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

vol. 27, no. 4

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 404.874.9652 [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)

April 2008

## Keeping the Dream Alive Lessons From MLK Jr. for Today

By Dwight N. Hopkins

*Editor's note: We are marking the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with several reflections on his life and witness. The following article was delivered as a lecture at the Interdenominational Center in Atlanta in 2003 as part of a lecture series for the Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrating 40 years since the 1963 March on Washington and MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech. Dwight N. Hopkins is Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School and an ordained Baptist minister. His books include "Being Human: Race, Culture, and Religion." His web site is <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/faculty/hopkins.shtml>.*

Martin Luther King Jr. is recognized as one of the greatest United States citizens, not only in this country but around the world. He has become synonymous with faith, love, justice, compassion, sacrifice and witnessing on behalf of and with those who struggle to benefit from the opportunities of America.

In a very interesting way, the social context in which he lived and died parallels this season of profound crisis and uncertainty, both in the United States and on the global stage.

King was deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement. It was a valiant effort to provide basic guarantees of liberty for U.S. citizens. In particular, he stood for the civil rights of black Americans, who for too long had been relegated to the rank of second-class citizens in a land where they had helped produce the wealth for elite families during slavery.

So too, today, we face both an attack on civil rights and a movement to sustain gains and advance them further. We only have to note the uproar around the University of Michigan's policy on affirmative action [in 2003].

What is at stake here, just as it was in King's time, is not simply the admission of a few more black, brown, red and yellow students. No, what is at stake is an entire philosophy of what America should be for all of its peoples.

One philosophy believes that the nation should go back to a culture of rigid racial and ethnic asymmetry, similar to the period of slavery or at least that of de jure segregation. Another philosophy believes that, given the great mixture of races and ethnic groups within this country, America can become a beacon for racial equality, mutual learning and harmonious living regardless of the color of one's skin.

Furthermore, in addition to the racial and ethnic dimensions of civil rights today, we also face other civil rights issues. The gains of women are under pressure. There is still a glass ceiling for women. There is still a discrepancy between what women earn and what men earn. This is still a culture in which correct family values mean that women and daughters automatically play a secondary role in the family; or their only



The Hands That Cried Out for Justice

Chucks Okeke

primary role is in the domestic sphere.

Civil rights for lesbians and gays have not even materialized. So it's not a question of going back to an even more retrograde era. This movement to recognize the rights of these American citizens is only recently really getting started. And an additional civil rights issue for us concerns one of the most egregious moves on the part of the U.S. government: the Patriot Act. Basically this law states that the American people don't have any civil rights. So, like King, we face a challenge and an opportunity in the area of civil rights.

Rev. King, moreover, operated in a context where poverty in America was so bad that the nation had to declare a national war on poverty. And, of course, we are dealing with a similar phenomenon today. This time, however, instead of the federal government declaring war on poverty, that government and the very small handful of families that privately own the majority of wealth in the United States have declared war against Americans who are poor, a huge percentage of whom are white people living in structural poverty.

We are experiencing major layoffs of working-class people. The news media often spend a great deal of time talking about downsizing in corporate America as it pertains to white-collar management. But we could double or triple the

## April 8, 1968 A Personal Reflection

By Eduard-the-Agitator Loring

**April 8, 1968**

9:00 p.m. For the first time in my life I am flying at night. I look out the window westward. The Mississippi River sloshes toward New Orleans. The lights below are majestic. A beauty I have never seen before. Christmas lights from the top of the tree. I squirm in my seat to keep the city glow in view. Suddenly lightning crackles and the night sky turns fluorescent. Our plane tilts eastward toward home. Memphis, Tennessee fades from view. I am in the dark

I am alone with 72 people. Conversations rattle round the cabin. Little laughter. Sobs seep. Black and White together. Shall we overcome? "Yes," I pray to God. "Yes," I say to America. My heart heaves. Hurts. My feet ache. My head bounces off the window when I, east of Eden, nod off. I have begun a new journey that shall forever define my life, my aims and purposes. The plane now at 28,000 feet in blackness roars toward my future, which is seeded in Southern soil, Black slavery, Jim Crow, and the bloody cotton fields down there below between heaven and hell.

I, like Abram and Sari . . .  
I GO from the land  
of my father and mother  
to a new land filled with . . .  
hope and disaster.

**March 31, 2008**

6:00 a.m. I climb out of a basement bed in a 90-year-old row house in Baltimore, Maryland. Climb the steps to the living room/kitchen. Fix tea and drink a quick cup with Jesus the prophet from Nazareth. 6:20 a.m., Hannah, 28 years old as I was just 40 years ago, comes down the steps for coffee. Murphy sleepily clambers up; Rob slowly descends. Breakfast. 7:30 a.m., Hannah and I go to the nearby corner, jump on Bus 23 and head to Johns Hopkins Hospital. Hannah's first day at work. She is a nurse formed into vocation by the naked, twisted, ruined feet of homeless men and women. Forty years ago I was 28. This morning brimming with love and fatherly pride soaring through my system I dance like a 20-year-old.

I am old now. So are my dangerous memories and my radical hopes for equality, love and justice. Hannah and I are the only whites on the bus. We sit in the back, further back than Rosa Parks sat on December 1, 1955. "Good Morning America, how are you? Don't you know me? I'm your native son?" America is sick and is dying. But once upon a time,

Keeping the Dream, continued on page 8

April 8, 1968, continued on page 9





Nelia Kimbrough

# The Open Door Community Spring Appeal

Dear Friends,

We need your help! Our financial resources are very low.

During the past 12 months we have had to make major repairs to our house and equipment — replacing the grease trap; installing a new compressor for our walk-in refrigeration unit; replacing two worn-out washing machines, one ancient dryer, and one freezer; removing roots from our sewer line; repairing our commercial dishwasher and commercial food steamer; and other smaller repairs. All together we have spent over \$39,000 on unanticipated major maintenance, equipment repairs and replacements. In addition, the city of Atlanta has announced intentions to raise water and sewer rates by 15 percent which will increase our cost by approximately \$3,000 per year.

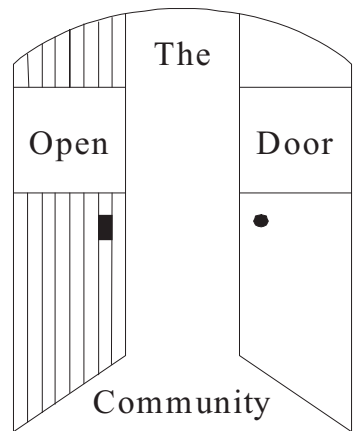
As you know, we do not ask for gifts except when there is a need. We have not come to you for a Spring Appeal Campaign since 1999. But the need is very great at this time, and we need your help.

In the midst of this financial crisis we experience significant signs of hope. One person who gives us great hope is our friend Calvin Simpson, who lived with us for 18 months. Like many of our residents who come in from the streets, Calvin is African-American, struggles with addiction, has been in prison and was separated from his family. Recently we sent him forth with prayers and blessings to care for his sister, who is recuperating from a severe heart attack. At a worship service before he left, Calvin expressed his gratitude for his time with us and gave thanks for 18 months of sobriety, for the opportunity to rejoin his family, and for his readiness to seek employment.

This work of mercy and resistance is often slow and agonizing. We give thanks for Calvin's progress and growth. We ask you to prayerfully consider making an "over and above" gift to us in our time of need so that we may continue to make the journey of healing and redemption with our friends from the streets and prisons.

With many thanks for your ongoing friendship and support.

Shalom,  
The Leadership Team



## The Open Door Community

Leadership Team

Murphy Davis  
Chuck Harris  
Calvin Kimbrough  
Nelia Kimbrough  
Eduard Loring  
Dick Rustay  
Gladys Rustay

## HOSPITALITY

**Hospitality** is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with and advocacy for the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

A \$7 donation to the Open Door Community would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality** for one year. A \$30 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

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Calvin Kimbrough

Steaming grits, hot coffee, cold juice, turkey sausage  
and eggs coming — welcome to Breakfast at 910!

### Newspaper

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**Circulation:** A multitude of earthly hosts  
**Subscriptions or change of address:** Anne Wheeler

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**Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring:** Street Preacher  
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**Phil Leonard:** Administration and Finance, Hardwick  
Prison Trip, Resident Volunteer Applications  
**Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough:** Worship, Art, and Music  
Coordinators  
**Chuck Harris:** Volunteer Coordinator  
**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry



# Drawing From the Well: Dr. King and the Liberation Tradition

By Murphy Davis

When the Open Door Community was founded, it was apparent that there were three movements from which we would draw and which would continue to provide our inspiration.

First is the Catholic Worker Movement, founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin and continued by sisters and brothers who do the work today in some 185 communities of hospitality and resistance in the United States, Europe, Canada, Mexico and New Zealand.

Second is the Koinonia Community from the time of Clarence and Florence Jordan. The Jordans, along with others, founded this Christian community in South Georgia with a commitment to interracial life and justice in 1942. Their farm was bombed and machine-gunned, and members of the community were beaten and lived under constant threat of violence and danger. Clarence wrote and preached widely a radical Gospel of nonviolence and equality, and he translated the Gospels from the Greek to his "Cotton Patch Gospels" in the vernacular of rural South Georgia.

And finally, we four who were founders of the community and those who have stayed to live this life have been deeply shaped by the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the movement for justice, nonviolence and human rights of which he was a major part in the 1950s and '60's.

This month we observe 40 years since Dr. King's assassination in Memphis, Tennessee. He was on his way to the Poor People's March on Washington, which he planned to lead with the objective to shut down the nation's capital until the urgent needs of the poor were acknowledged and addressed by the national leadership.

King's momentum and increasingly radical vision were cut short by the bullet that came from the heart of the American Empire. He had been trailed and surveilled, hounded and harassed, threatened, bombed, stabbed and discredited since he stepped forward in reluctant leadership of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. J. Edgar Hoover's FBI came up with endless surveillance techniques and dirty tricks and even attempted, on occasion, to push Dr. King to suicide. The Patriot Act and illegal surveillance of American citizens are not an altogether new problem.

Had he lived, Dr. King would probably *not* be a national hero; he would probably be seen as a pesky, irritating malcontent.

Because we live in Atlanta, Dr. King's hometown, we have closely observed and often participated in the owning of him as a national hero. When the first King national holiday was celebrated, our daughter Hannah was a student at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, located between King's birth home and the King Center. We were at the center of the action.

But of course when someone like King becomes a "national hero," his life and message must first be — well, shall we say, "adjusted." It didn't take long before you could go into the King Center gift shop and purchase an "I Have a Dream" ashtray or wastebasket. And every rendering of his message stopped with his great speech of 1963.

Even as a young student, King understood himself as a democratic socialist. It was his vocation as a pastor and theologian — his understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ — that led him politically to be a democratic socialist.



Kerry Dugan

One aspect of the greatness of King's leadership was his openness to grow, study, change and reflect on history and Scripture and politics — to critique his own actions and learn from mistakes. And so, toward the end of his all-too-short life, he was more and more forthright and articulate with his radical critique of the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism. He frankly and harshly critiqued American capitalism, the military-industrial complex, and the structures of racism and greed that are intertwined with the foundations of our nation. In light of this critique, he called for a "revolution of values" and a radical restructuring of American life.

Even in the days immediately following King's assassination, people rushed forward to praise his life. Many who had never lifted a finger to help his movement tried to claim him now that he was "safely dead." One movement soldier declared that by the time of his funeral, King had become a "plaster of Paris hero."

In the midst of this "heroization" of King, his close friend Vincent Harding has worked constantly and diligently (and against great resistance) to keep the radical King alive. Harding has held firm and clear that honoring King's legacy would lead us not to gala banquets, once-a-year interracial worship, golf tournaments and parades with marching military bands. Honoring the real Dr. King leads us to the streets for nonviolent resistance against "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: [our] own government." (Dr. King went to jail many times, and those who have never been to jail or suffered public rejection or punishment for the cause of justice and human dignity should ask, why not?) Along the way, Harding referred to his friend as an "Inconvenient Hero," and published a book of essays under that title.

Scholar Michael Dyson has said that only a radical remnant has insisted upon knowing King's life and work in its fullness. And thankfully, numerous excellent publications have contributed more recently to understanding the depth and breadth of King's radical vision. (We are proud to include in this issue reflections on King by Liberation Theologian

Dwight Hopkins. See also the January 2008 *Hospitality* for Todd Moyer's review of "From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice" by Thomas F. Jackson.)

We are honored to live in the city of Dr. King's birth and even more honored to have the privilege of struggling to live out his radical legacy in a vision for the Beloved Community. We want to be faithful to the legacy of this great leader by keeping our feet in the street and our hands on the movement plow. King was in the streets with garbage workers when he died: why should we think he would be anywhere else today? The minimum wage is even less a living wage than it was in 1968! Had he lived, Dr. King would probably *not* be a national hero; he would probably be seen as a pesky, irritating malcontent. Such is the plight of prophets. (Just ask Jeremiah Wright!)

All his life he was threatened with violence by white racists, and he was told to slow down by "moderates," black and white. (See his "Letter From the Birmingham Jail.") "Gradualism" was the gospel of the comfortable then as it is now. The cruelty of predatory capitalism has developed in ways that Dr. King could hardly have imagined (who could have seen such an ugly vision 40 years ago?). Gary Younge wrote just recently, "The monied black middle class [King's] movement helped create is imploding. A Pew report last year revealed that almost half of African-Americans born to middle-income parents in 1968 — the year King died — have ended up in the lowest fifth of the nation's earners. This was true for just 16 percent of whites."

Who might have imagined, while we struggled for *open* housing, that we would come to tolerate decades of systemic homelessness?

Who might have imagined, while we struggled for *open* housing, that we would come to tolerate decades of systemic homelessness? Who might have imagined that the racist legacy of American prisons would find new ways to harness itself to corporate greed to create a whole new industry based on captivity? (See the review in this issue of "Prison Profiteers.") There were, of course, great gains during and as a result of the civil rights struggle — incomparable gains. But who could have imagined that the predatory lending crisis of 2007 forward would constitute the largest loss of wealth for Black America yet — and that even though many in the Black middle class are doing quite well, the systematic economic targeting and squeezing of the African-American community would march forward relentlessly.

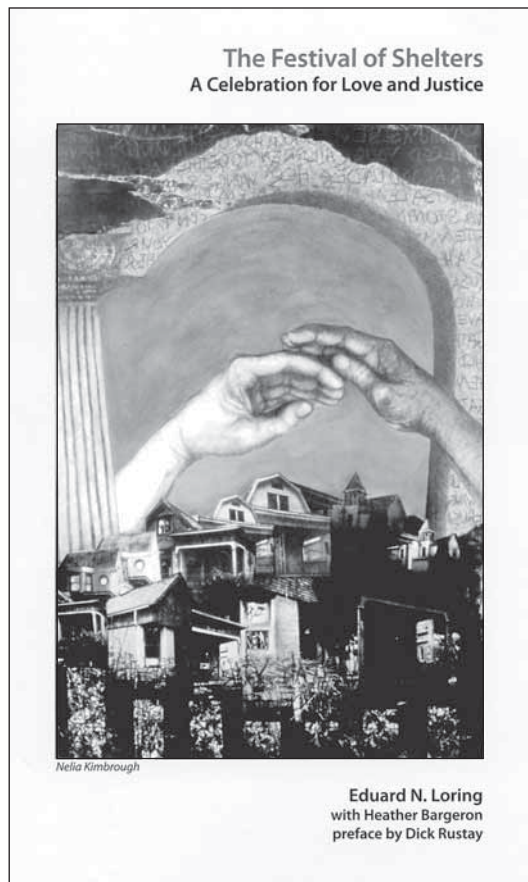
King would have wept to know the racial disparities of 2008 in income, health care, life expectancy, imprisonment and death sentencing. He would be enraged about the 4,000 young Americans and countless tens of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan people slaughtered since 2001.

Thank you, Dr. King. We honor you, and we treasure your legacy. We pray that we might have the faith and courage to grow in our understanding and appropriation of your radical vision, your anger, and your courageous action. And we pray that your movement will grow and flourish. ♦

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.



available now!



## The Festival of Shelters A Celebration for Love and Justice

**By Eduard Loring**  
with Heather Barger  
preface by Dick Rustay

The shrill, summoning voice of Eduard Loring is an important one among us. He is grounded in our oldest poetic memories and rooted in the bodily reality of his community of need and care. His voice and his practice remind us of how it really is with us, how it could be different among us according to God's promises, and how we may, even now, enact our best hopes and our treasured memories in concrete ways. This is a welcome and urgent statement.

Walter Brueggemann  
Columbia Theological Seminary  
Decatur, Georgia

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# Betrayal and Denial

By Phil Leonard

*Editor's note: Phil Leonard, the Open Door Community's Administrative Coordinator, offered this reflection on March 18, during Holy Week, in front of the Atlanta City Jail.*

**The Gospel reading for Tuesday of Holy Week: Luke 22:1-6, 31-34, 54-62**

It is Tuesday. Today we are at two pivotal points in our Holy Week journey: Judas' betrayal of Jesus to the Powers and Peter's denial of any relationship with Jesus.

This location is a fit place to be today. This jail is the reality of betrayal in Atlanta, the betrayal of our failure to love one another, to provide housing and health care for all, to provide jobs at a living wage, to provide justice with mercy for those who have fallen. This jail is filled with people Atlanta has betrayed.

## The actual cost of this building was much greater than planned, as contractors, subcontractors and suppliers lined up to satisfy the fears of the public.

This jail is also a symbol of the prisons throughout Georgia and our country, and of the system of "justice" that betrays people without adequate money or connections.

This day in our journey, this Gospel reading, is fraught with human emotions —visceral, gut emotions that, when we feel them coming on, are difficult to control.

The first emotion we encounter is fear. "The chief priests and teachers of the Law were *afraid* of the people . . ."

Fear drove the Powers to build this jail. It's larger than the one it replaced, so it can hold more people. Fear drives many of the decisions as to who is detained here. Homeless people, poor people, immigrants, the mentally ill. The small windows make it difficult to see in, difficult for us to distinguish the faces that would make us certain there really *are* people inside. Easier for us to forget that inside this building are children of God, our brothers and sisters, who are there because of our collective betrayal of their humanity.

This fear has contributed to the building of many prisons throughout Georgia, and to our having one of the highest rates of incarceration in the United States.

When Judas went to speak with the chief priests and the officers of the Temple Guard, the Gospel tells us, "They were pleased and offered to pay him money."

How easily fear and greed join hands, and money becomes the lubricant of betrayal. There is a stark and sinister role of money in our jail and prison system.

The actual cost of this building was much greater than planned, as contractors, subcontractors and suppliers lined up to satisfy the fears of the public. The Hardwick prisons that we visit each month evolved out of the fear of economic decline as the Central State mental hospital was downsized. Prisons are built throughout rural Georgia with the promise of new jobs and economic development. The probation system in Georgia requires participants to

pay \$40 per month to a private contractor or go back to jail. Collect telephone calls from inmates are sold to the highest bidder, with a slice off the top for the State. The two essentials for a prison family visit are a picture ID and a plastic bag of quarters for the food vending machines in the visiting room.

Fear and greed are key human elements in Judas' betrayal of Jesus. Judas, the chief priests, the teachers of the law, the officers of the Temple Guard, represent the "system" that today betrays the poor, the homeless, the stranger, the mentally ill.

We stand now in front of the Atlanta City Jail, in the presence of the reality of that system.

And against that system stands . . . Simon Peter!  
"Simon, Simon! Listen! Listen!"

Jesus warns that the disciples will be tested by Satan, by the Powers. How does Peter respond? Peter boasts. His pride overtakes him. "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you and to die with you!"

Peter did not listen. Many times he has not listened when Jesus has tried to help him understand.

Jesus prophesies denial. Then Peter denies Jesus, and is bitterly remorseful.

Today, we are Peter. Like him, we are full of pride and quick to boast when our faith is challenged.

Yet, also like Peter, we have denied Jesus. Peter's denial shines a harsh light on our own failures, our inadequacies, our individual powerlessness in the face of this dirty, rotten system.

We stand at the foot of this jail towering above us, and we seem very small.

But there is hope. Jesus says, "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail. And when you turn back to me, you must strengthen your sisters and brothers."

It is Tuesday. Jesus is in the custody of the State. Let us walk together for another day.

Amen. ✠



Calvin Kimbrough

Tuesday, March 18, 5 p.m., Atlanta City Jail.



# Profiting From Prisons

By Rob McCulloch

*Editor's note: Rob McCulloch is a new friend of the Open Door Community, having discovered our fellowship through the peerage of Hannah Loring-Davis and other Open Door volunteers. He has recently left private sector work in hotel and restaurant development to return to an original focus on housing and social issues.*

*"Have your Prison Blues gotten you out of a jam; saved your hide; taken a beating; been scraped up, bruised, weathered, flattened, crushed, trampled and abused? Write us a note and let us know how your Prison Blues held up when the going got tough. If we post your tale, you could win a yardcoat. ..."*

— Ad copy from the "Prison Blues" retail Web site, supplier of prisoner-made work clothes manufactured for both prison inmates and mass-market consumers

This relatively clever, if not dark, marketing ploy presents a perhaps ironic example of prison life as a growing corporate enterprise and cultural commodity in modern America. But the irony may be lost upon the largely poor, minority young male consumers who make up the target demographic for such apparel and are the most likely to wind up wearing jailhouse clothing inside a real prison. Unfortunately, the underlying message is that prison culture is less a consequence (by individual action or as an outside force of social control) than a lifestyle alternative, a path chosen among equally unappealing outcomes rather than one to be avoided.

The rapid expansion of prison populations, coupled with the movement for limited government, has resulted in an increasingly private prison industry.

This is among the many effects of the unholy confluence of captive labor and increasing privatization of the prison industry, and part of a larger indictment of American incarceration policy: a prison population explosion largely attributable to mandated sentences arising from the "war on drugs," despite steady declines in violent and property crime. Unbridled capitalist fervor guides the response to this growing condition, to tap a vast sea of cheap captive labor and to feed and feed off the expanding prison infrastructure and services industry, growing far beyond the grasp of state control.

"Prison Profiteers: Who Makes Money From Mass Incarceration," a matter-of-fact compilation of essays assembled by veteran prisoner advocates Tara Herivel and Paul Wright, documents the expansion of the modern prison system to include a new face of corporate-industrialist enterprise, from its longstanding function as a means of social control, punishment and rehabilitation. Providing a range of perspectives, from the anecdotal to the macro, the essays focus less on the underlying socioeconomic factors or criminal justice policy that are creating a de facto separate prison state within America than on the impacts of privatization on, within and self-sustaining this para-state.

As of this year, one out of every 100 adult Americans is under state control within the nation's prison system, representing perhaps the highest incarceration rate in the world (though high estimates of China's prison population would make the two nations roughly equal in this respect). This is a fact not lost on corporate America, whose perpetual search for cheap labor has landed its sights squarely on the 2.3 million American adults under prison control.

Prison workers, if often lacking the advanced skills and education of a modern work force, present a multitude of other favorable characteristics: exemption from workers compensation and payroll taxes, lax occupational and industry safeguards, absence of indirect compensation, and a lack of ability to unionize. Last but not least, exemption from minimum wage laws allows pay as low as 23 cents per hour, notwithstanding deductions for items such as room and board and victim reparations.

Ostensibly, prison work can serve a range of positive goals: affording prisoners some form of income, keeping parts of a volatile population busy in an otherwise idle environment, providing additional means of monitoring and social control, and gaining skills that may help with the transition to mainstream society upon release. These goals, however, are often secondary to the economic value of what essentially represents a slave labor pool.

While revenues from prison labor serve somewhat to offset incarceration costs borne by the state, the bounty inevitably is offered to a greater corporate cause. All 50 states operate some sort of prison industry, working in lockstep to provide prison labor to prominent companies including Dell, Motorola, IBM, Texas Instruments, Honeywell, Microsoft, Chevron, Boeing, Victoria's Secret, Nintendo, Starbucks and the Parke-Davis and Upjohn pharmaceutical companies. While industrial production is a common application of labor, information and service sector jobs are also increasingly performed by prison workers, including call center operations and data entry. The prison-industrial complex also takes on a global face: Honda employs prisoners in Ohio at \$2

## Prison Profiteers

Who Makes Money From Mass Incarceration

Edited by Tara Herivel and Paul Wright

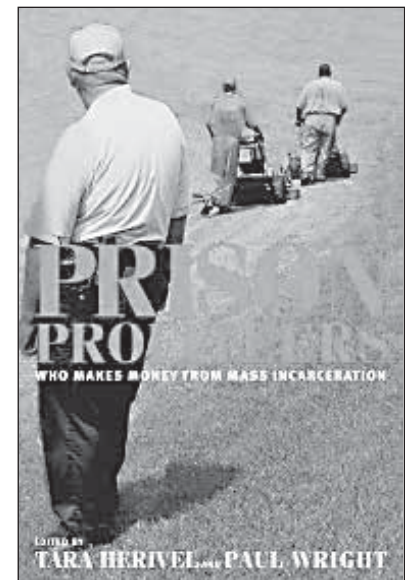
Published by The New Press

ISBN: 978-1-59558-167-9

\$26.95 / £16.99 / \$33.95 CAN

Hardcover 2007

352 pages



an hour to manufacture the same parts once made by union workers at \$20 an hour.

An even darker aspect of prison production is its entanglement in the military-industrial complex, in particular the role of Federal Prison Industries, a semi-public, for-profit business operated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, as highlighted in the essay by Ian Urbana, "Prison Labor Fuels American War Machine." As the federal government's 39th largest private contractor, FPI's 21,000-strong prisoner work force takes part in manifold aspects of war production, including weapons manufacture, armor, apparel and transportation and communications equipment.

Enjoying a special relationship as a government supplier under enabling legislation, FPI maintains "mandatory source status," which requires federal agencies to purchase its products even if cheaper alternatives are available. A natural consequence of this special status is the decimation of private domestic competition, which raises concern about the loss of the nation's "warm industrial base" — the small manufacturers that specialize in ramping up production in times of conflict. Overdependence on these prison industries for war materiel poses some threat in leaving military readiness hostage to riot or prison work stoppage.

A solution to this problem, however, may be self-evident. FPI has been known to employ convicted foreign terrorists. Should the "war of terror" continue on its present course, a steady supply of captured enemy combatants could be readily turned over to produce war implements, creating the Orwellian prospect of perpetual war — combat as a means of consuming excess industrial capacity, fueled in perpetuity by the constant renewal of prisoner-of-war labor.

While prison labor becomes increasingly ensnared in national and corporate power structures, the essays take care to address the community impact of prison expansion. Several seek to refute the myth of economic benefit to local economies, often proffered as an incentive to site new prison facilities. Notwithstanding the occasional prison road crew and recent efforts to revive the chain gang, jails provide a nominal benefit to the communities where they reside (e.g., creation of working-class jobs for guards and administrators), but not

nearly as much as may be marketed by the local chamber of commerce.

Conversely, prison construction often serves to supplant alternative, and potentially more sustainable, means of economic development. The aforementioned industries pit local residents in competition with prisoners for employment, and against a low-cost captive labor pool, the deck is stacked against the low-skill wage slave on the "outside." Stockholder attention to the bottom line will always seek to minimize investment, and wages, to maximize returns.

In competing with other communities to attract prison facilities, offering infrastructure and services as an incentive transfers the burden of providing electricity and roads to the local government, which in many cases is already beset by strained tax bases and resources, and thereby limited in what it can offer to other industries. Furthermore, actual job creation is often a hollow prospect, as facility construction and jobs within the prison are more often than not performed by non-resident workers. Most prison construction firms are specialized outfits that bring their work crews with them, usually from out of state. Seniority rules for prison employees, particularly for higher-level supervisory and administration positions, often result in employee transfer rather than hiring of local residents. Those employees who do relocate often choose to live away from the prison town, commuting from cities with more amenities. The multiplier effects of these workers are limited.

The latter parts of this book shift the focus away from prisoners as a commodity and the shady underside of prison financing — which literally "bonds" local and state governments to creating more and more prisons — to the growing commoditization of prisons themselves. Emphasis on the prisoners' plight is not lost, however, and in the individual, often harrowing accounts of unjust and inhumane treatment, shades of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "The Gulag Archipelago" abound.

The rapid expansion of prison populations, coupled with the movement for limited government, has resulted in an increasingly private prison industry. While privately owned prison facilities, holding

**Profiting**, continued on page 10





# Holy Week 2008

Photographed and Compiled  
by Calvin Kimbrough

## Monday Grady Hospital

5:00 pm

*John 12:1-11* Dick Rustay leads the circle in prayer for Grady's historic mission — quality health care for all who are ill or injured.



## Tuesday Atlanta City Jail

5:00 pm

*Luke 22:1-6, 31-34, 54-62* Phil Leonard leads the circle in worship (see "Betrayal and Denial" on page 4).



## Wednesday Ponce de Leon Avenue

5:00 pm

*Micah 4:3-4* We join a city wide march down Ponce de Leon Avenue to the Midtown Army Recruiting Station to call for an end to the war in Iraq. Chuck Harris, Lora Shain, Mike Vosburg-Casey and Heather Barger (above right) call for closing Guantanamo. Robert Clayton, Nelia Kimbrough and Larry Huff (right to left, above) carry coffins remembering those who have died.



## Maundy Thursday Atlanta City Hall

5:00 pm

*Mark 14:12-26* Eduard Loring leads our Eucharist service (far right). Emily Hayden serves the cup to Yolanda Harris (right).





## Good Friday Georgia State Capitol

5:00 pm

*Luke 22:47-53, 22:63-23:49* Murphy Davis presents the Passion narrative through the eyes of the Family of the Executed.



## Holy Saturday Pine Street Shelter

5:00 pm

*Matthew 27:57-66* Calvin Kimbrough, Emily Hayden and Peter Crooke (above left) lead singing in the vacant lot across Pine Street from the shelter. While Heather Barger and Katie Aikins (left) keep the drumbeat going, Nelia Kimbrough (below) leads us through the Litany of the Tombs (*Hospitality*, June 2006). These three photographs from Holy Saturday were made by Amanda Petersen. Thank you, Amanda!



## Easter Morning 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue

5:00 pm

*Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18* After a fine breakfast of grits, ham, scrambled eggs, sweet rolls, coffee and orange juice with our friends from the streets, we gather in the front yard at 910 to hear Eduard-the-Agitator proclaim, "Jesus Christ is risen! The powers of death and oppression are defeated!" Amen!



**Keeping the Dream**, *continued from page 1*

firing of white working-class Americans and workers of color.

To add insult to injury, our government has slashed safety-net programs that in the past were taken for granted. There has been a radical shift in the country's culture and psyche that believes that a citizen no longer has an obligation to help those who are worst off. There has been a further shift in the ideology of the federal government to a perspective that the government should not use tax money to help the poor, but now the poor should be helped by the private sector or faith-based initiatives — or, in the worst-case scenario, the government simply allows the poor to become poorer.

Moreover, just as there is a downward spiral for those in structural poverty, there is a simultaneous redistribution of wealth upward. The federal government is still playing a role in issues of poverty and wealth, but this time it is providing increased tax breaks for the rich and huge and lucrative government contracts to wealthy monopoly capitalist corporations.

For King, the erosion of citizens' rights and the war against the poor were not the end of his theological concerns. From his famous April 4, 1967 speech titled "Beyond Vietnam" until his assassination on April 4, 1968, King added his ethical challenge against the war in Vietnam. And again, we are living in a similar context. The government and the handful of wealthy arms and oil corporations and "reconstruction businesses" that are the primary beneficiaries of the U.S. colonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan — an elite political and economic leadership that also has assigned young American men and women to the possibility and reality of death — these prosecutors and beneficiaries of the war have reoriented our priorities to such an extent that the billion dollars demanded for the dropping of bombs on Baghdad is more important than using 850 billion dollars for eradicating poverty and racial inequality here in the United States. And the 850 billion is the floor of the expenses, not the ceiling. [And by 2008, we are speaking of *trillions* of dollars squandered on the wars.]

Like King, we too are confronted by times of crisis. But times of crisis always offer opportunity for growth and healthy change. This is the good news.

Fortunately, just as there were movements of resistance for a healthy America in King's time, we too have what I like to call a new American movement. And I think that public school and university students, as in the 1960s, are leading the way. In addition, many working-class people and their unions have opposed the Iraq war.

E-mail and the Web have become sites for healthy debate and information. Marching, petition signing, writing to Congress, the building of various new organizations and ad hoc groups, increased conversations about international law, challenging public officials based on their war records, signs of solidarity between Americans and the people of Iraq, the

recognition that the war budget means decreased spending on healthy domestic priorities, national and local efforts to influence public opinion and the Supreme Court's deliberations on affirmative action — all these and more are signs of hope.

Yet, in the midst of this flowering of resistance and debate about civil rights, poverty and war, a glaring question begs for a response. Where are the churches, where are the church leaders, where are Christian institutions of higher learning, where are those to whom we naturally turn for moral leadership in times of crisis?

## To really have a church, King believed, called for centering worship and witness around the efforts for justice.

Rev. King offered us some instructive insight about the role of the church and Christian community in times of crisis and opportunity.

First, for King, the Christian church must be a beacon for justice. If Christians dared to witness as followers of Jesus the Christ, then we would have to practice what Jesus practiced and preached. From King's vantage point, justice stood at the heart of the cross and resurrection; it stood at the heart of Christian suffering, hope and love. Those persons, of any color or ethnicity, who claimed the name of Jesus deserved that name only if they anchored their Christian faith and identity in justice. "Those of us who call the name of Jesus Christ," preached King, "find something at the center of our faith which forever reminds us that God is on the side of truth and justice."

Accordingly, the church could not be a Christian family if it supported a racial hierarchy or U.S. military presence abroad, or the decline in civil rights. And most definitely, King argued, no church could identify itself as Christian if it supported the wealthy over the poor. Maybe people could call themselves a gathering of like-minded individuals, or a group of people interested in religion. But only when black, brown, red, yellow and white Americans placed truth and justice at the center of their faith could a people of faith claim themselves believers in and doers of Jesus' words and deeds.

A Christian church of justice, from King's perspective, would emerge once the church de-emphasized such activities as fund-raising for the pastor's anniversary or expanding church physical structures in order to claim bragging rights. Justice would not be found in those churches where pastors paid more attention to the "size of their wheelbase" than to righting incorrect relations outside church walls. To really have a church, King believed, called for centering worship and witness around the efforts for justice.

Second, a Christian church

distinguishes itself through the role of servant. Justice manifests itself through active service to those who suffer from physical poverty and need, those who are emotionally broken, those who cannot advocate for themselves, and those who lack a full humanity.

Toward the end of his life, King summed up all that he had done and asked that his eulogy convey this message: "I don't want a long funeral. ... But I hope I can live so well that the preacher can get up and say he was faithful. ... That's the sermon I'd like to hear."

Defining the nature of Christian faith by servanthood, King finishes:

" 'Well done thy good and faithful servant. You've been faithful; you've been concerned about others.' That's where I want to go from this point on, the rest of my days. '[The one] who is greatest among you shall be your servant.' I want to be a servant. I want to be a witness for my Lord, do something for others."

The Christian church does not define itself by worldly possessions and materialistic acquisitions. In fact, in the list of his own earthly achievements, King does not detail his Nobel Peace Prize, his many speaking and preaching engagements, his prestigious educational degrees, or his books and articles. In contrast, he hopes the living will remember him for his lifelong service to the poor and society's powerless victims. Again, the nature of the church is to serve and empower the people, even if (in the case of exceedingly wealthy churches) serving implies sharing power equally with the poor.

King based the servanthood of the Christian church on the Bible. Specifically, he refers to Matthew 25:31ff. Here Jesus uses the parable about the ultimate judgment day, when specific criteria deny or permit passage into heaven. All of humankind faces Jesus on the throne and awaits either permission to enter eternal life or relegation to hell or prolonged condemnation.

On the left, Jesus places the goats — those who pursued an earthly lifestyle of materialistic, profit-oriented activity. In this crowd one discovers those who placed profit before people, the value of things above human value. Here too one meets all those so-called Christians who preached an abstract "spiritual" religion, which primarily encouraged people to gaze at the heavens while systems of greed, racism and war enslaved the spirits, souls and bodies of victims on earth.

On the right hand Jesus places the sheep, and gives them access to heaven because they have been faithful servants to the world's physically poor: people without food or water, people incarcerated or homeless, people sick or without clothes, or immigrants to a strange land.

King wanted the Christian church to stand with the sheep. As Jesus states in the parable, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). What the Christian church does to society's poor equals what it

does to Jesus Christ.

Third, the church obtains its Christian identity when it organizes for the God-given rights of the poor. Specifically, what the church organizes for is not the aesthetic and romantic notion of integration. For King, the Christian church fights to realize a new definition of equality in which power-sharing would satisfy the new understanding of racial and ethnic integration. In other words, racial integration, which King continued to pursue, would arise only when what he called the white power structure surrendered its exclusive monopoly on power.

Clarifying the goal of Christian organizing efforts, King lectured in 1967: "Now, if we are to recognize that we are in this new era where the struggle is for genuine equality, we must recognize that we can't solve our problems until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power." Furthermore, the new power that the poor and the black community would receive in "genuine equality" would reflect the natural rights given by God in God's focus on the poor. Continuing, King asserted, "We must recognize that if we are to gain our God-given rights now, principalities and powers must be confronted and they must be changed."

Basically King wants to clarify the organizing target of the Christian religion and the church and thus facilitate a full humanity for all people. Christians must sharpen their social tools of analysis and clearly identify and confront the "principalities and powers" on earth that block the achievement of oppressed people's God-given rights.

Toward the end of his life, King began to define these demonic powers as racism, capitalism and capitalist war abroad. Thus to enjoy the rights freely given through God's grace entails eradicating systemic evil. To organize toward what it means to be human forces the church to name immoral activities. Naming evil, then, comprises part of the organizing effort; fully removing that which the church names approaches the restoration of just human relations, a new and equal power-sharing.

Fourth and finally, the church has to heal, preach and help deliver. Here King uses Luke 4:18-19 as his personal guide and, by implication, instruction for all Christian witness. Not only does the church define itself by justice, servanthood and organizing, but it also heals those who have broken hearts. At this point King adds a concern for the soul, which encompasses the heart. Just as the physical body needs material sustenance, the soul and the heart likewise require care. Therefore Christians provide relief for the nonmaterial in conjunction with alleviating systemic principalities and powers.

Related to healing is proclamation of the gospel message, or good news, for those who are poor. As a fourth-generation Baptist preacher, King knew all too well the importance of the proclaimed word in the Christian faith tradition. The people need to hear a word from the Lord to soothe their souls, direct their vision, gird up their courage to confront and change systems of evil, and assume their God-given rights in the here and now.



In particular, the proclaimed word tells society's poor and afflicted that "the acceptable year of the Lord" is at hand, not tomorrow but now. In fact, the year most acceptable to a God of justice and truth was the year of Jubilee, when all slaves received their deliverance into freedom. Consequently, the church must help in this deliverance by letting society's victims hear that a radical transformation has already occurred with the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

Specifically, the coming of Jesus meant that deliverance from evil has taken place. If deliverance into the realm of Jesus' own liberation has occurred for the poor, then the church must aid the poor in their own deliverance. Put differently, Jesus shifted the balance of power from the realm of evil to the realm of freedom, thereby making victory of the oppressed assured. Though a historic shift has taken place in terms of guaranteeing Jesus' victory for "the little ones" on earth, the victims must allow this already ultimate deliverance to empower them toward making this liberation concrete. The Christian church has a role in this process; it proclaims and helps organize deliverance. ✠

*This is the first in a two-part series. Part 2 will be in the May issue of Hospitality.*

## poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

## Disguise

God could be  
the slightly known —  
an undertaker named Max.  
The teenager who wanted  
to kiss me. The woman  
who sings *Mustang Sally*.  
The short blonde who knocks  
and knocks at three a.m.  
looking for Frank and Dave,  
asking *can't I just come  
inside and sleep?* I could  
have said yes. Made her  
a bed on the couch. It  
could have been one of  
God's disguises, wearing  
the blonde wig and the bright  
green eyeshadow, hooded,  
desperate eyes.  
Oh how She knocked, loud,  
with the flat of Her hand.  
In the morning, that bright  
lipstick print on the green  
door. The pale pink glove.  
High heel marks  
in the snow.

~Diane Seuss

*Diane Seuss is Writer in Residence at Kalamazoo College. Her book "It Blows You Hollow" was published by New Issues Press. Recent work is forthcoming or has appeared in The Georgia Review, Indiana Review, Alaska Quarterly Review, Brevity and Blackbird. Her work is anthologized in "Boomer Girls," "Are You Experienced" and "Sweeping Beauty," all from the University of Iowa Press. Her new manuscript, "Hicksville," is making the rounds.*

## April 8, 1968, continued from page 1

we had a chance to change, repent, forgive, build the Beloved Community. Wolfe Street. Bus stops. We dance downward to the earth on which we move, into which we shall be buried when the clock's last tock is ticked. There — old and new, stately and worn, under construction and renovated, waits Hannah's future: Johns Hopkins Hospital. We kiss goodbye. She to work: me toward her new home so far away from the Open Door Community.

## January 8, 1979

Murphy Davis, my wife, and I were in Spanish Harlem visiting our friend Doug McGee. He is a photographer for Newsweek, a playwright, and the author of the first photo-bio of death row prisoners under the new Jimmy Carter law and the Republican application of that law. We were in NYC to raise funds for Southern Prison Ministry. Murphy is the director of the Georgia office. Will Campbell is the founder of the ministry of visitation and resistance to killing of human beings as punishment.

During the night on a pallet on the floor, our beautiful daughter, Hannah Williams Loring-Davis, is conceived. October 20, 1979 — ten days before we opened the first free shelter for homeless people in Atlanta at Clifton Presbyterian Church — she was born: a gift among gifts. A girl, to woman, who grew up among the homeless, and in a residential discipleship community: Open Door Community.

## April 8, 1968

11:00 p.m. Pat picks me up at the Charlotte, North Carolina airport. We kiss. She and I cannot see what lies ahead for us and our lives. The change is mighty like an oak tree, but hooded like a Guantanamo prisoner during the Bush Regime. Seeds have been planted in good soil. I will bear a different, and for my traditions as a white man in the Deep South, strange grain. Only sixtyfold, but a harvest nonetheless. In six years we are divorced. I am fired from my teaching post at Columbia Theological Seminary. I have reduced the distance and I am walking on asphalt and concrete: Black and White.

## April 4, 1968

6:30 p.m. I am watching the evening news. Walter Cronkite. He looks straight into the camera. Straight into me. "We have just received word that Martin Luther King Jr. has been shot in Memphis, Tennessee." I scream. Father Perry Kingman, Episcopal priest, lives in the next-door apartment at 39 Green Street, Madison, New Jersey. We are graduate students at Drew University. He runs over. We share shoulders. We lament like women drawing water from a dry well for their babies with bloated bellies.

7:30 p.m. Words shatter the dream as a bullet shattered the dreamer's skull. He is dead. I made a vow on that day which I live today. "Dear God and Dr. King: I promise to live in protest for racial justice and peace in the streets for the rest of my life. Please help me. Please show me the way. Amen."

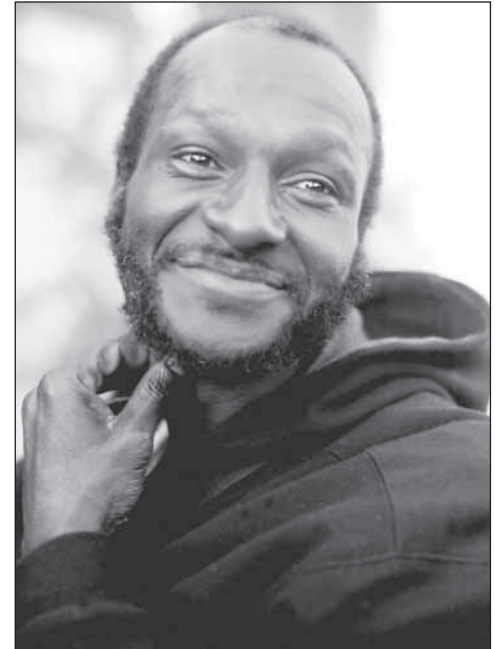
## April 5, 1968

5:00 p.m. Pat and I are riding the rubber rails in our Volkswagen Beetle named George Washington. Heading South toward Charlotte, North Carolina. My dislocation. I was born and suckled in Bamberg, South Carolina. We circle DC and see the smoke and flames along the 14th Street Corridor. Vietnam come home? We are afraid.

We drive and drive and drive and the sky gets springtime dark. A Good Friday crucifixion of our Prophet seeps into the shattered slivers of bone fragments and dried blood in the chips of concrete outside the door of Room 306, Lorraine Motel, Memphis, Tennessee. The unrecognizable crushed body of a sanitation worker fades from memory as King's body and the nation's attention is moved toward Atlanta, Georgia. Birthplace. Burial site. The city of my future

April 8, 1968, continued on page 11

# Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Timothy 3/08

Calvin Kimbrough

*Come and meet the risen Christ. He comes in the guise of the stranger for grits, soup and a shower with clean clothes.*

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volunteer  
needs  
at the  
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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, Wednesday soup kitchen and Thursday showers and lunch.

Volunteers to help staff our foot clinic on Wednesday evenings.

**For more information,**  
contact **Chuck Harris at**  
[odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net](mailto:odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net)  
or **770.246.7627**

### Profiting, continued from page 5

about 7 percent of the nation's adult prison population, are addressed in the book, attention is directed to private juvenile facilities, contract services to state-run prisons (e.g., medical care and food service), and prison-related private industries, such as transportation companies, prison technology and weaponry, and telephone services. It is in these sectors of this mirror economy that the base nature of capitalism and the profit motive are laid bare.

While a fairly low proportion of adult prisoners are housed in for-profit facilities, the reverse is true for juveniles — about 30,000 of the 92,000 children held in detention are in privately run prisons. The number of private facilities for juveniles has grown nearly 50 percent in the past decade, and the growth shows little sign of abating, as the industry achieves multibillion dollar profits annually.

These profits come at great cost. A bare-minimum provision of services (to a very high-risk population, as anywhere from 25 to 60 percent of juvenile inmates require specialized developmental or mental care), constant pressure to cut costs and lack of governmental oversight have given rise to a system rife with abuse. The inherent problem lies in the fact that uniformly underpaid guards (making as little as \$6 an hour), untrained staff saddled with the responsibility of caring for a population with a range of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders cannot create a stable, secure environment, much less one that fosters rehabilitation.

## High recidivism may well be an overt or covert aim of the prison system, given its increasingly symbiotic relationship with private interests.

The book takes a much darker turn when the discussion turns to privatized prison medical care. It is well understood how the health maintenance organization (HMO) model operates in the civilian economy — the fewer patients treated, the more money made — but this takes on ominous overtones within prison walls. Unlike the traditional HMO, where company liability is (tenuously) linked to the quality of care, in the prison system malpractice is little threat and incompetence and negligence are not legal standards of responsibility. Rather, a higher, more nebulous standard of “deliberate indifference” must be met to establish fault. Furthermore, medical privacy is compromised in the jail environment, where privacy rules exist within a physically and legally restricted realm. The result is a health system in which understaffing, lack of credentials and training, and gross incompetence and misconduct lead to horrifying conditions, where spider bites result in amputations, heart attacks are treated with arthritis cream, and hepatitis and tuberculosis epidemics are allowed to run rampant.

While lack of accountability, disregard for ethics and unabashed profit motive may not be surprising outcomes of a “doing more with less” approach to prison services, the willingness of traditional, mainstream companies to pile on and fleece prisoners and their families also goes largely unnoticed. Major telephone companies, including AT&T, Sprint and Qwest, engage with prison systems across the country to extract the highest allowable telephone rates for prisoners seeking phone contact with their families and communities. The state is a willing participant, with the vast



Gary Packingham

majority of prison systems (more than 90 percent nationwide) entering service agreements with phone companies to charge the highest rates provided they receive a percentage of profits from inmate-placed collect calls, ranging from 20 to 55 percent of gross revenues. State governments are only too compliant, as proceeds as often go to general state coffers as back to the prison system itself. The consequences of these arrangements are in clear contradiction to the original purpose of the prison phone system — to let prisoners maintain ties to their communities to assist their transition upon release, and ultimately curtail recidivism.

High recidivism may well be an overt or covert aim of the prison system, given its increasingly symbiotic relationship with private interests. Prisons need occupancy to justify their existence, and the expansion of prison privatization shows that a prison quasi-state represents a well-oiled economic engine.

Power structures, once entrenched, are difficult to dismantle. The prison system has long been an effective instrument of social control. Introducing profit potential, another set of motivated stakeholders and removing the system incrementally from state governance and oversight may create the appearance of limited government, and keeps the reins of power firmly in the grasp of a ruling class.

But mechanisms of capitalist democracy may ironically provide inroads to a devolution. Stockholder interest in for-profit prison facilities is sensitive to lawsuits and bad publicity. Inability to generate sustainable profits could doom, if not the industry as a whole, the growth of the private prison model. Furthermore, promised cost savings from private prison contracts established in the 1990s have largely failed to materialize, and poor prison conditions and scandals involving escapes have blemished the reputation of private prisons. Some states prohibit private prisons outright, and strong correctional worker unions in some states are a potent lobby against private prisons.

States and local governments do sometimes bring prison health services back in house as misery and poor performance take their toll. As a Florida sheriff said about outsourced prison medical care: “We probably saved a little money . . . but the human and political cost is too high. I thought if I’m going to get the blame for this, I’m going to bring it back inside.”

Education and awareness of mainstream corporate complicity with prison industries, encouraged by Herivel and Wright’s work, may yet provide consumers with ammunition to protest those activities through collective boycott.

Furthermore, the prison system operates within a larger continuum of criminal justice. The U.S. Sentencing Commission recently approved retroactive reductions in prison terms and will allow more than 20,000 drug offenders the opportunity to reduce their sentences. Of those, 1,600 are eligible for immediate release. This move is part of a broader trend to reverse discriminatory and unjust mandatory sentencing. However slight, these represent opportunities to reduce the nation’s incarcerated population and the overall potential for profit from prisons. ♦



April 8, 1968, continued from page 9

and the place of my decline.

#### April 4, 1968

8:00 p.m. Professor Gordon Harland, master of Reinhold Niebuhr, teacher of Martin Luther King Jr., my major teacher, has assembled three of us in his living room to grieve and ask: "What have we done? What shall we do?" Ruth Harland serves sherry in weenie little glasses. I need a few bourbons neat.

9:30 p.m. We have decided that I will go to Memphis on April 8. A national call for clergy and people of good will comes from Coretta Scott King. She with Harry Belafonte asks for the march to continue, to be completed with non-violence. Dr. Harland will raise money for my trip. I go as the representative of Drew University Graduate School.

I am proud and terrified. I have not been in a march since I was required to be in ROTC at Presbyterian College. I have never protested other than the talk, talk, talk that liberals like me called action. I, like Abram and Sari, like the first disciples, I GO from the land of my father and mother to a new land filled with . . . hope and disaster.

11:00 p.m. Pat and I pack. We leave for Charlotte early the next morning. I weep.

#### April 5, 1968

Midnight hour. We arrive at Mom and Dad's. They cannot comprehend what I am going to do. Don't want the neighbors or my grandmother to know, but are pleasant and do not try to stop me.

1:00 a.m. Pat and I go to bed. I cannot sleep. King is dead. I am going to Memphis. What is the meaning of these stones?

#### April 8, 1968

10:00 a.m. I deplane for the second time in my life. I am alone. I am very afraid. I want to go home to my mother. I want to teach American Religious History. I want out. So, HE who is always with us has me hail a cab and off we go to the assembling point for the march. I get out at the checkpoint, for the cab can go no farther. I walk a block and turn left. There is a line as far as I can see of bayoneted National Guard standing "at ease." I wait. 20 to 30 thousand marchers gather.

My legs ache. Suddenly, slowly we begin to march. I make it to the end. I will never be the same. But, oh, how long and how hard the journey. I still don't know who I am or what I am doing. But Martin Luther King Jr. is born inside me that day and he has never left me nor I him.

Coretta Scott King, Yolanda, Dexter, Marty and Bernice lead the march. Nibs Stroupe, whom I would meet in August, was at the back of the line. Murphy's brother, Mac, a college student in Memphis, was marching as well. I would meet him in 1975.

7:00 p.m. Famished, exhausted. I return to the airport and wait my turn to fly away.

#### April 4, 1998

30 years later. Murphy Davis, my wife and partner of 23 years, and I land at the Memphis airport. We have come to re-enact the march of March 28, the foiled march, and April 8, 1968. The Rainbow Coalition held its annual meeting at the same time. I was invited to give the opening prayer.

#### March 31, 2008

5:00 p.m. Hannah's home! Rob picked her up and they had a moment before returning to the delicious supper Murphy prepared. Hannah is now on the way, her way, the way, the truth, the life as she follows the crucified King. We rejoice. We grieve. She is a young woman practicing the healing arts in an Empire. A police state called Homeland Security. "We shall overcome. Someday." Amen. ♦

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

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Friends,

Thanks and praises for two articles in March. First, the "Angola Bound" story concerning Thony Green was real and amazing. I have visited Angola twice, and it is seriously a place of despair. The fact that Thony has visitors like Eduard and Murphy sets him in a somewhat unique category: 80 percent of the inmates at Angola never receive visitors. Stay strong, Thony Green!

Second, "The Hard Truth About Soft" by Br. Aelred Dean (with whom I had the pleasure of cooking at the Christmas and New Year's meals) was powerful and heartfelt. As a Christian, I am repulsed when the words of Christ are used as weapons against humanity. Selective use of Scripture and misconstrued notions are obviously more harmful than helpful.

Brother Aelred knows Scripture and speaks the truth on multiple accounts. I am inspired!

Peace,  
Andrew Quinn  
Grayson, Georgia



Daniel Nichols

Dear Nelia and Calvin,

Greetings from snowy Wisconsin. This has been one of the snowiest Decembers on record here in Madison. It is very pretty, but we are tired of shoveling.

Hope both of you are well. I enjoy reading about the work of Open Door in your newspaper and seeing Calvin's photos, including occasionally a picture of one or both of you. And I was delighted to receive the calendar and Nelia's note. Almost as good as being back at Patchwork and listening to her wonderful sermons there. You are a wonderful storyteller, Nelia.

Overcoming fear was also the theme of the Longest Night service held recently at the church I attend here in Madison. So I have been reading the Bible verses referenced around the calendar and reflecting both on that service and Nelia's message. It will guide me through the year.

Rodney and I are well. He still works at the student union on campus, and I just completed three years with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The work can be challenging. I often feel I am putting Band-Aids on situations that really require major surgery at a higher policy level.

Best wishes to you both, and may 2008 be healthy and peaceful for all of us.

Love,  
Bonnie Benson  
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Ed & Murphy,

*Hospitality* just came last week with Murphy's tale of Alaska and Canada ("Inch by Inch," November-December 2007). We were also lucky enough to see the photo album you made for Ed Weir and of course heard all his stories. Sure sounds like you had a great time.

We very much appreciate receiving your newspaper and once in a while recognize names from our days in Georgia. Sounds like Hannah is making you proud and doing wonderful work.

Our love to all of you and greetings to all we know at Open Door. (We met Chris Rustay while Ed was here too.)

Peace & Joy,  
Nancy & Max Rice  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

*Editor's Note: Nancy and Max Rice were Partners at the Jubilee Community in the 1980s.*

Dear Murphy and Ed,

My name is Eugene Barbaro. I am a 58-year-old Roman Catholic man. I am presently civilly committed in the Massachusetts Treatment Center on the Bridgewater Complex. I have been here since January 1979. I've been incarcerated since 1977.

I receive your newspaper *Hospitality*, which I enjoy and is most welcome. I am writing to say thank you for the June-July 2007 article by Hugh M. Grant, "Same-Sex Love in the Body of Christ."

As a gay man in the Catholic Church, I have struggled being gay. I had a very hard time "coming out" because of it. I also felt being called by God to serve as a priest, but in my church being gay is wrong, more so if you are open.

Growing up, I hid being gay so much that I believe that is one of the reasons that brought me to prison when I was 29 years old. I did come out in prison but also came closer to God in prison, and still struggle because all I hear is that homosexuality is against God's word. I never believed that to be so. I always felt God's love, and Him calling me to follow Him. I never felt condemned by Scriptures, only by priests and preachers and people who try to change me.

When I read it, I only read about love, and if I love I am obeying God. Even in the passages they use to justify their opinions, I still didn't think it was talking about me. You see, I wasn't living the jailhouse gay man life. To me that's wrong. There's no love there for each other, just lust.

For the last 11 years I have lived a celibate life. I always felt that my biggest sin was hating myself for being gay, but God loves me. I am not better than God, so if He can Love me, to be whole I must love myself and who I am.

This *Hospitality* article for me was a message from God that my feelings and what I read and believe in are right. When I read in the article John's words from Chapter 14:27, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid," my heart felt peace.

So I wanted to say thank you and to give my appreciation to Jose and Hugh for the reflection. Have they been married yet? (You know this state will marry them.)

That brings me to one more thing about gay unions. In the 13th century the Greek Orthodox Church had a ceremony for same-sex unions, called "Order for Solemnisation of Same-Sex Union." So it was recognized at one time by the Catholic and the Orthodox Church. Because they don't any longer, they say we are living in sin, but what choice do they give us?

I never looked into the Episcopal Church, never knew anyone who was Episcopalian. Maybe Jose or Hugh can introduce me to the Episcopal Church or to someone who can.

I do attend Catholic services here. In fact, I'm the organist and music director for our services. I wonder sometimes if that is the only reason the chaplain lets me attend.

I will keep them both in my prayers. Will they both still become priests? My address is at the top of my letter if they would like to write me.

May God bless their ministry and yours.

Peace Always,  
Eugene D. Barbaro  
Prisoner in Bridgewater, Massachusetts

Dear Friends,

With gratitude: for the challenge and promise I find in *Hospitality* each month, and for all you do to build/restore God's Kingdom . . .

Peace,  
Marlys Graettinger  
Milford, Iowa



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Breakfast & Sorting Room:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 – 8 a.m.  
**Women’s Showers & Sorting Room:** Wednesday, 8 a.m.  
**Soup Kitchen:** Wednesday, 10:45 a.m. – 12 noon.  
**Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinic:**  
Wednesday, 6:45 - 9 p.m.  
**Men’s Showers & Bag Lunch:** Thursday, 8 – 11:30 a.m.  
**Use of Phone:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.  
Wednesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. – 12 noon.  
**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;  
monthly 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.  
If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 770.246.7628.  
Please visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| April 6  | Worship at 910<br>Edward Loring preaching   |
| April 13 | Worship at 910<br>Don Beisswenger preaching   |
| April 20 | Worship at 910<br>Nelia Kimbrough leading   |
| April 27 | Worship at 910<br>Edward Loring preaching   |
| May 4    | Worship at 910<br>Eucharist service and<br>Music with Elise Witt,<br>Joyce Brookshire and Friends |
| May 11   | Worship at 910<br>Day of Pentecost<br>Eucharist Service   |
| May 18   | Worship at 910<br>Eucharist Service   |
| May 25   | Worship at 910<br>Eucharist Service   |



### 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](http://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 Wednesday evenings  
from 6:45 - 9 p.m.!

## Needs of the Community



we need **sandwiches**  
**meat & cheese on**  
**whole wheat**

#### Living Needs

- ☐ jeans
- ☐ men’s work shirts
- ☐ men’s belts (34” & up)
- ☐ men’s underwear
- ☐ socks
- ☐ reading glasses
- ☐ walking shoes  
(especially 9 ½ and up)
- ☐ T-shirts (L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
- ☐ baseball caps
- ☐ MARTA cards
- ☐ postage stamps
- ☐ trash bags  
(30 gallon, .85 mil)

#### Personal Needs

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

#### Food Needs

- ☐ turkeys
- ☐ hams
- ☐ sandwiches  
meat & cheese  
on wheat bread
- ☐ quick grits

#### Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ single bed  
mattresses
- ☐ blankets

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!