But that was not enough. Death is never enough for those who feast on the entrails of evil and make money on the flesh of the poor.

In his death, we have lynched him with museums, street signs, and celebrity. We have drowned him with Coca-Cola syrup, claiming that corporate America reflects his Dream, his agenda. We have castrated him with our acceptance of this God-filled prophet as a “loveable, harmless icon” (Ched Myers) of the American Way of Life — ironically, of white supremacy.

On Sept. 29, 2006, Rev. Timothy McDonald III, heir and embodiment of the radical King and pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church, wrote an op-ed for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Rev. McDonald, responding to the white lies of the Republican Party that continue to domesticate and harm King’s living legacy, wrote that whites and white-blacks are trying to use this man’s message for the ends of white supremacy (like the white slaveholders perverted and maligned Jesus’ message into a pro-slavery gospel from which we have still not recovered). White interpreters are, wrote Rev. McDonald, using King for white domination and white wars in the world of colors. Rev. Mac, my companion in ministry and discipleship, was responding to a terrible lie, which reveals the white supremacy at the heart of American politics and especially the Republican Party. Wrote this Black Baptist preacher: “A recent radio ad that claims ‘Dr. King was a Republican’ twists the entire Civil Rights Movement for partisan purposes. The ad is an insult to the intelligence of African Americans [and to 21.7 percent of whites, I surmise], and it is offensive to those who fought the battles of the Civil Rights movement.” Concludes this preacher who spends more time on the streets than in the comfort and protection of the rocking sanctuary: “This is why it is so important for us to stand up to this deception.”

How shall we stand up? What stands shall we take?
How can we undo racism? ✚

(To be continued in the May issue of Hospitality.)

Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring, is a Partner at the Open Door Community

Work a Healing Miracle: Stand Up for Health Care for the Poor

By **Murphy Davis**

I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore, choose life, that you and your descendants may live ... (Deuteronomy 30:19)

To get right to the point, one of the more difficult aspects of pastoral work for the church in the face of catastrophic, serious and/or chronic illness is talking frankly about money. Talking about money is difficult for most of us in our communities and sometimes even families. But for all the awkwardness, money is one of the primary concerns for people who get sick in the U.S.A. Health care in the United States has become largely a commercial transaction. Those who get quality health care are those who can afford it.

There are, of course, important exceptions to this, but we live and work in a context in which the fine print in your health insurance policy and the amount of money in your bank account are largely what define your access to the care of a physician, medications, medical procedures, and hospitalization. Another option is for poor and middle-class folks to go deeply into debt or to go over a financial cliff, as it were, because of medical bills. There are also those who, frightened by the soaring costs of care, forego medical attention until an illness has become very serious and even more expensive to treat, or it is simply too late. And there are the elderly and chronically ill among us who make regular choices between paying for expensive life-sustaining medications and paying the rent — between paying for the heart medication and buying groceries. We have met many people who eat dog food in order to pay for their medicines. Or they take crucial medicines every other day.

But whether or not you have access to money — the class divide — is only part of it. A recent study showed that between 1991 and 2000, the deaths of nearly 900,000 people could have been prevented if African Americans had received the same care as whites. African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be uninsured, underinsured, and underserved. The intricate intersection of race and class in America remains key to defining access to life-saving and life-sustaining resources.

Disturbing language patterns have developed in health care — a system that is now referred to as an “industry.” In the HMO for-profit era, patients have become “consumers.” Hospitals, clinics, physicians and other medical caregivers are referred to as “providers.” Insured patients are faced with “co-pays” for doctor visits and prescription medicines. In a system where the care provided is defined in such commercial terms, the uninsured and the poor become non-existent. If patients who can pay are

“consumers” instead of patients, those who are not able to pay do not exist in the system at all. The dehumanizing aspects of such language are another (serious) matter altogether and certainly worthy of deep reflection and consideration.

But suffice it to say, it seems that we in the United States have come to a point where people of every race and class are coming to understand that our health care system is in critical condition. For the poor, the system has been broken for many

When we set off on the journey to form the Open Door Community, all of us who were founders discerned that we should give up insurance, salaries, and personal savings in order to live into solidarity with the homeless and hungry sisters and brothers with whom we are in community. We did not want to separate ourselves by having access to insurance and savings that our desperately poor friends would never have. This abstract move became harshly concrete twelve years ago when I was diagnosed with a virulent

strain of Non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Since that time, I have gone through two major surgeries and three stringent rounds of chemotherapy. As one of my hematologists said last year, “You know, you’re not *supposed* to be alive.”

I am, indeed, alive and grateful beyond words for the wonderful care I have received. I am alive primarily because of the fervent and steady prayers of my community, Catholic Workers and other radical communities of faith around the world, the larger church, friends and family; but I am alive also because I live in a major city that still has a public (read, poor people’s) hospital. Institutions like Grady

Hospital in many cities around the country have closed their doors because of economic trends in recent years that have cut away at everything helpful to the poor and those outside of the economic mainstream. Grady saved my life several times. Because I lived long enough, I finally qualified for Medicaid as a permanently disabled person. But like any homeless or poor person, I would not have ever lived long enough to meet the stringent federal definition of “disabled” without a public hospital that absorbed the costs of my care. Now Medicaid is one of the most threatened of federal programs, and Grady Hospital is cutting services and holding on by a thread. The solidarity with the poor for which we fervently prayed in our early years grew and brought deep joy over the years. But solidarity took on a whole new meaning when I was thrown on the mercy of the dwindling system of public health care. I had access to the



All Living Things Bless the Lord

Katy Quigley

years. For all the rest, it started with the poor and is moving through the whole system. And surely a large part of our common disease is our mostly silent realization that to have the means and resources for healing and cure but to *withhold* care because some sick people do not have money or insurance is simply evil. Sin.

The number of medically uninsured has grown steadily in recent years as the profits of the insurance industry have grown and corporations continue to cut costs on the backs of their workers. Many other factors play into the fact that growing numbers of families and individuals are plunged into distress and often meet financial ruin. There are religious communities here and there dealing forthrightly with all of this, but my guess would be that many families and individuals are suffering in silent desperation in the midst of congregations and caring communities where this truth is never publicly acknowledged.

Once Upon a Time When We Were Dying

By **Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring**

Once upon a time when we were dying, Dr. Lonial asked me to join him in the hall on the seventh floor of Emory Hospital. “We do not use respirators in these cases,” he said, with dark eyes darting about the walls and floors. Then, slowly, he turned his face into mine, placed his left hand on my right shoulder, gave the slightest little finger hug, turned on his right heel and disappeared into the next room.

I turtle-tumbled toward the nurses’ station. I asked for a room where I could weep and keen. Quickly, no questions asked, the nurses’ break room became my sanctuary, my monk’s cell, my holy place. I wept like the lover of Murphy I am. I groaned like an Iraqi mother when her dead baby is pulled out from under an American Humvee.

Later, quieted, I returned to Murphy’s bedside. “Hello, darling,” she whispered, with plastic lines dangling out of her nose, giving her the oxygen she could not get on her own. Her chest had a hole in it for chemo. Her left arm lay limp on the bed with an antibiotic fluid seeping into her lovely, bruised, and fading body. I did nothing. I could not respond with words. I only stood and looked at my sweetheart who is my life.

Two days later, with the oxygen level up one more notch, a miracle worker bounded into our hospital room. Beautiful, lithe, brilliant, and above all, brimming with loving-kindness, Dr. Amelia Langston, Murphy’s primary doc, told us of an experimental drug for fungal pneumonia that had not been FDA-approved, but was part of a study Dr. Langston was leading at Emory. If Murphy would like, she could give it a try. The other drugs obviously were not working.

A couple of days after the first dose, Murphy’s oxygen level needs began snailing down. Then, for four months, it stayed at No. 3 on the scale. We had a long plastic tube that could reach into every room in our apartment at the Open Door. We put a generator in our bathroom, which gave the room a perpetual borborygmian hum. We also had an oxygen canister in a backpack, so we could go to movies and take walks and wheelchair rides in the park.

During these months, we began to realize that Murphy was making it. Then, under the gentle hand and acute eye of Dr. Langston, Murphy’s cancer disappeared. Where did it go? We don’t know. To hell, we hope.

Dr. Langston assured us that Murphy would take this medicine, Pozoconazole, for the remainder of her days.

Healing, continued on page 10

Once Upon A Time, continued on page 10



Stephen 11/06



Geraldine 1/07

At Our Home

Created in the image of God.
We are created in the image of God.
Human beings all over God's earth,
created in the image of God.

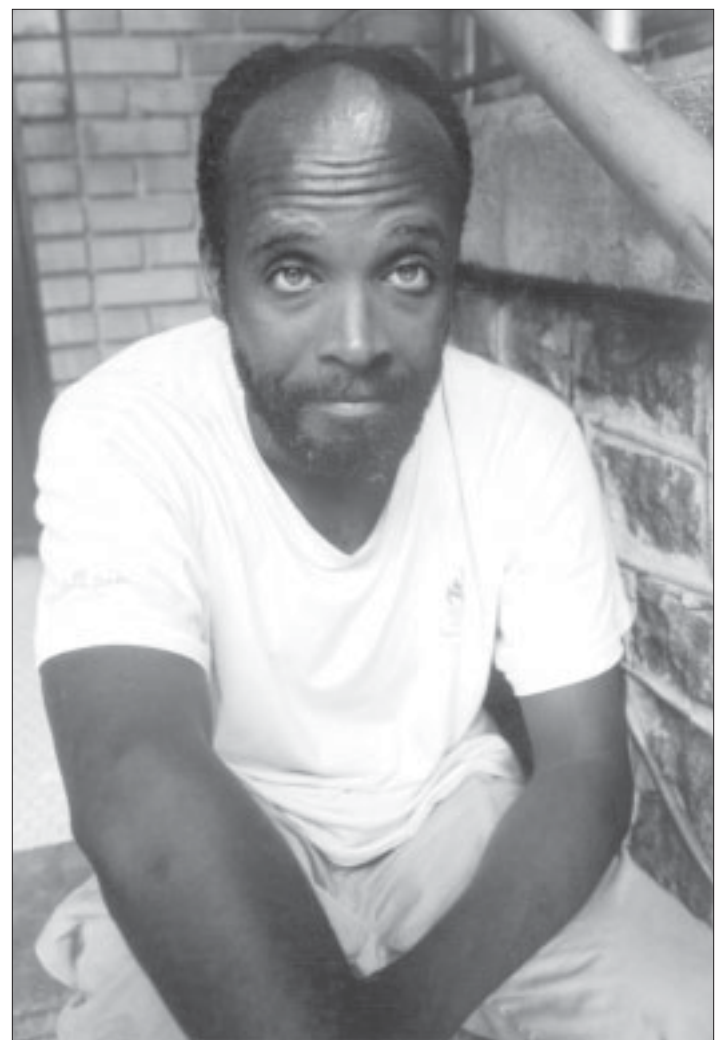
As a photographer I make images with cameras, lenses, film, light, my eye, my vision, another's visage, their eyes. This work, inspired by God's spirit, sometimes opens a door into the soul, revealing God's image.

I began making portrait photographs at the Open Door Community in 1992. In 2004 I moved into 910 Ponce de Leon to live, work, sing, play and pray. These images of nine of our friends from the streets come from my new home. These images flow from the works of mercy and the works of justice which are the work of my household. Created in the image of God, these men and women open doors into God's soul, and they all deserve housing, food, health care, and living wages. What is so difficult about sharing?

Calvin Kimbrough

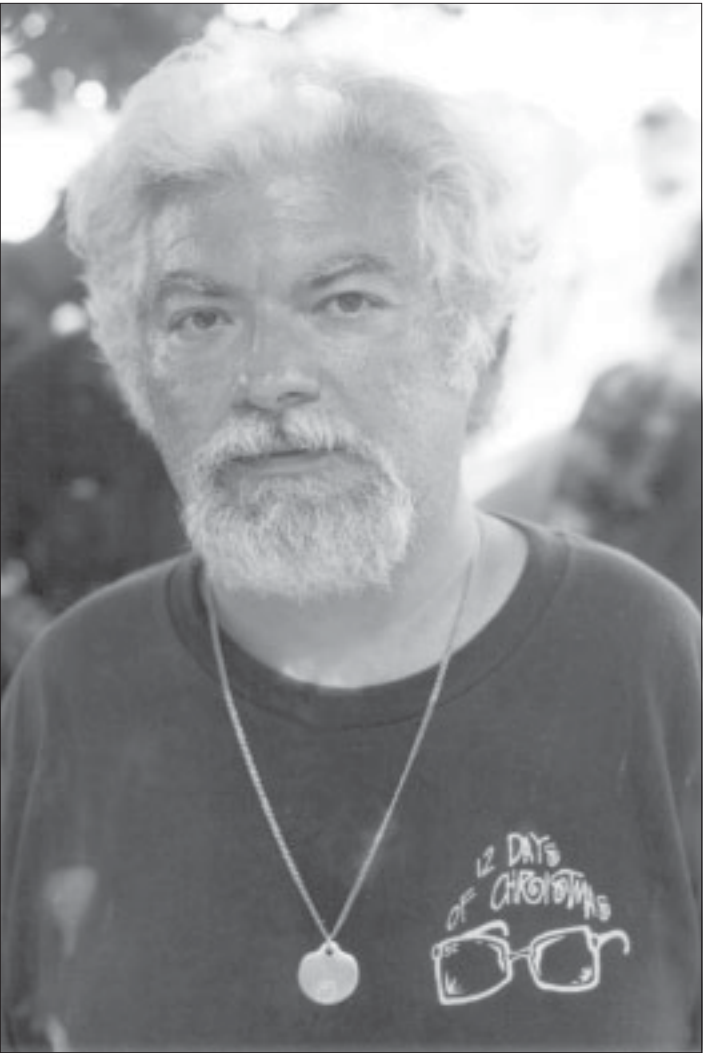


Roger 7/06



Desmond 12/06

Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough



Stanley 5/06



Gidget & Richard 12/06



Ralph 10/06



Rick 12/06

Koinonia, continued from page 1

system, “all hell broke loose.” A grand jury was impaneled to try to close Kamp Koinonia that the community ran in the summer with black and white children participating together. The county commissioners claimed the camp had health code violations. (From their perspective, it wasn’t “healthy” for blacks and whites to be together.) The Georgia Bureau of Investigation was asked to investigate these “race-mixers” and see what “illegal” activities they might be charged with. The Ku Klux Klan held a rally and a long line of cars drove out to Koinonia to intimidate and get the Koinonians to move.

Finally, they tried to disrupt the community economically. The local produce stand run by the community was dynamited. An economic boycott was declared and Koinonians could not buy or sell anything in the entire county. Members had to travel 45 miles to Albany to purchase parts for the tractor, groceries, and gas. They couldn’t purchase seed. The chickens that provided eggs to sell for community income had to be slaughtered because members couldn’t sell the eggs. And ultimately the economic boycott got to a point where they also threatened anyone who would consider selling anything to Koinonia, so when one of the businesses in town talked about selling some feed to Clarence and the community, that business was dynamited as well.

People supportive of the work of the community came from all over to try to help out, because the community was under siege. There were bullets flying at night. Clarence, because he was speaking around the country, wrote to friends, saying, “Help us out.” There were stories about the violence directed at the community in several national magazines: Life, Time, and the Saturday Evening Post. Some sent money as support. Others came. Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, took her turn on “night watch” duty during Holy Week in 1957 and had a flashlight shot out of her hands. Fortunately, she wasn’t killed or injured, but she was frightened by the experience. When asked if she wanted a coat or a blanket because she was shaking, she replied, “That ain’t cold — that’s scared!” Shots were fired into many of the community buildings. And that was the reality Koinonia faced late in the 50s and into the early 60s. Community members were called “communists” and “n——r-lovers.”

Finally, the community started a mail-order business in order to survive economically. The mail would be protected by federal agents (the post office) rather than the local “law enforcement” people who were in collusion with the Klan. The motto for this mail-order business of selling fruitcake, pecans, and peanut products was, “Help us ship the nuts out of Georgia!” Insurance companies dropped their coverage, so Koinonia turned to the wider community, asking people to pledge money as a form of “common insurance” in the event of a need arising due to the boycott and violence. Out of that drive also came the idea that became

the basis for a “Fund for Humanity,” which I’ll get to in a minute.

After the physical violence died down by ’63, people started to leave. By 1968, only the Wittkamper family and the Jordans remained. Clarence died in 1969 just as the first house under the new housing ministry was being completed. He was working on his Cotton Patch translation of the book of John when he slumped over from a heart attack. He was 57.



Chad Hyatt

Clarence’s Theology and Ideas

There are several words or phrases that Clarence used that help summarize his theology. The word **Koinonia** is a term used in the Greek New Testament, which described the early church and has been defined as “fellowship” and “community.” Koinonia refers to the practice of “holding all things in common.” So when the Jordans and the Englands wanted to begin their “experiment,” they thought this term could help capture what defined the early church — that passion of holding all things in common, of loving one another, of being in fellowship with one another, and being on fire with the Holy Spirit.

As a student of agriculture, Clarence often used the term “**demonstration plot**,” where farmers use test acreage to show the efficacy of various brands of seed, fertilizer, or farming techniques. So you’d set up a demonstration plot and plant five rows of corn with one seed or fertilizer and then plant another five next to it with the competing brand, and so on. Clarence said what we need is a “demonstration plot of God’s Kingdom.” We need to see if it is going to work out. We need to try it. We need to live it. So that’s what Koinonia was to be: a demonstration plot — a visible manifestation of what the Kingdom of God — the Reign of God — might look

like.

When translating the New Testament directly from the Greek, Clarence spoke about the word **metanoia**. “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” is a terrible translation of metanoia, he said, because metanoia is not about “feeling sorry for getting caught doing wrong,” but is much closer to the English word metamorphosis. A caterpillar doesn’t feel sorry when it’s about to become a butterfly; the butterfly is getting

prepared for a new way of life, a day of liberation. Metanoia/metamorphosis is changing so you can get equipped for the new order. “Change your whole way of thinking because the new order of God’s Spirit is impinging upon you!” So the decision to follow Jesus is not one of getting sorry or being repentant, as much as it is rather getting equipped to be about the loving relationships, the sharing, and the reconciliation that Jesus is a

part of.

Clarence talked a lot about **faith** and often contrasted faith with fear: “Fear is the polio of the soul which keeps us from walking by faith.” “Faith is not a stubborn belief in spite of all evidence but rather a life lived in scorn of the consequences.” He said faith is “betting one’s life on the unseen realities.” They are still realities — they’re just not seen — and it is our job to make those realities visible by the way we live our lives. Clarence used the phrase **incarnational theology** to remind us that we have to live out our beliefs in our everyday practice. Theology isn’t just an academic exercise; it has to inform how we live. He talked about **incarnational evangelism**, meaning that our lives speak more than our words. We give witness to what we believe by how we live our lives.

Clarence reminded us that the New Testament was originally written in a language that the common person could understand. For us to better understand the message of the Gospel, it needs to be translated into our time and culture — thus Clarence’s “Cotton Patch” version of the scriptures. He translated the texts into 20th century Southern vernacular so local folk could relate to the stories and concepts. In the Cotton Patch translations, you find the story of the Good Samaritan recast as a white businessman traveling from Ellaville to

Albany. Clarence’s listeners would know there was one town between those two places — Americus. So when the businessman is robbed and beaten and left for dead on the outskirts of Americus, and first a traveling evangelist and then the gospel choir director pass by the victim, the man who stops to help is a local black farmer in an old beat-up pickup truck. He helps bandage the victim and takes him to the hospital. When Jesus asks his listeners, “Who was the neighbor to that man?” we get, “Ooh, I don’t want to answer that question. It was the n——r; I mean, it was the colored man. . . .” The Good Samaritan in the context of the 50s and 60s in the South, and today, is that poor African-American brother, is that man on death row, is that homeless person down the street, is that person with mental illness — that’s the Good Samaritan for us today. So that’s what Clarence helps us understand with his Cotton Patch translation.

The **virgin birth** for Clarence was less about whether or not Mary was sexually “pure” and more about the idea that her offspring was “sired by God.” Clarence complained that the church too often over-emphasized the deity of Jesus, obscuring the radical concept of the **humanity of God**. Clarence talked about the ancient church heresy of Gnosticism — of *only* seeing Jesus as divine — and he said the *real* error of the church goes more like, “The Word became flesh and God parked his mobile home next to ours.” That’s where the Gospel came home for Clarence.

When Clarence spoke about the **resurrection**, he said:

The good news of the resurrection of Jesus is not that we shall die and go home with him, but that he has risen and comes home with us, bringing all his hungry, naked, thirsty, sick, prisoner brothers [and sisters] with him. ... The proof that God raised Jesus from the dead is not the empty tomb, but the full hearts of his transformed disciples. The crowning evidence that he lives is not a vacant grave, but a spirit-filled fellowship. Not a rolled-away stone, but a carried-away church (Jordan, “The Substance of Faith,” pp. 28-29).

That’s the incarnation.

The Communities of Koinonia

The Koinonia Community was really two separate experiments. From 1942 until 1968, it was known as Koinonia Farm. Koinonia Partners was the name of the community that existed from the dissolution in 1968 until the mid-1990s. The Koinonia Farm, designed to be a demonstration plot, had a strict policy of personal divestiture before joining. You had to give your money away — it couldn’t be given to the community. Clarence remarked that if you gave it to the community, you would either want to have a greater say in how things were run or the community would be tempted to sit around and “talk about theology all day” rather than working.

Community aspects included shared

meals and shared work. The common purse was the vehicle for economic sharing — you didn't have your own possessions. There was an expectation of a commitment to gospel nonviolence based on Jesus' dictum to "love your enemies." And Clarence — before many of us were educated in the late 60s by our sisters to use inclusive language — talked a lot about "brotherhood," and what he meant by that was being in relationship with each other. In the South that meant healing the racial divide.

Although the original expression of the community in 1942 expected a life-long commitment, by 1968, only two families remained. Numerous conscientious objectors to the Korean War came to the community because it was a safe haven for people who refused to fight. People supportive of the witness for racial reconciliation during the turbulent 50s and 60s came and went.

By 1968, with only two families left, Clarence asked what should we do. Clarence deemed the demonstration plot of this community a failure. He had given up on community being able to happen in that time and that place, and he was ready to pack his bags and head to Atlanta to finish his Cotton Patch version and continue the speaking engagements which had become a regular endeavor.

However, the group of friends Clarence called together in 1968 to help discern the future developed the idea of making Koinonia into a service organization, which featured "Partnership Industries" as a way to continue to build bridges between whites and blacks in Sumter County. Despite the fact that the reorganization of Koinonia did not anticipate the re-forming of an "intentional Christian community," many of those who came to join this service organization in the early 70s were looking for a change. They wanted to experience an alternative lifestyle, challenge the structures of society, and deepen relationships, and they had been inspired by the stories of the witness of Koinonia during the 50s and 60s. There developed a distinction between "Resident Partners" (those who had moved to Koinonia from elsewhere to be part of this ministry) and "employees" (mostly local black folk who participated in Koinonia activities for wages but did not choose to live in community-owned buildings). Although the original design of Koinonia Partners called for all the workers to be "partners" and share in the decision-making as well as the risks (profits or loss), many of the local residents preferred to have a steady income as wage-earners rather than as "partners" in a risky business venture.

The "Partnership Industries" over the years included farming row crops and fruit and nut trees, and a mail-order business with a bakery selling pecan and peanut products, fruitcake, books, and tapes of Clarence's work. There was a short-lived sewing industry selling shorts and slacks, a handcrafts and pottery industry, an Early Childhood education program with a preschool and nursery, and a housing ministry which served as the forerunner of Habitat For Humanity.

Expectations for membership as a Resident Partner both echoed and differed from the expectations of the previous community venture. Instead of a life-long commitment, prospective partners would commit to remaining "into the indefinite future" (with no plans to leave within two or three years). It was recognized that God might "call" people elsewhere, so even though departure of fellow Resident Partners felt somewhat akin to divorce, it was recognized that a lifetime commitment was not realistic for this community. Instead of total financial divestiture, partners were expected to live off the resources of the community while living there. Although no Social Security-type wages would accrue to them as Resident Partners, those who came with pensions or retirement savings were not instructed to give them up. It was assumed that the community would endeavor to meet financial and medical needs out of its "common purse."

However, by the early 90s, the community struggled with its identity. The original goal of the partnership industries was never realized, as most of the people of color expressed interest in working for wages rather than getting involved in

the risks and meetings that joint management would entail. Habitat for Humanity became a viable reality, thus lessening the uniqueness and need for Koinonia's housing ministry. The state of Georgia began to offer public kindergarten programs, making a valuable part of the KCDC (Koinonia Child Development Center) less necessary. The pottery had fallen into disuse after the primary potter left. It became more difficult to inspire new community members to get excited about marketing fruitcake and candy as part of the push for more mail-order sales prior to Christmas, and the dissonance between running a fall-oriented business and preparing for the advent of a radical social-justice-oriented Messiah continued to cause tensions between "ministry" and "business." Koinonia always had great difficulty in attracting people of color to join the Resident Partnership, so when the Board tried to address this failure in 1993 by ending the common purse and designated all those working for Koinonia "partners," within a few years the intentional community as it had existed completely disbanded.

(Editor's note: Today the shared life of Koinonia "stewards" revolves around work, study, prayer, service and play, but without the "common pot" of the original community.)

I don't wish to end on a negative note. Despite the ideal of community ending in "failure," the experience of participating in intentional Christian community at Koinonia was, for me, a time of deep spiritual formation, challenge, and inspiration for which I will be eternally grateful. One only needs to look at the level of violence and hostility directed toward them to realize how radical Clarence Jordan and the Koinonia Communities were. I don't think Clarence was ever thrown in jail for "protesting" (although he may have been jailed briefly while being harassed by the local "law enforcement" [sic] officials), but he certainly inspired a lot of others to take those risks. Clarence questioned the process most churches use in selecting a pastor:

Actually, we're looking more for an octopus from the seminary than we are a prophet from God. I think we ought to begin to investigate not so much how many years [one] has spent in the seminary diddling around on a doctoral thesis, but how many years s/he's spent in jail, because somehow or other a [person] is better able to get up a sermon in a cell than in a church study ("Substance of Faith," pp. 111).

And, taking a page from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Clarence always stressed the **cost of discipleship**. Following Jesus will cost you everything, but in the process, you gain a whole new "family." Yes, you will get phone calls at 2:00 a.m. threatening your life. You will be visited and questioned by the FBI.

Actually, in our time at Koinonia, it was usually Christine who answered the phone at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. when I received death threats prior to blocking the nuclear train in 1985 on its route through Montezuma, Georgia. We took a full-scale model of the electric chair to the courthouse lawn in Americus every time Georgia scheduled an execution, and people would drive by and yell or spit at us. When the FBI came to inquire about why I refused to cooperate with the renewed military draft registration, I politely refused to answer their questions in front of the Koinonia volunteers working with me in the fall of 1982.

Clarence once said, if you haven't been called a communist, you ain't worth your salt. And so Clarence would say to us today, if you haven't been called a terrorist, if you haven't been called a bum, if you haven't been called an agitator, you probably ain't worth your salt.

In the community in Minneapolis where I live now, we have come to recognize that people will always come and go — so we've developed what we call a "turn-over file" so the next person who does this job or task has notes to follow

Koinonia, continued on page 10

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

Come learn joyful protest with Open Door Partner Dick Rustay. He's a 77 year old granddad who wants an end to our warring ways.

Live in a residential Christian community.

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

Join street actions and loud and loving non-violent 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: Phil Leonard

at opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7625

For information and application forms
visit www.opendoorcommunity.org

SOA Watch



Calvin Kimbrough

Mike Vosburg-Casey reported on Tuesday, April 17 to FCI Jesup, about four hours driving-time south-east of Atlanta. He is serving a sentence of 100 days. His address: Michael Vosburg-Casey 92955-020 JESUP FCI 2680 301 South Jesup, GA 31599 mikevcinprison@gmail.com

for information about SOA Watch: www.SOAW.org

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HOSPITALITY

A \$7 donation covers a year's worth of *Hospitality* for a prisoner, a friend, or yourself. To give the gift of *Hospitality*, please fill out, clip, and send this form to:

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910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

____ Please add me (or my friend) to the *Hospitality* mailing list.

____ Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.


____ I would like to explore a six- to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please contact me. (Also see www.opendoorcommunity.org for more information about RV opportunities.)

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____



volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community

- ◆ People to accompany community members to doctors' appointments
- ◆ Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna or pb&j, please) on whole-wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends
- ◆ People to cook or bring supper for the Community on certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings
- ◆ Volunteers for Monday and Tuesday breakfasts and for Wednesday and Thursday soup kitchens
- ◆ A Dentist within a 40 mile radius of Atlanta who would provide care for long-term Partners at the Open Door Community
- ◆ Volunteers to help staff our foot clinic on Thursday evenings

For more information, contact Chuck Harris at odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net or 770.246.7627.

Koinonia, continued from page 9

how it was done before. Well, here is my “turn-over file” from my years at Koinonia — my “lessons learned” that I’ll pass on for what they’re worth. Not in any particular order, just some thoughts that came to me about my sixteen years in the south Georgia “commune.”

- Leadership in community must be named, recognized, and held accountable. Every group will have leaders, but those who aren’t named and recognized can’t be held accountable.
- We must deal with the issue of “leaving community.” In our mobile culture, people come and go, but in intentional community, this is a hard reality that causes feelings of betrayal, abandonment, and failure. It can feel akin to divorce. When Christine and I left Koinonia — she after 20 years and me after 16 years — we were ready for the grieving process that the remaining community and we underwent. Clarence said it is a demonstration plot; Gandhi said it’s an “experiment with truth.” We have to give ourselves to these experiments and sometimes we are going to fail. Let’s confess it and move on. A community must learn to creatively deal with these transitions. Ritual might be helpful in this process, just like when members join.
- It is essential to resolve conflict within the community in positive ways instead of avoiding it and hoping it disappears.
- The community focus and energy must be kept on the mission, or else petty differences will work at your destruction. That was one of the bitter lessons for us at Koinonia, when Habitat started gaining credibility in the mid-’80s and our housing ministry was no longer “cutting edge.” When you lose your sense of mission, you focus on discussions over owning pets, how much or little (if any) meat to serve at common meals, etc. etc.!
- Vision and renewal are essential for the long haul. You have to have people calling out that vision, that renewal. That is where the Bible study, the inspirational teaching, the mentoring, and the pastoral help are essential. Where there is no vision for the future, the community flounders and dies or becomes irrelevant.
- Stewardship of common property is difficult in an ownership society. Just because someone has a Ph.D. in some esoteric academic field does not mean s/he is exempt from checking the oil in the community-owned car — or cleaning the toilets. That’s what we mean by sharing responsibility for the common property!
- Intergenerational aspects of community life are both a challenge and a blessing. One of the real blessings of living at Koinonia was being able to raise our kids with surrogate grandparents, aunts, and uncles. But “We tried that — and it didn’t work” coming from a veteran of community (especially a founder) can kill a conversation with newer members.
- Be open to change and growth. Beware of complacency and living on the laurels of the community’s past (now mythological) history. Remember, if we are faithful to the Gospel, we *will* be attacked. The domination system, the system that runs the powers today, is always threatened by that faithful response to the Gospel. We will be attacked. If all speak well of us, we must not be clear enough about our collective discipleship!

Koinonia gave tangible evidence to the Open Door Community in its founding that intentional Christian community with economic sharing is possible. The Open Door, in exchange, continued to remind Koinonia not to get too comfortable or complacent. I think the relationship between these two communities was one of symbiosis, of giving and receiving. Together, we enabled each other to be more fully representative of the Body of Christ. For that I give thanks to God. And I give thanks to God for you all and celebrate with you your 25 years of struggle and joy. ✚


Healing, continued from page 5

same system of care available to a homeless person or the uninsured working poor. An important reality all the while is that my husband, daughter, and I are highly educated and better able than many to understand my care needs, monitor care, and advocate for what I have needed. This has separated me to some extent from other patients at Grady, and it has made us even more zealous in trying to provide this kind of accompaniment for the poor and homeless with whom we live. Solidarity has become a reality for us in ways we never dreamed. I am deeply grateful for this gift, but it makes me long for the day when the church will stand up to resist the ongoing efforts to cut access to care for growing numbers of sick and hurting people. And such public resistance would indeed create new pastoral space for all those in congregations — rich and poor, black, brown and white — who are being ruined and/or completely left behind by the for-profit medical system.

One reason that Jesus was hunted, despised, and executed is that he healed freely and spontaneously, without tipping his hat to the prevailing medical establishment or asking for “payment for services rendered.” In other words, his healings were non-commercial, and this simply wouldn’t do. What would Jesus have to say — and what would Jesus *do* — in response to our health care system based on the bottom line and corporate profits? Would he go into the hospitals and overturn the tables in the bill collection office? Would he drive the administrators out of their offices — and the overpaid corporate executives away from their money-changing desks?

Then, as now, healing miracles threatened the system. The miracle of a church standing up to unmask and confront a sick and sinful system — a system creating death and havoc in the lives of all of our people — will also threaten the current system: threaten it with resurrection hope. ✚

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community. This essay is adapted from one published in The Journal for Preachers.



Julie Lonneman

Once Upon A Time, continued from page 5

Every morning and every night. The rest of her life. The stuff tastes like dry cardboard with some mystical mean mess mingled morosely in it. But, hey, who cares? Murphy can breathe. Murphy is alive. Murphy is strong and beautiful and sings and writes and visits the prisoner and loves her Eduard.

That was a long time ago. Two hundred years or so, I think. Well, let me bring Murphy to you: “I had my three-month checkup on Monday and my doc [Dr. Amelia Langston] says that all is well. She feels like even though I still have fungal pneumonia, it is dormant and she and her team feel like my immune system can probably handle it. So after two years, they took me off the very strong medication that I have been taking. They will watch me carefully (and we are so thankful), but they expect me to do fine.”

Dearest of friends, we thank you for all you are doing to help keep Murphy alive and well. Our God is a Woman-Healer like Shug Avery in “The Color Purple.” Our Dr. Langston is a gift of grace and miracle. She is giving her life away, day after day, for the healing of our lives from these terrible cancers that eat us and our nation alive. Our friends, you who are reading this with me, our friends, yes, our friends: Thank you. ✚

Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Two Responses, continued from page 2

spent one month of a sabbatic leave with the Open Door Community in 1999. Norman and his wife Ruth will spend three months in Atlanta this fall as Campbell Scholars at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Dear Eduard-the-Agitator,

We enjoyed the latest edition of Hospitality as usual. [The following is in response to Loring's words, "In Scotland, the Presbyterian Church is often aligned with the Socialist Party and/or the Labor Party, and this is another place from which we have learned much."]

... There may be a germ of truth in what you say. I do think that "democratic socialist"/communally responsible/Christian values are deeply embedded in Scottish life (see, for example, the poetry of Robert Burns!); but these values are being eroded and diluted all the time by insidious consumerism/acquisitive individualism (the "capitalism" to which you are so resolutely and rightly opposed).

And I'm not sure that the churches' influence on national institutional life is as much as it used to be or is still sometimes claimed. I'm talking here more about the Scottish Parliament, etc., than about the U.K. government. But even in the government of the U.K., there are fairly good contacts and ready access. Gordon Brown's taking over as Prime Minister may even increase this. I suspect that it is a case rather of "coinciding agendas." Where there are different agendas — the churches' opposition to nuclear weapons, the treatment of asylum-seekers, issues relating to matters like adoption of children by gay couples and "civil partnerships" — the churches tend to be left whistling in the wind. (Of course on the latter two issues there is less consensus in the churches because of the very strong Roman Catholic opposition and a right-wing Protestant lobby as well.)

I also have a pedantic etymological point: "Synoptic" doesn't mean "one-eyed"! I realize you are a Hebrew rather than a Greek scholar of course! The prefix "syn-" means "with/together." So "synoptic" means "seeing alongside/together" or something like that — as in "Synoptic Gospels" (cf. synthesis, synchronistic, syncopated, etc.). A stimulating, challenging piece nonetheless.

Yesterday afternoon we drove for about an hour to a young offenders' (men 18-21) prison, for a meeting there about a project the Iona Community is starting for the rehabilitation/support of ex-offenders. (Have I mentioned to you that one of our very good friends, an ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, is currently the national Inspector of Prisons? A government appointment, but independent of the prison service, so he is constantly drawing attention to deficiencies in the system.)

Please give our/my love and greetings to all there who may remember me — Dick and Gladys, Ira, Phil, Lauren, Heather, Calvin and Nelia, and all the rest.

Norman and Ruth Shanks
Glasgow, Scotland

Response to Rev. Dr. Shanks from Eduard Loring:

Thank you, Rev. Dr. Shanks. Yes, you're correct as an etymologist and as a reader of the one-eyed gospels in street (Koine) Greek. What you correctly say is "seeing alongside/together" I translated as one-eyed. It is as though the focus is so close to the heart that the reader/practitioner is reading with one eye, as Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not take their eyes off the prize nor their hands from the plow. Here in the United States of America we have drowned and gone to hell because of the weapons of mass distraction. We have had to pluck one eye out and read/follow with the other to make it through the maze of this consumer culture that bellows at us constantly: buy, buy, buy, eat, eat, eat, invest, invest, invest, drink, drink, drink, get your neighbor's wife/husband quick while the kids are at school. Thank you. See you in the fall with my one good eye! ✦

Grace and Peaces of Mail

To all who make the Open Door a beacon of light and source of love in Atlanta, continued success and blessing on all of you! May 2007 bring public toilets to Atlanta.

Love,
Acacia and John Salatti
Washington D.C.

Dear Eduard and Murphy and all the Open Door family,

How well we remember our short but meaningful times with you and how they influenced our own lives and perceptions. We're glad you feel our love is the "long-haul" kind — that's a wonderful phrase! We would love to come down again while we still can and are thinking about that.

We've moved to a retirement community — a big transition and rather daunting — but are well and active, thankfully.

Love to all,
Mason and Bobbie Ellison
West Hartford, Connecticut

Thanks for the hope you provide for so many (me included). You model the Kingdom!

Danny and Ginny Wyatt
Marshall, North Carolina



The Open Door Community,

Thank you for your ministry among the poor. Your newsletter is where we all need to be. Thank you.

Sincerely in Christ,
Sandra Baboian
York, Pennsylvania

Dear Eduard and the Open Door,

The consistency of your work and witness during all these years makes the Open Door the most outstanding model of front-line work known to us.

May it long continue, and may you and Murphy be given ever-renewed health and energy during your much-deserved sabbatic leave.

Rhoda and Douglas John Hall
Montreal, Canada

Dear Ed and Murphy,

From the moment Betty Jane Crandall described the work of the Open Door (years ago now), I have appreciated knowing that folks are truly acting on Jesus' teachings and word. I am glad to receive *Hospitality* as it affirms and confirms my ideas and ideals about our faith at work and what Christ wants us to do in our lives.

My heart is at the Open Door and your work inspires me to look at my own work in a school system as a mission, too — a mission to focus on practicing my faith and making a difference with children and adults daily. And you inspire me to continue to be bold and outspoken about what is right and what is wrong in our world and our nation.

Thank you for inspiring me and for treating the homeless with hospitality and warmth.

Sincerely,
Mona Fleming
Pendleton, South Carolina

Dear Friends,

My wife Sarah and I are happy to donate this money to the Open Door in [honor of] my father, Roger Lier.

We are very grateful for your work and witness throughout the years. The witness of your community, along with the Catholic Worker, has inspired my wife and me, and our son Henry (just born December 10th!), along with our friends Christina and Scott and their four children, to live in intentional Christian community, and to keep a "Christ room" in our home so that we can offer hospitality. Thank you for all you do — for pointing the way toward Jesus and for showing what the beloved community can look like.

Peace,
Andrew Carlson-Lier
Beverly, Massachusetts

Murphy:

Elaine is in Vancouver for the weekend, and I'm catching up on some reading here. Your eulogy for MaryRuth in February's *Hospitality* ("MaryRuth Matlock Weir: A Rebellious Kindness") was magnificent. I was in tears reading it, as all the losses of our mentors and friends came rushing back. But your words softened the sting, evoking mostly gratitude that we have these guides.

Thank you for your keen sensitivity, for your own life, which is one of my guides.

Love from here,
Ched Myers
Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries
Oak View, California

Hi Open Door!

Brian and I are still enjoying your great newsletter. Your newsletter always acts as a soul-"centering" vehicle. Am always glad to see Ed and Murphy still going strong.

Love,
Lita and Brian Doesken
Hibbing, Minnesota

Dear friends,

I flew in and through Atlanta last month. I remember when the "new" airport opened about 25 years ago. It was so unique and huge. They offered tours to the public before the official opening! Now it is dingy, overcrowded, and still huge, but with a reputation for chronic delays and headaches!

We left Atlanta for Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1982. As far as I am concerned, we brought two great things out of our two-year stay in Atlanta. No. 1, my son Bo (we had to give him a good Southern nick-name), and No. 2, the Open Door stamped on our hearts.

Your love for the poor, your service to those hungry and in prison, your voice for those made voiceless, are beautiful and new and still growing and, yes, eternal. Compare that with the airport and all the other ineffectual striving that goes into [people serving themselves]. Your entire community is awesome! Six months with you as a first-time volunteer helped change my life. I am very grateful to you.

Love to all,
Mary Schlech
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Peace!

I just got a big tax refund! I'm employed in a job I love (public school teaching), own a home I share with great people, eat well and do anything I want — and the government gives me money?

Thanks for all you do.
Peace,
Renee Grogg
Chicago, Illinois

Open Door Community Ministries

Breakfast & Sorting Room: Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 – 8 a.m.

Showers & Sorting Room: Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

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

Use of Phone: Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Wednesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. – 12 noon.

Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinic:

Thursday, 6:45 - 9 p.m.

Clarification Meetings: some Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

Weekend Retreats: Four 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; The Jackson (Death Row) Trip; Pastoral visits in various jails and prisons.

We are open...

Sunday: We invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m., and join us following worship for a delicious supper.

We are open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. for donations.

Monday through Thursday: We answer telephones from 9 a.m. until 12 noon and from 2 until 6 p.m. We gratefully accept donations from 9 until 11 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 and weekly Eucharist.

Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.

Our worship space is limited, so if you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 770.246.7628. Please visit www.opendoorcommunity.org or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

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| April 15 | Worship at 910
Eucharist Service and
music with Yes, Virginia |
| April 22 | Spring Retreat at Dayspring Farm
no worship at 910 |
| April 29 | Worship at 910
Billy Neal Moore, preaching |
| May 6 | Worship at 910
Nelia Kimbrough, preaching |
| May 13 | Worship at 910
Faith Kirkham-Hawkings, preaching |
| May 20 | Worship at 910
Eucharist Service and
music with Elise Witt |

*The
Vagrant
Christ
at
City Hall
on
Maundy
Thursday*



Calvin Kimbrough

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 404.874.9652 or visit www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medicine Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

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

Foot Care Clinic

epsom salt
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 are also looking for volunteers to help staff our Foot Care Clinic on Thursday evenings!

Needs of the Community



Chad Hyatt

Living Needs

- ☐ jeans
- ☐ men's work shirts
- ☐ men's belts (34" & up)
- ☐ men's underwear
- ☐ socks
- ☐ reading glasses
- ☐ walking shoes (especially 9 1/2 and up)
- ☐ T-shirts (L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
- ☐ baseball caps
- ☐ MARTA tokens
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ trash bags (30 gallon, .85 mil)

Personal Needs

- ☐ shampoo (full size)
- ☐ shampoo (travel size)
- ☐ lotion (travel size)
- ☐ toothpaste (travel size)
- ☐ combs & pics
- ☐ hair brushes
- ☐ lip balm
- ☐ soap
- ☐ multi-vitamins
- ☐ disposable razors
- ☐ deodorant
- ☐ vaseline
- ☐ shower powder
- ☐ Q-tips

Food Needs

- ☐ turkeys
- ☐ hams
- ☐ sandwiches
- ☐ quick grits

Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ single bed mattresses
- ☐ bed pillows
- ☐ futon couch

From 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 a.m. or after 2 p.m., it would be helpful. THANK YOU!