

# HOSPITALITY

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

vol. 26, no.1

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 404.874.9652 www.opendoorcommunity.org

January 2007

## A Litany of Atlanta: Done at Atlanta, in the Day of Death, 1906

By **W. E. Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963)**

*Editor's note: W.E.B. Du Bois was in Alabama in September 1906 when he was notified of the racial massacre. He wrote "A Litany of Atlanta" on the train back to the city and spent the next several days with a shotgun across his lap on the porch of the building where he and his family lived at Clark College. The following is an excerpt from James Weldon Johnson, ed. (1871–1938), "The Book of American Negro Poetry," 1922.*

O SILENT GOD,

Thou whose voice afar in mist and mystery hath left our ears  
an-hungered in these fearful days —

*Hear us, good Lord!*

Listen to us, Thy children: our faces dark with doubt are made  
a mockery in Thy sanctuary. With uplifted hands we front Thy  
heaven, O God, crying:

*We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord!...*

Wherefore do we pray? ...

*Awake, Thou that sleepest!*

Thou art not dead, but flown afar, up hills of endless light, thru  
blazing corridors of suns, where worlds do swing of good and  
gentle men, of women strong and free — far from the  
cozenage, ... hypocrisy and chaste prostitution of this  
shameful speck of dust!

*Turn again, O Lord, leave us not to perish in our sin!*

From lust of body and lust of blood

*Great God, deliver us!*

From lust of power and lust of gold,

*Great God, deliver us!*

From the leagued lying of despot and of brute,

*Great God, deliver us!*

A city lay in travail, God our Lord, and from her loins sprang  
twin Murder and ... Hate. Red was the midnight; clang, crack  
and cry of death and fury filled the air and trembled  
underneath the stars when church spires pointed silently to  
Thee. And all this was to sate the greed of greedy men who  
hide behind the veil of vengeance!

*Bend us Thine ear, O Lord!*

## Remembering Racial Terror



graphic from  
*Le Petite Journal*  
Paris, 1906

## Only Justice Can Stop a Curse

By **Murphy Davis**

The strongest voices during the days of remembrance were the voices of the descendants of the survivors. They spoke of the racial massacre of 1906 in personal terms, and the stories brought it all home.

Dr. June Dobbs Butts is the youngest (and only surviving) of the six daughters of Irene and John Wesley Dobbs. She returned to Atlanta in her retirement and has offered crucial leadership in the Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot. She grew up in the Auburn Avenue neighborhood, and in the years after the street became the center of Black commerce, her father became known as the "Mayor of Auburn Avenue." Dr. Butts says that her father never forgot the conflagration of September 1906. "He spoke of it as 'The Horror — the worst that could happen.' It wasn't really a riot," she continues. "It was a *pogrom*: a planned, organized, intentional massacre of black people and the destruction of their neighborhoods and businesses to benefit the white elite."

Dr. Butts speaks with an authority that makes you sit up and listen. She grew up in the wake of the terror of that

## Litany of Remembrance and Renewal

*Editor's note: This Litany was written to be read at every public gathering commemorating the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot.*

One: We remember those who died in the riot in Atlanta in 1906.

**All: We seek the truth so we can heal.**

One: We remember those injured and all those affected by the spreading waves of violence.

**All: We seek truth so we can heal.**

One: We believe that by acknowledging the truth of yesterday we can transcend the violence and suffering of today.

**All: We seek truth so we can heal.**

One: We remember those caught in the riot whose names were hidden, whose names are known, whose names are forgotten,

**All: We remember those who died.**



MEINRAD CRAIGHEAD

## Connections

me instruction about the hard realities of life in the world and more about the meaning of discipleship. I encountered powerful teachers, like a young boy whom I tutored at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church, patients I met as a chaplain resident at Grady Memorial Hospital, and the great cloud of witnesses I came to love at the Open Door Community.

What better place to get infected by the radical love of Jesus than at the Open Door? Becoming a part of this unlikely family, getting up in what seemed like the middle of the night to serve breakfast to folks from the streets, scrubbing showers and toilets, experiencing the curls in my hair growing tighter from the steam rising off the piles of wet dishes, listening to the stories of the people I encountered, writing to those on death row, praying, singing, and worshipping together — these are the lessons that I was determined to take with me into the parish and to do my best to infect the folks in the pews with the call to discipleship that I had discovered.

At Second Presbyterian Church, with time and trust, the infection began to spread. The faithful people of the church were already housing 18 homeless folks each week during the winter months, providing meals, showers, and laundry facilities. This work was important but safely located on home turf. Because of the infectious memories of Easter morning celebration in downtown Atlanta with the Open Door, I encouraged the congregation at Second to leave the comfort of their lily-dressed sanctuary to head downtown on Easter morning. Some arrived as early as 4:00 a.m. to cook breakfast and set up for the Easter Sunrise Service, which we celebrated and enjoyed with the homeless in a parking lot; and Jesus always showed up to have a cup of coffee.

I left the Open Door an infected

Christian — infected with a desire to seek justice not only for the homeless but also for those in prison. Upon my arrival in Nashville, I sought ways to continue the ministry to those on death row that began at the Open Door. God led me to a man named Steve Henley, whom I began to visit eight years ago and who has been on Tennessee's death row for 22 years. I also became involved with a small, grassroots organization called the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing (TCASK), which witnesses to a higher way of dealing with our society's violence than by killing more people and creating more victims. The more I learned about the evil of the death penalty system, the more I was infected with the passion to do all that I could to end it.

I began to teach, preach, and share with my congregation, particularly my youth group, about my conviction that support for the death penalty could not be justified by those who claim Christ as Lord. A few members of the church did not like that message, demonstrating the profound influence of violence upon both society and the church; and yet, most continued to listen, as I did my best to listen to them. Don Beisswenger, a friend of the Open Door and of mine, once shared with me that "to love is to listen." Not easy words, but important ones.

Over time, some members of the congregation became more active in their own resistance to the death penalty by visiting and corresponding with people on death row, writing letters to officials, attending vigils, hosting a Death Row Art Show, and by supplying Christmas baskets for approximately 10 men on Tennessee's death row for the past three years. One of our youth group members, Kathryn Lea, was just named Youth Abolitionist of the Year by the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Look out — this stuff is contagious!

As much as I loved my congregation, over time, the church walls became as seductive as they were confining. I realized that I could stay behind those walls, safely serving my flock, without ever really having to push myself into the world. I could expound upon the words of the prophets. I could write and preach about Jesus' call to a life of nonviolence, of mercy-loving and justice-doing without daily picking up my cross and following Jesus into that world of suffering, violence, and injustice.

After three years of praying that God would open up a door for me to serve "the least of these my sisters and brothers" in a more fulsome way, the door cracked open this summer. The opportunity to become the Interim Executive Director of TCASK presented itself, and I suddenly understood that prayer is risky business! God answered my prayer with the call to work on the abolition of the death penalty full-time. Though my knees go a bit weak when I ponder the enormity of this work, I remind myself that I do not go it alone. The infectious connections of the Open Door Community, of the faithful at Second Presbyterian, and many others give me courage as I set out on this journey to follow Christ to Tennessee's death row, where Jesus, shackled and alone, is already waiting. ✠

### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS MURDER



NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

By Stacy Rector

*Editor's note: Stacy Rector is a Presbyterian minister in Nashville, Tennessee. She has been an important part of the Open Door's extended community since she was a student in Atlanta in the mid-1990s.*

Most of us want just enough of Jesus to be protected, swapping costly discipleship for a once-a-day gospel vitamin. Like children exposed to chicken pox when we are little so we don't get sick, as adults, we want Jesus in small doses, enough to make us feel good, but not enough to infect us.

— Craig T. Kocher, Associate Dean of the Chapel at Duke University

I recently used this quote in my final sermon as Associate Pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, a church I have served for nine years. My call to Second Presbyterian was my first to parish ministry following my years in Atlanta preparing for such a call. My preparation took a variety of forms, the most obvious through my studies at Columbia Theological Seminary. And yet, beyond the red brick walls of Columbia, other teachers and classrooms presented themselves, offering

## 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 would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing Hospitality for one year. A \$30 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

**Open Door Community**  
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Atlanta, GA 30306-4212  
www.opendoorcommunity.org  
404.874.9652; 404.874.7964 fax



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Dick Rustay baked and carved most of the 50 plus turkeys cooked at 910 during the Holiday Season.

### Newspaper

**Editor:** Murphy Davis  
**Photography and Layout Editor:** Calvin Kimbrough  
**Associate Editors:** Eduard Loring, Gladys Rustay, Lauren Cogswell, Mark Bashor (Poetry Editor) and Anne Wheeler  
**Copy Editing:** Mary Byrne, Julie Martin, and Charlotta Norby  
**Circulation:** A multitude of earthly hosts  
**Subscriptions or change of address:** Charlotta Norby

For more information about the life and work of the **Open Door Community**, please contact any of the following persons.

**Tony Sinkfield:** Hardwick Prison Trip and Food Coordinator  
**Gladys Rustay:** Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator  
**Dick Rustay and Lauren Cogswell:** Dayspring Farm Coordinators  
**Hannah Loring-Davis:** Harriet Tubman Free Clinic Coordinator  
**Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring:** Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host  
**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

# Agitator

By Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring

I, Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring, am a field hand in the little group of Christian disciples called by the Holy Ghost to be the Martin Luther King Campaign for Economic Justice. This progressive group is trying to save the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from the moneyed hawkers and domesticating dominators who say they are sorry that he was assassinated and simultaneously turn to kill his vision by lies and institutional forgeries.

*"How terrible for you, merchants of the prophetic past, highlighters of a dream devoid of justice. You hypocrites! You make fine tombs and museums for the prophets and decorate the monuments of those who lived good lives; and you claim that if you had lived during the time of your ancestors, you would not have done what they did and killed the prophets or driven the poor out of housing to die under bridges and at the Pine Street Shelter. So you actually admit that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets and passed the 'quality of death ordinances.' (Hey, pass me a Coke please)." (Matthew 23.29-31)*

Some in the party of Strom Thurmond, Trent Lott and W even claim King was a Republican. Ah, blasphemy, like the Prosperity Gospel. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." The Democrats are now the party of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; while the Southern-dominated, Southern-led, Southern-based Republican Party is now the party of Ross Barnett, Pitchfork Ben Tillman, George Wallace who articulated the vision in 1964 before Barry Goldwater, and James K. Vardaman. (Of course, and I want to be fair here, there is another reason to be a Republican in addition to white supremacy: tax policy, which is not unrelated to race and justice issues. If one is rich and does not want to share or work toward an equitable distribution of wealth in the United States of America for the Common Good, Republican tax policy is for you. However, greed and tax cuts are not only immoral; they are stupid. The economy is crumbling within as the War in Iraq is crumbling without. Hard to see, though, if you are a racist or a greedy rich person. The reduction in taxes as proffered policy came with the promise and implementation of the lottery [1964, New Hampshire, William Loeb]. Gambling has now corrupted the American moral system and the work ethic of the poor and golf players alike. Funny how the Christian Right claims it supports "family values" while advocating tax cuts, the lottery, and war. Somebody is lying and it ain't Jesus Christ or our Lord God Almighty. Enough to agitate a caring soul.)

I am a field hand in the movement to feed the hungry, house the homeless, stop the death penalty, and revise the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to outlaw slavery completely within the states and our territories. My title in this little Radical Remnant of faithful King believers and followers is "Agitator." (For a call to be a part of the Radical Remnant of all the King's men and all the King's women, see Michael Eric Dyson, "I May Not Get There With You: The True Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," 2000)

From whence cometh this wonderful epithet? First of all, Agitator comes from the name of the most resourceful leftist paper in the United States of America: *The Catholic Agitator*. This holy rag is published (call 323.267.8789 for a subscription) by the wild-eyed, fiery, Holy Ghost dominated, cool-moon, smoke-stack lightning lovers of God, the Poor, Peace, and Jesus who live, suffer, and die at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker. My friends (who are watched by the left-over J. Edgar Hoover crumbs at the FBI) were horrified when they learned this was my new title. Catherine Von Morris ran out to "Homeboys Industries" and had a T-shirt crafted just for me: "Protestant Agitator" announced the garment front and back. But everyone knows white



ADE BETHUNE

## What the Catholic Worker Believes

- 1. The Catholic Worker believes** in the gentle personalism of traditional Catholicism.
- 2. The Catholic Worker believes** in the personal obligation of looking after the needs of our brother [and sister].
- 3. The Catholic Worker believes** in the daily practice of the Works of Mercy.
- 4. The Catholic Worker believes** in Houses of Hospitality for the immediate relief of those who are in need.
- 5. The Catholic Worker believes** in the establishment of Farming Communes where each one works according to his [and her] ability and gets according to his [and her] need.
- 6. The Catholic Worker believes** in creating a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new, which is not a new philosophy but a very old philosophy, a philosophy so old that it looks like new.

Peter Maurin

Protestants don't protest, much less agitate. Nonetheless, I, born and bred a Baptist, wear the shirt with gay pride.

Now, the Los Angeles Catholic Workers did not come up with *Agitator* all by themselves. Agitation began a long time ago. The word comes to us from our ancestors, the Romans, and their political network, The Holy Roman Empire. In Latin, *agere* means to act, like the Book of Acts: to put into motion. This gift comes to us today with partisan emphasis: to stir up, to shake up, to disturb. And a particular dictionary definition is like that of one of our Catholic Worker founders, Peter Maurin (1877-1949): "to stir up interest and support through speeches and writing so as to produce changes" (New World Dictionary, 4th edition).

Peter Maurin was a French peasant by birth and formation. His family's land holding began during the era of Charlemagne, King of the Franks (768-814) and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (800-814). Peter founded the Catholic Worker Movement on May 1, 1933, during the Depression and the rise of FDR. Maurin's vision was a concrete alternative to the system which his founding partner, Dorothy Day, named "this filthy rotten system." Dorothy Day had, before she met Peter, unmasked the demonic in the never-ending need of capital to control more workers at low

pay, to use natural resources, land, and money, and to keep our country either in war or in preparation for war. A capitalist economy is a war economy. Wealth and its corollary — unequal access to economic resources (like medical care, good schools and funding for Grady Hospital at the level agreed upon by the counties) — are the cause of poverty and war.

Peter described himself, and calls each of us to be, an Agitator. Maurin is describing the fundamental way to be in the world. This way of being and doing releases the power of the Gospel and the dynamite of the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, unlike most of her Protesting offspring, teaches the state to structure society and economics for the Common Good. (Common here means "for all the people.") The Saints teach us that to hold on to surplus money and material is robbery, even murder, of the poor. Most modern Popes and the American Bishops have incisively criticized capitalism and its clone consumerism. Peter makes the word Agitate a holy term in Catholic Worker circles. He teaches that we must agitate in our capitalist society as a way to be and do for the Beloved Community on earth. Now let me be clear: Maurin believed the basic problem was spiritual, not political or economic, except as politics and economics are expressions of spiritual life. The god Mammon is alive in capitalism and forms our citizens in a capitalist spirituality. A good example of this idolatrous spirituality of death is W's call for the American people to shop after 9-11 to prove to the world our way of life (death) is intact. Against this power and principality Peter Maurin agitates for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the social teaching of the church to bring us back to a life in the spirit shared for the Common Good. The Los Angeles Catholic Worker named its newspaper for Peter Maurin and their way of life: *The Catholic Agitator*. Read, please, the "Easy Essay" (in the adjacent box) by our mentor as he clarifies our thought.

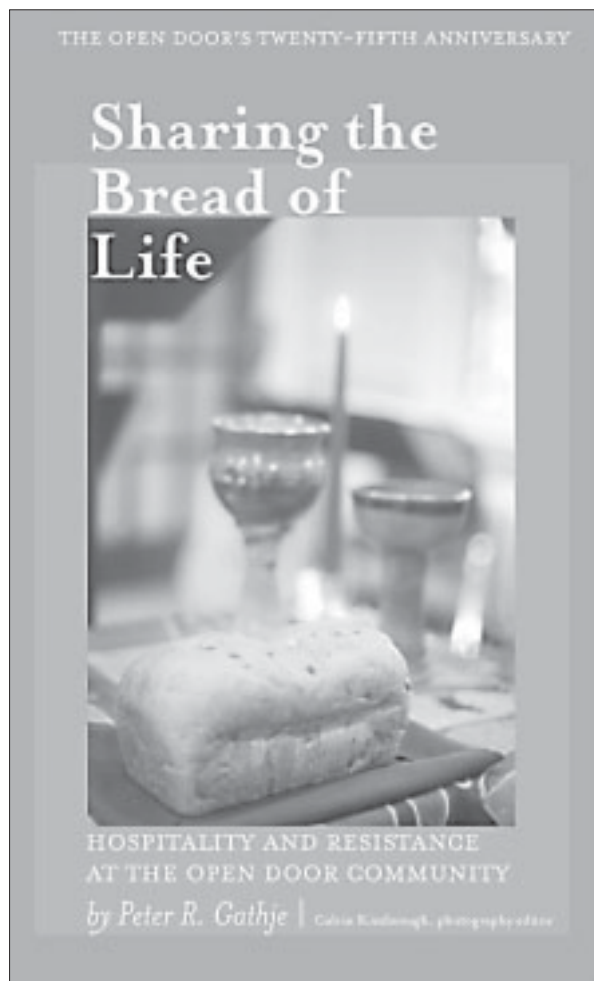
A third dimension of this fruitful, faithful word is its synonym: Protest. We at the Open Door Community are "Protestant Catholic Workers" for the most part, although we have many Catholic partners: members of our Advisory Board, volunteers, generous contributors, and members of our worshiping community. Nonetheless, our ethos is Southern and Protestant. To be a Protestant means to be a protester, to dissent, to be a nonconformist, an AGITATOR. (We are very proud of the UCC, Episcopal and Northern Presbyterian agitation during the 1960s for racial justice in the South. The first Northern martyr of the Civil Rights Movement was a Presbyterian minister who was run over by a bulldozer as a group of courageous Christians protested the building of segregated schools in Cleveland, Ohio: Bruce Klunder [see Taylor Branch, "Pillar of Fire," page 291. Sounds like Israel, doesn't it?]). In our lives and deaths at the Open Door Community, the two broad rivers of Christianity — Roman Catholic and Protestant — converge in power, truth, and joyful Gospel obedience in the title and practice of Agitator.

Fourth, our Agitation Theology is our source of practice and our angle of vision. It is eclectic, partisan, progressive, true, loving, and heretical according to the doctrines of the mainline church and its offspring, the Prosperity Gospel. We believe that "the only solution is love and love comes with community" (Dorothy Day). Not any particular community in isolation, not family life alone, not a political party, not patriotism, not race or class or sexual orientation or a literary club. Rather, and in resistance to the aforementioned substitutes for abundant life, communities of hospitality to strangers and enemies. A common life of diversity (in this day we need queers, just like we need lots of Blacks, whites, browns, reds, and yellows together). A life of covenant and common disciplines to the practices of the faith

*Agitator*, continued on page 10

## Available Now!

a new history of the  
Open Door Community  
celebrating our  
Twenty-Fifth Anniversary



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

By Peter R. Gathje

*"Sharing the Bread of Life," Peter R. Gathje's gift to The Open Door Community (Jerusalem to those who live on the street in Atlanta) is a marvelous recital of God's outrageous work of liberation and restoration. This book stands as a tribute to the faithful chosen to lead and to all members of the Community, past and present, who have stood in the circle, hand in hand.*

*Well, that's how this friend sees it. Jean Vanier wrote "Marginal people in community have very particular needs." "Sharing the Bread of Life" points that out clearly. The book also has a special message for each of us "We are all marginal people on the inside."*

*In God's Love, I trust,  
Bill Thomas  
Goldenrod, Florida*

272 pages  
45 photographs  
Paperback  
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# Why I Am Joining the NAACP

By Lauren Cogswell

To: The Reverend Ezekiel Holley, President of the Terrell County NAACP

Dear Rev. Holley,

I am honored and humbled to write to you today and ask to be accepted as a member in the Terrell County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

It is significant for me to make this request because in September we remembered the 100-year anniversary of the 1906 Atlanta Massacre. One hundred years ago white racists, full of fear, who would go to any end to secure their economic and political power, successfully organized a massacre, which resulted in the brutal murder of scores of African Americans, injuries to many more, and the terrorizing of thousands.

In learning this terrible history of our city I have been deeply moved by the story of Walter White, President of the NAACP from 1929 to 1955. During the Atlanta Massacre he was 13 years old and helping his father run his daily postal route. Walter and his father helped to save an African American woman who was being chased by this mob of white men thronging from the heart of the city. Walter and his father were not attacked because of the light pigmentation of their skin. They returned to their neighborhood and prepared to defend their home and their community. Throughout the commemoration events, we heard time and time again the account of Walter White's commitment to solidarity with his people. In the midst of the terrible violence he decided that he would never choose to "pass" as a white person; he would never choose to benefit from the violence and murder of white racism. From that day forward he chose to identify himself with the African American community and to be about the work of struggle and liberation of his people.

I am asking to join the NAACP today because I am a 32-year-old white woman who has benefited and continues to benefit from the privilege of my whiteness. That privilege has been secured for hundreds of years by oppressing people of color and with extreme violence, as in the 1906 Massacre. Today I commit myself to follow the leadership of Walter White, to give my life to ending white racism and dismantling the structures that continue to perpetuate violence on people of color. I have a long way to go in my journey of transformation. I have a great deal to learn and a great deal of work to do within my own heart and life. I want my life to reflect clearly my allegiances, whose side I am on. I choose to follow the steps of Walter White, to be on the side of the oppressed and to give my life to the struggle for liberation and justice.

I am asking to join the NAACP because I want to follow the leadership of Lugenia Burns Hope who, after the 1906 Atlanta Massacre, founded the Neighborhood Union, which would become a worldwide model for civil rights organizations. She organized women to respond to the social needs of their own communities and to work for justice for their people. She later served as the Vice-President of the NAACP. I want to be formed by the courageous leadership of women like Ida B. Wells and Mary White Ovington, two of the founders of the NAACP, who gave their lives to the ending of lynching, to the work of justice for their people.

In 2003, I became a part of the Open Door Community in Atlanta, Georgia, an inter-racial community that gives its life to the works of mercy and the works of justice for the outcast and the marginalized, the homeless and the prisoner, in our city. I seek to follow Ida B. Wells in my work



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

to end the death penalty that continues the horrific practice of legalized lynching. I seek to follow Lugenia Burns Hope in building the Beloved Community and creating a place where all people are welcome, where the outcast and the marginalized find a warm meal, a hot shower, a welcome place, and a healing place. As one of our homeless friends often says to me when he has come in for a shower and a hot meal, "This is just like home, this is just like home."

Why am I joining the Terrell County chapter of the NAACP when I live in Atlanta? The Open Door Community has long been connected to the Terrell County NAACP through the work for justice in partnership with the Prison and Jail Project in Americus, Georgia. My personal history also connects me to Terrell County. In 1995-97 I lived in Americus as a full-time volunteer for Habitat for Humanity International, one county over from Terrell County. It was there that I began a transformation into a life of radical discipleship, into a life shaped by the works of mercy and the struggle for justice. It was in the deep south of Georgia that I found small Christian communities that were giving their lives to the struggle of liberation and justice that God's people have long been about. In 2005 the Open Door Community learned more about that ongoing struggle for justice on our African American History Tour. I am amazed at your courage and the courage of ordinary people in small-town Georgia who continue to put their lives at risk to undo racism that is deeply entrenched in our state. I want to join the Terrell County chapter to join you in the struggle for life and liberation in this part of Georgia that has been so important to my formation and transformation.

I give thanks to God for the NAACP's long history of struggling for justice and freedom. I give thanks to God for your faithful leadership of the Terrell County chapter and for the ongoing struggle for justice going on in the heart of Georgia. I am sending in my yearly dues, and humbly ask to join you as a member of the NAACP.

In Solidarity,  
Rev. Lauren Elizabeth Cogswell  
The Open Door Community ✦

*Lauren Cogswell is a Novice at the Open Door Community.*

# Waiting for Friendship

By Kyle Thompson Lambelet

*Editor's note: Kyle Thompson Lambelet is a former Resident Volunteer (RV) at the Open Door Community. During his year with us he was Bobby Callahan's Pastoral Friend. Kyle shepherded Bobby through the Grady Health System, getting Bobby a Social Security Card and then, with the able assistance of Charlotta Norby who became Bobby's legal guardian, moving him into a personal care home. After further health complications Bobby died on November 10, 2006 at Grady Hospital. On November 21 Bobby was buried and we had A Celebration of the Resurrection and the Life of Bobby Callahan. Kyle, and former RV Nicole Thompson Lambelet, had returned to attend the SOA Watch Action and spend Thanksgiving with us, so he was here to help plan and lead the service.*

Sitting in the waiting room, I looked over and smiled at Bobby. He was obviously frustrated by our being there, but he put up with me all the same. This was our third trip to Grady Memorial Hospital in the last two weeks, and with the stark lack of results, he was beginning to be wary of my insistence that we show up for his appointments.

We waited alongside other folks, some hoping for and some dreading a surgical operation. One thing you can be sure of if you're poor is that you will wait, and Bobby was about as poor as they come. A 76-year-old, formerly homeless veteran, he suffered from dementia along with a host of other medical issues. He didn't have a dollar to his name.

*Bobby had been known by the Open Door Community, of which we were now both a part, for many years. But it wasn't until Christmas 2003 that he moved into the house. At the time of his arrival he was known by the name on his jacket — Timberlake — and the name he claimed: Bobby. One day he looked at Murphy Davis with a bemused twinkle in his eye and said, "That's not my name." He wrote carefully on a nametag, E-B-E-R-H-A-R-T. "My name is Bobby Eberhart."*

*Before that time Bobby was always someone on the margins of the margins. He did not usually come in the house but would be brought a sandwich or change of clothes by a friend or concerned acquaintance. From time to time Ira Terrell would convince him to come in and take a shower.*

*Some of the folks who were most familiar with his day-to-day life became concerned about Bobby. He was falling asleep in the bitter cold with his skin exposed to the elements. He was often forgetful and seemed to be unable to care for himself. Bobby's friends prevailed on the Open Door to invite Bobby to come in*

*for the Christmas holidays.*

*Upon moving in, Bobby got cleaned up and simply never left. It wasn't expected that he would stay, but slowly he began to get rid of the things that connected him to his life on the street. He asked Willy Carter, the community barber, to cut off all his hair. While Willy had confessed he didn't know how to cut white people's hair, Bobby insisted he wanted it all off: his long mangy beard, his pepper-gray greasy hair. Bobby began to take showers a little more regularly at that point and joined the community for common meals. After some time he got rid of the cart that held all of his earthly possessions and slowly, slowly became accustomed to life at the Open Door.*

Bobby and I both became accustomed to the waiting. Occasionally we would talk — well, more accurately, I would pose questions, which he would answer with one or two words until he would throw up his hands and grunt in exhaustion. Despite the fact that he would tire of my interrogation, these were usually warm exchanges.

Our current mission was to address the large hernia that he apparently had been dealing with for anywhere from a week to six years (depending on the day and doctor who was asking). Since we had already found care for him on several other health issues — hypertension, breathing difficulty, osteoporosis, and dementia — I was hopeful that we would find the same here. In trying to treat the hernia, though, we had gotten the bureaucratic run-around and this was our third attempt.

For this reason, our waiting that day was a little testier; Bobby and I both were frustrated by being there. So we sank down into the green vinyl chairs and stared out into the hall, hoping his name would be the next called.

On this particular day, in order to endure the wait, I was reading Walter Brueggemann's essay, "The Prophet as a Destabilizing Presence." In it, Brueggemann looks at the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarepath (1 Kings 17:9-24). He explains that "widow" in ancient Near Eastern society was a "legal category for those with no social power."

I looked over at Bobby. He was

staring off into space, his eyelids slowly falling, his head nodding forward, and a little drip of snot beginning to form at the end of his long nose. I gently nudged him on the shoulder and motioned to him to wipe his nose. He did, dutifully using one of the paper napkins he always kept in his pocket (and left throughout the house, carefully folded), and then returned to staring off into space.

Occasionally a nurse would appear and call a name, but not Bobby's. I turned back to reading. We continued to wait.



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

**Bobby Callahan May 14, 1930 - November 10, 2007**

*Getting Bobby to Grady was difficult on several fronts. First, when Bobby came into the Open Door, he had no identification of any kind. Because Bobby had dementia, finding these documents was extremely difficult. By piecing together several conversations, a faithful volunteer, Nikki Kundrum, worked with Dick Rustay and was able to get Bobby's mother's maiden name and his date of birth; these were the only things he was consistent on. After some haggling with the Office of Vital Information, Nikki was able to obtain Bobby's birth certificate. The family name on his birth certificate was Callahan: Robert E. Lee Callahan. Bobby nodded as if he had told us this a hundred times. But once we had this, we were able to take him to Grady, with the hopes that with a birth certificate a social security number would be easy to find.*

*This was not the only hurdle, however, in getting Bobby to Grady. More*

*formidable, it seemed to me, was Bobby himself and his disgust with the waiting, the poking and the prodding, the waiting, the noise, the walking, the questions, and more waiting that a visit to Grady entailed. In one instance, Bobby got so frustrated that he pulled out his comb, the long point facing me, and insisted, "I'm not f\*\*\*ing going!" I responded with all the calm reassurance I could muster and said, "Bobby, that's not an appropriate way to relate." Meanwhile, other friends and community members rallied to herd Bobby slowly into the car. Ultimately, the promise of a cheeseburger gave him the motivation he needed.*

*Once at Grady it was always a slow, laborious walk to whatever clinic we may have been visiting that day — surgery, memory, imaging, financial counseling; the list goes on and on. Bobby never complained at that point, however, and was usually fairly pleasant. At first I viewed these visits as very goal-oriented: We were going to figure out what was wrong with Bobby and fix him. I was completely misguided in my thinking, however, and my attitude slowly changed. Our visits to Grady became less about medical treatment and more about time spent together. Bobby began to give less resistance to going and, slowly, Bobby became less of a standoffish, strange old man or a problem to be solved and more of a familiar friend.*

"Robert Callahan," the nurse called. Finally. I hurriedly put the essay I was reading into my bag and roused Bobby, indicating that it was time for us to be seen. We saw the intake nurse and were escorted to another, smaller room where the wait continued.

After some time, a young surgeon entered. He began to ask questions but quickly realized Bobby wouldn't be able to answer. At that point he began to direct his attention toward me. Before long he explained that they couldn't perform the surgery. Because of the dementia with which he struggled, Bobby was not considered legally competent. Additionally, he had no living family or legal guardian, so legally there was no way for him, or me for that matter, to authorize such a procedure. As I pressed Bobby's predicament, attempting to be an advocate, the surgeon told me the only case where Bobby could receive an operation would be if the hernia became an emergency and life threatening.

"So we have to wait until this thing gets stuck out before we come back?!" I said with a measure of disbelief.

"That's right," he responded.

Our time at the Surgery Clinic was done. I left feeling dejected. After three attempts it was clear that surgery was not an

**Friendship**, continued on page 9

## Catholic Worker Gathering

From Thursday, October 19 through Sunday, October 22, 2006 seven of us from the Open Door Community joined 300 other Catholic Workers in Iowa. We prayed, visited, told stories, met in a variety of workshops (right - the Open Door Community Workshop, "Living Scripture"), sang, ate well, and slept a little. We joined others in issuing a Catholic Worker statement on the War in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Military Commission's Act. The Statement calls for all people of faith and goodwill to join together for a nonviolent action in Washington, DC on January 11, 2007, the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first prisoners arriving at Guantanamo, to call for its closing (see page 9). Representing 910 at the Gathering were (below, left to right):

Lauren Cogswell, Heather Bargeron, Calvin Kimbrough, Tony Sinkfield, Chuck Harris, Nelia Kimbrough, and Dick Rustay. Eduard Loring and Murphy Davis missed the gathering to stay in Knoxville, Tennessee caring for Eduard's sister Carol, who had heart surgery; and Gladys Rustay stayed home and kept the 910 household running. Thank You Gladys!



ERIC GARBISON



## *In, Out & Around 910*

### SOA Watch

On Sunday November 19, we joined 20,000 other protestors at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia to call for the closing of the School of the Americas/Assassins. The theme of the 2006 Vigil and Nonviolent Direct Action was "Return to Life: Stand Up for Justice for the People of the Americas!" Mike Vosburg-Casey (see

photograph on page 9), extended community member and a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community, was one of 16 arrested. Their trials will begin on January 29, 2007 in Columbus. Lauren Cogswell, Nicole Thompson Lambelet, and others from the Open Door Community respond "Presenté!" during the chanting of the names of those killed in Central and South America by graduates of the School (left). Crosses carried in the Funeral Procession bear the names of the known dead. Nelia Kimbrough (kneeling) and Lora Shain pray at the fence (below). Lora's late husband Bill, a former Air Force MSgt, crossed the line at the SOA Watch Action in 1998.

## Thanksgiving 2006

Our household Thanksgiving meal always includes many friends and guests from all over. Ken Warren (far right), our neighbor at Dayspring Farm, came into Atlanta for his first visit to 910. Gad Mpoyo, a Candler School of Theology student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, came with fellow Candler students Katie Aikins and Heather Bargeron (right). Gad led us in a Congolese song before our meal. Following our wonderful dinner, Civil Rights Movement veteran Connie Curry presented a copy of her award winning book *Silver Rights* to former Open Door Resident Volunteer Bemene Baadem-Piara, currently a student at Berea College (both right with Eduard Loring).



Photographed and compiled by Calvin Kimbrough

## Thank You!

Atlanta's Mother Hughes delivers clothing to the Open Door Community and others who serve homeless people twice each year, once in July and again on her birthday in December (left with Nelia Kimbrough and Andrea Harris Wynn in July, 2006). On December 8 she was 93 and she brought 93 boxes of clothing to several groups who serve homeless people in Atlanta, including the Open Door.



On Wednesday December 6 Allison Miller, Cheryl Jacobs and Bridget Lovinger came from Piedmont Hospital to bring Flu shots to our friends from the streets who had gathered at 910 for our Soup Kitchen. Bridget gives D.A. his shot (left). D.A. was one of 39 folks who received the free shots.

For almost two years Aveda stylists Denise Larrivey and Kelly Dudley (left and right with Nelia Kimbrough) have been coming every few weeks to the Open Door Community to give the household at 910 haircuts. The whole place looks better after they leave!



## DuBois Litany, continued from page 1

In the pale, still morning we looked upon the deed. We stopped our ears and held our leaping hands, but they — did they not wag their heads and leer and cry with bloody jaws: *Cease from Crime!* The word was mockery, for thus they train a hundred crimes while we do cure one.

*Turn again our captivity, O Lord!...*

Bewildered we are, and passion-tost, mad with the madness of a mobbed and mocked and murdered people; straining at the armposts of Thy Throne, we raise our shackled hands and charge Thee, God, by the bones of our stolen fathers, by the tears of our dead mothers, by the very blood of Thy crucified Christ: *What meaneth this?* Tell us the Plan; give us the Sign!

*Keep not thou silence, O God!*

Sit no longer blind, Lord God, deaf to our prayer and dumb to our dumb suffering. Surely Thou too art not white, O Lord, a pale, bloodless, heartless thing?

*Ah! Christ of all the Pities!*

Forgive the thought! Forgive these wild, blasphemous words. Thou art still the God of our black [mothers and fathers], and in Thy soul's soul sit some soft darkenings of the evening, some shadowings of the velvet night.

But whisper — speak — call, great God, for Thy silence is white terror to our hearts! The way, O God, show us the way and point us the path. . . ✠



JULIE LONNEMAN

## Remembrance, continued from page 1

One: We know we are all descendants of this horror. (pause)

We live in a world made poorer from the murder, the city divided, the gifts and talents denied us all.

**All: We mourn those who died.**

One: Out of a history of isolation and violence, we choose a future of community and compassion,

**All: A Future of hope and reconciliation,**

One: A future of justice: free of fear, free of domination, free of oppression.

**All: We choose a future of self determination and promise.**

One: Please, share this wish for peace with each other. May peace be in you.

**All pass the Wish for Peace: May peace be in you. ✠**

## Only Justice, continued from page 1

hot September when white men and boys raged through the streets of downtown Atlanta, chasing down black men and women — screaming “n-gg-r,” and savagely shooting, stabbing, beating, burning, breaking, wreaking havoc on black people and their homes, businesses, communities.

But she would not want you to ever believe that the events of these days of rage “just happened”: a *pogrom* is a slaughter based on a racial or religious political agenda. There was a long buildup. [Extended accounts of these events are still available by request in the March and September 2006 issues of *Hospitality*.] The agenda, of course, was black subjugation for the preservation and concentration of white supremacy: economic, political, social, and cultural supremacy. Some 40 years after the abolition of chattel slavery, too many black people were doing “too well.” Too many former slaves and their offspring were building up homes, communities, churches, schools and businesses. And, in what became the symbol of this growing power, many of the former slaves (the men) had registered to vote, they were exercising the franchise, and they were organizing to register more black men to vote.

After the plantation elite had successfully brought a cruel end to Reconstruction and gotten those pesky Union troops out of “their South,” a system of domination was re-instituted. The Black Codes, a vast array of prison slave camps, the convict lease system, and the Night Riders of the Ku Klux Klan had all been put into place and employed to drive and terrorize the black community “back” into subservience and virtual slavery. But in spite of it all — in spite of the failed promises of “40 acres and a mule,” in spite of scant or nonexistent resources for family and community building — yes, in spite of it all — black people were building and some few were even thriving. African American leaders were emerging on a national level to speak of (often competing) visions of progress for the formerly enslaved people.

Booker T. Washington articulated his “bootstraps” theory while W.E.B. DuBois organized for the expansion of black voting rights and education. Alonzo Herndon became the first black millionaire with his elegant barbershops (catering to white men) and later the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. And Herndon used his wealth to support DuBois’ Niagara Movement, which later became the N.A.A.C.P. Ida B. Wells traveled all over the South to document the lynching of black folks in her publications *The Red Record* and others. Mary Church Terrell organized church and club women to advocate against lynching and Lugenia Burns Hope organized the Neighborhood Unions.

It was all too much for white folks in Georgia: too much black success, too much black political power, and the threat of more. (Thus the title of Dr. Norman Harris’ documentary on the Riot, “When Blacks Succeed” — see box on page 10.) If the former slaves achieved their full constitutional rights and became *equal citizens* would

social equality be next?

Besides, what if black folks got enough power to “give back” to white folks as they had received? What if black folks ever armed themselves and decided to “get even?”

So the forces were brought to bear: political campaigns for “disfranchisement of the Negro”; manufactured newspaper stories — combining rumor and fantasy — about a “black crime wave.” And for weeks before the slaughter began, the white authorities legally forbade the sale of guns to black people.

When the white elite had worked it up to a fever pitch, they left it (as they always leave it) to the white poor and working class to take it to the streets. White patricians rarely need to “dirty their hands” to maintain their own economic and political control. They create and perpetuate the illusion of white solidarity to keep poor white folks from ever making coalitions with poor black people. (Did Dr. King “have to” die in 1968 because his Poor Peoples’ Campaign was really bringing poor people together *across* the racial divide to act in class solidarity for justice?)

Historically, when poor people come together across racial lines, more powerful whites have played the race card. Thus, poor and working class white folks have continued to act and vote *against their actual self-interest* in favor of the lie that wealthy and powerful whites are their “friends” and protectors. And that is certainly what happened in Atlanta in September 1906.

Farrell Allen was present during the remembrance events to tell his family’s story. He is the grandson of Luther Price, for whom Atlanta’s Price High School is named. Price became a highly respected member of the Brownsville neighborhood, where he owned a store. When the edict was issued to prohibit black citizens from buying guns, Price began to import guns from other places. The guns came into Atlanta from Alabama and other Georgia towns. They were hidden in wagons and sometimes even on railroad cars. When the violence “broke out,” Luther Price began to distribute the guns so that black folks could defend themselves and protect their homes and communities.

Pat Walker Beardon and her sister Yolanda were also in Atlanta for the remembrance events. Their grandfather was Alexander Walker. On the third day of the riot, the white militia/mob attacked the Brownsville neighborhood (now the area below Turner Field around the intersection of Jonesboro Road and McDonough). They attacked on the basis of rumors that the black community was armed and preparing for retaliation. Clark College and Gammon (Methodist) Seminary were located in the buildings that are now The New Schools at Carver, and the chapel of the seminary had for days provided sanctuary for women and children as Dr. Wesley Bowen, president of Gammon, stood guard with a shotgun.

As the white mob began to storm homes, shots rang out. It is generally

assumed that the white militia fired first, though no one can say for sure. But by the end of the shooting, several men had fallen dead, one of them a white officer named Jim Heard. 250 black men were arrested and taken to jail. 60 were charged with the murder of Officer Heard. In the end, Alex Walker was convicted of the murder and sentenced to Life on the Georgia chain gang.

“He sure did shoot that white man,” says Pat Beardon. “He had his gun and he was standing in front of his home and his pregnant wife. And as my Daddy used to say, ‘Papa didn’t *take* no mess.’” He went off to the chain gang and there was no reason to think he would ever return. But it turned out that Alex Walker had a grandfather who was an Irish police officer! This white granddaddy “made arrangements” for Alex to escape the chain gang in the middle of the night. He fled with his family to Birmingham and later to Chicago, where he and his wife raised a large family. Pat Walker Beardon never heard the story until she retired from teaching and began to do genealogical research. Blessedly, her father (Alex Walker’s son) was still alive and told her the whole story — always punctuated with, “Papa didn’t *take* no mess!”

As the stories came together it became more and more clear: *The racial massacre of September 1906 ended when it did, at least in large measure, because the black community had guns.* The community was armed and prepared to defend itself. Some say a whole lot more white *and* black people died than the whites would ever admit in their “official” story. To admit to more black deaths would be to compound the crime of white violence. To admit to more white deaths would be to show that black self-defense was more successful than they wanted anyone to believe.

But every one of the descendants told of their parents and grandparents having at least one gun. Walter White’s autobiography recounts the experience of his father handing him a shotgun in the living room of their home in “Darktown” (what’s now the Old Fourth Ward neighborhood). The 13-year-old was told by his postmaster father, “Don’t shoot ‘til they set foot in our yard; and then don’t you miss.” Walter White’s elderly niece came to the remembrance.

John Wesley Dobbs had a gun because he worked as “Clerk in Charge” for the railroad. He apparently did not have to use it, but he was ready.

Luther Price not only *had* guns, he imported them into the city and distributed them to his community. (Do you suppose the white folks knew this part of the story when they agreed to name a high school for him?)

And Alex Walker had a gun and he used it. The family of Officer Jim Heard would forever regret his part in the violent assault on Brownsville and the Walker home.

This part of the story raises one of the most disturbing questions that we must take to history. *What does it take to stop injustice and unprovoked violence?* For instance, the hideous injustice of American chattel slavery was *not* ended by the work of

**Only Justice**, *continued from page 8*

abolitionists who worked tirelessly in the U.S. and Britain; chattel slavery was ended by a bloody and protracted Civil War in which Federal troops defeated the Confederate slavocracy.

When we condemn violence (and we at the Open Door and in our larger movement are followers of Gandhi, Jesus, Dorothy Day, and Dr. King and committed to nonviolence), we must be very careful to recognize how intractable systems of violence and injustice can be. And we must take note of what it means to be a people under constant assault — to be people whose lives are worth nothing to those who hold the power.

How long — how many more days and nights or weeks — would the massacre have gone on without the volley of defensive shots fired from the homes of Brownsville on September 25, 1906? Is there anything else that might have “worked” to stop the savagery? Of course white law enforcement could have stopped it, but when the militia was finally called out, they often *joined in* with the mob rather than stopping them. So what were the other choices available to the black community? Perhaps the question cannot be answered 100 years later, but it is an important question for us nonetheless.

\* \* \*

The Centennial Remembrance Events in September were, for the most part, a great success. The Coalition gave splendid leadership and events were planned to include scholars, survivors, students, old and young, activists, people of many faiths, and artists. We attended programs of information, storytelling, artistic representations, music, liturgy, and recommitment. All of the events were well attended. And the work of the Coalition is moving on to create educational resources, to physically mark the events of the riot (with historical markers, etc.).

The greatest challenge will be to strengthen the political agenda that must emerge from such a remembrance. We must appropriate what we have learned and act. It was disturbing to note that very few political and business leaders were present for the Remembrance events. Several members of City Council were present for one or another event. *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and *Creative Loafing* ran several articles about the history and ongoing events. The Mayor issued a proclamation. Perhaps the most embarrassing moment was during the closing ceremony. The Mayor did not agree to come to this wonderful and very important event, but she was to send a staff member to represent her in the program. But even her representative did not show up, and that part of the program was skipped over with no comment. This was indeed the commemoration of a dangerous memory. Was the silent absence of city leadership related in any way to forgetting the screams of the victims of the Massacre in the Capital of Negrophobia?

And unless we’ve missed something, no new commitments have been made by the establishment to seriously address the curse that remains on our city 100 years later. As Alice Walker says, “Only justice can stop a curse.” When a curse remains and justice is not forthcoming, violence is perhaps a given. Could it be that our ongoing struggles with violence in our city are related to the curse of racial violence in 1906, which has never been acknowledged by the white elite and for which there has never been a political or economic response?

How could the city address the loss of more than 1,000 black citizens who fled the city in the wake of the riot? How could the newspapers address the loss of life in the violence provoked by the sensationalist headlines and Extras? What about the vast economic losses to the black community? What about the reign of terror that silently remained in place as the white elite went about the official “great forgetting?” Is there any relationship to the recent event when the Atlanta police stormed the “wrong” place in a “drug raid” and killed a 90-year-old black woman in her own

home? Is Atlanta (the Black Mecca!) still a hub of what Mark Baurlein calls “Negrophobia?”

How might the city address the legacy of poverty and hopelessness that has gripped Black Atlanta with the ongoing realities of hunger, infant mortality, bad schools, homelessness, lack of health care and the legacy of continuing ongoing massive displacement and lack of decent affordable housing? What might we do about the fact that the same small group of white elite men and women still control the life of our city?

Atlanta, Georgia is still under a curse.  
And only justice can stop a curse. ✦

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

**Friendship**, *continued from page 4*

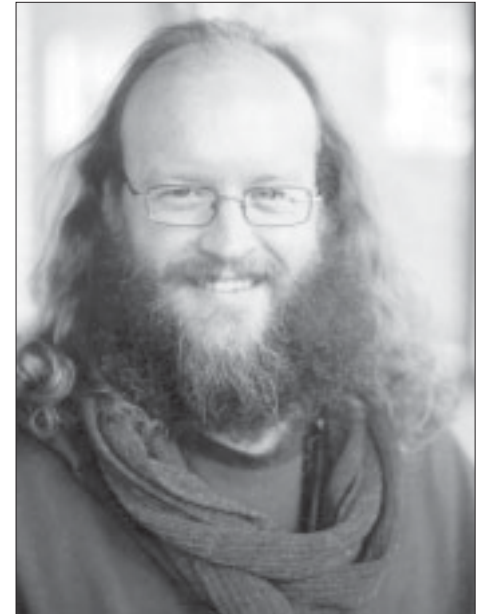
option for Bobby. It was as though Bobby, who claimed to be a veteran of the Korean War, had the same second-class status as an undocumented immigrant. He had no social power.

*It is embedded in the story of the widow at Zarepath that we find a strange — although biblically predictable — reversal. The prophet, Elijah, is moved by Yhwh into a place of dependency on the widow.*

*It is the neurosis of people of privilege, like myself, to compare their lives to those of great leaders, prophets, and saints. But it seemed somehow right to cast Bobby as the widow and me as the prophet in this particular story, precisely because the power had been so clearly reversed in my own mind. I was to be the one advocating for Bobby, giving him healing, fixing him. Yet I found that in our time together a quite opposite phenomenon occurred. Rejecting the lie of “official reality,” Bobby was giving healing to me. He was healing me of my privilege and my attachment to my own casual power. He was giving me friendship that transcended words and even rationality. In the face of the medical-legal system that refused to give “life” to Bobby, Bobby was giving life to me.*

*The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews admonishes, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). Bobby was for me an angel, or better translated, a messenger; bringing the good news of friendship. Bobby did not need to be fixed, though I thought this was my task. Bobby offered me the message of God’s friendship, a message that for Bobby transcended verbal expression and found itself made concrete in glances and smiles shared in the waiting rooms of Grady. ✦*

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*Mike Vosburg-Casey, extended community member and former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community, was one of 16 people arrested during the SOA Watch Action on November 19, 2006 at Ft. Benning, Georgia.*

*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](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net)  
or 770.246.7625  
For information and application forms  
visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)



## International Day to Shut Down Guantánamo

**Thursday, January 11, 2007**

**The 5 year anniversary of the first prisoners being brought to Guantánamo**

**“A stain on the character of the United States.”**

**—Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

**[www.witnesstorture.org](http://www.witnesstorture.org)**

## this year give 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:

**Open Door Community**  
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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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](mailto:odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net)  
or 770.246.7627.

### Agitator, continued from page 3

of Jesus. The faith of Jesus is the distinguishing mark of our Radical Remnant Movement. That is, the life in the one-eyed gospels of Jesus before the resurrection is our life (synoptic means one-eyed); nonetheless we believe in the resurrection of this Holy awe-filled Jew. We base our politics and pursuit of justice on his defeat of the powers and principalities of the world gone wrong. We believe, because the Holy Spirit gave us the faith, that the Gospel is good news for the poor. Thus we stand in solidarity with the poor, in partisanship, choosing the side of the poor as we critique and renounce the burden and bondage of our privilege and entitlements. We stand with the oppressed, the hungry, the homosexual, the prisoner, the poor, the mentally ill, women, and children, especially the ones outside the womb. We practice assertive direct action with nonviolent agitating love, which is made public by the Works of Mercy (Matthew 25:31-46) and the Works of Justice (Isaiah 58.1, 1-12) and the Works of Peace (Micah 4.3-4). Yes, Yes, Yes. We follow, dancing in the street and shouting in City Council, the Prince of Peace. Jesus' strongest anti-war acts were to enter Jerusalem on Sunday on a donkey and die in the city on a cross on Friday, after raising hell all week with the religious elite and the Roman oppressors. You can't get to heaven unless you raise a lot of hell, that is, agitate!

The hard rock sources of Open Door Community theology are: The Catholic Worker Movement, Koinonia and Clarence Jordan, and Black Theology, beginning with the resistance against slavery and the abolitionist movement, reaching a high-water mark with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and continuing under the dynamic leadership of Rev. Timothy McDonald III with the spiritual life and prophetic witness of the First Iconium Baptist Church of Atlanta. Rev. McDonald is to Dr. King what Elisha was to Elijah.

Our primary source is the Bible, with a tight relationship to the three one-eyed, Holy Spirit-inspired gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Our teachers include William Stringfellow, Dorothy Day, Jacques Ellul, Clarence Jordan, Jeff Dietrich, Elsa Tamez, Ched Myers, Dan Berrigan, Pete Gathje, and Warren Carter, among others.

The gospel of John is true, radical, anti-war and concretely anti-empire. But John has been more abused, lied about, mistranslated, and culturally ensconced than the one-eyes. One must read and study the truth revealed in Wes Howard-Brook's "Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship" to get to the seeds that must fall into the ground and die for John's truth to break through the fundamentalism, mega-church Prosperity Gospel, and the theology that Jesus came to earth that we might live in heaven if we only believe (no practice included unless it means to get a job with the FBI. Think: Billy Graham). Today we see and hear the John 3:16 folk praise God when a touchdown is scored or a hockey puck hits the net. This is heresy and garbage.

We are a nation at war. We are creating a world of terrorism where people hate us and want to kill us. Their death wish grows by the day as we hurt each other on our "Black Friday" shopping sprees that are obeisance to the gods of consumer capitalism. The ice caps are melting. The world is coming to an end. Finis, not telos. This is our "social location" for biblical studies and the war for Jesus our leader. The abuses of the gospel of John and the John 3:16 folks' monstrous perversions of Jesus, the cross, and the Way make the work of saving Jesus from Christianity an imperative for every person of goodwill and the Common Good, whether one is an atheist, Muslim, Jew, or a disciple of the faith of Jesus as told by the one-eyed gospels. He is the agitator. Just like saving Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. from the Republicans and money-hungry children of the Civil Rights era. Agitate!

Finally, two Black men who have decisively shaped my life: Justice Thurgood Marshall and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. enjoyed and employed the image of agitator. Marshall believed that we must agitate in the courtroom for the sake of the revolutionary power of the U.S. Constitution. Though (like

most NAACP leaders) he did not favor street demonstrations in the 1960s (Medgar Evers being a dead exception), Marshall was fond of saying that we must agitate like the agitator in a washing machine. That's how the dirt gets out. (Perhaps Justice Marshall learned this from the fearless Mother Jones, early 20<sup>th</sup> century labor organizer and unabashed Agitator.)

Dr. King has put his hand on my aging shoulder in my elderhood. And so, we, with the leadership of Lauren Cogswell and Tony Sinkfield, formed in 2004 the Martin Luther King Campaign for Economic Justice. Though I went to seminary a few miles from Ebenezer Baptist Church in King's heyday, I had little idea who King was or what he was doing until Dr. Gordon Harland of Drew University introduced me to him in daily conversation and lectures during 1967-68. My life was drastically and dramatically transformed on the evening of April 4, 1968. This would not have happened if I had been in the South or if I had done my graduate work in a denominational setting. It was in the North, studying under the most important teacher of my life, who had been shaped by Reinhold Niebuhr and Abraham Lincoln, that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to reside "inside my bony ribs under my red valve heart" (Carl Sandberg).

Like many who love the South and stay rooted in place, King was considered an "outside agitator." As Bonhoeffer had to tell Niebuhr and Paul Lehmann he must return to Germany to face Hitler and the Nazis, so King told Coretta and the many who offered him Northern positions that he *had* to return to the South and transform by the only solution — love — Jim Crow into a member of the Beloved Community. As I was seeking a new name and epithet to suit my declining years (Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring), God led me back to one of King's most powerful sermons: "The Drum Major Instinct" (February 4, 1968). King gives us a short biography of Jesus in this sermon played during his funeral two months later.

"[T]he tide of public opinion turned' against Jesus when he was still young. 'They said he was an agitator,' said King (emphasis added). 'He practiced civil disobedience. He broke injunctions. Jesus was betrayed by friends, cursed, killed, and buried penniless in a borrowed tomb.' . . . For all the worldly gloss about a 'lord of lords,' King found nothing royal about Jesus: 'He just went around serving'" (Branch, "At Canaan's Edge," page 686).

I am now referred to as Agitator by people of good will and bad will. I hope you have found something in this article to agitate you. If so, please drop me a line. Thank you. Blessings to you and peace. ✠

*Brother Eduard-the-Agitator Loring, CW # 91030306, is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

One World Archives Presents

## When Blacks Succeed: The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot

A Documentary by Norman Harris

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# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Ed and Murphy and Open Door Friends,

Warm greetings from Ada and myself here in Louisville, KY. It has been too long since we have communicated to you, though we read *Hospitality* regularly. I often remember my night in the Sojourner Truth room, so many years ago, and of course our time together at Warren Wilson College. Know that we are often mindful of you and pray for you all.

Ed, I wanted to support your economic analysis in the September *Hospitality* article, "Hunger and Eating." I am deeply convinced that until North Americans can re-educate themselves with a Marxist Critique of Capitalism 101, they simply will not get at the roots of economic injustice. Just because the egotism, scientific dogmatism, violence and bureaucratism of the Soviet Union did not succeed with flying colors does not mean that capitalism is God's gift to the world. And socialism or socialist values of cooperation and regional integration, meanwhile, are making a wonderful comeback in Latin America. As Chavez says, socialism was declared dead, but is actually alive and well, deriving in large degree, he says, from the indigenous and Afro cultures' collective ethics that have enriched the Americas.

On that note, I would like to extend an invitation to the Open Door to consider participation in an upcoming delegation and encuentros that Agricultural Missions is planning. In October 2006, we organized a small group to participate in the first Border Social Forum in Ciudad Juarez (across from El Paso), where community organizations from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border met to learn from each other and build the grassroots movements for justice for immigrant workers and, by extension, for all workers, and against the militarization of the border and the wall of death being built there. I would like to extend an invitation to the next World Social Forum, to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, next January 18-31, including visits with African women farmers to their communities in Western Kenya and in Uganda after the Forum itself. Homelessness and impoverishment in the U.S. needs to be shouted about to the peoples of the world to enable a wider understanding of this global economic juggernaut of exclusion and exploitation.

Abrazos grandes y fuertes,  
Stephen and Ada Bartlett  
Louisville, KY

Dear Ed,

I really liked your "get out and vote" article ("For Whom Shall We Vote in the Midterm Elections?") in October *Hospitality*. It expresses my sentiments exactly. When I was young, all the adults (white ones, that is) that I knew took enough interest in politics to vote, even if they weren't political junkies.

Keep up the good work. I'm glad you and Murphy are going to do some writing.

Sincerely,  
Emily Calhoun  
Alto, GA

Phil,

I'm calling you to let you know that my son was released (from prison in Hardwick, GA) last week. I thank you so much for letting me make the monthly trips down there (to Hardwick). I'm sorry I won't be able to come by and thank you in person, but I'm leaving and going to California. Please say hi to all the people. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. This was a great thing you did for me over the years. Thank you very much. I hope if I come back this way, I'll certainly come by and holler at you. Thank you and let everyone know how much I appreciate what you all have done.

Nelson Riley  
Atlanta, Georgia

Hello,

I am a former volunteer and an avid reader of *Hospitality*. I'm also a freelance musician in Atlanta, and often get calls to perform at private parties for corporate clients. I got an offer for a gig at the Georgia Aquarium in October. As a strong believer in the slogan "House people, not fish," I have not visited or supported the aquarium since it opened. So my first inclination was to turn down the gig. But then I realized that if I didn't play, someone else would. My refusal to play the gig would accomplish nothing. So I decided to take the job and donate half my wages to the Open Door Community.

Thanks,  
Will Scruggs  
Atlanta, GA

P.S. On the night of the gig, the band was served delicious boxed dinners (in the back room, so the guests would not see the help eating from the buffet). I took a leftover meal and gave it to a hungry friend on the corner near the aquarium — he was very grateful for a fresh, clean meal.



RITA CORBIN

Murphy,

It was wonderful to see you recently. I am so grateful for the January term trips I made with King College students beginning in the early 80s. We spent time at Habitat for Humanity, Koinonia and the Open Door. Our minds were really stretched by the wonderful people at all these places. We grew in our understanding of Christian service. Those trips have made a difference in how I have spent much of my time. Thank you, and thank you for the work you all continue to do.

Love,  
Elizabeth Ann Hay  
Retired from King College Facility  
Bristol, TN

Congratulations for 25 years of keeping the light burning for all those in the Atlanta area and beyond for whom doors are usually closed! And thank you also for *Hospitality*'s mention of Erskine's splendid "Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic." It made a moving and enlightening summer read.

Rhoda and Douglas Hall  
Montreal, Canada

Thank you for the copy of Pete Gathje's book, "Sharing the Bread of Life." I am gratified to have found such a worthy cause to support. You may be surprised that I am acquainted with Pete through training runs many years ago.

Steve Batterton  
Dacula, GA

Hello Eduard the A:

Thanks for your lead article in the October *Hospitality* ("For Whom Shall We Vote In the Midterm Elections?"). I remember our many discussions and arguments over whether it was worth voting for George McGovern over Richard Nixon in the 1972 election, with your arguing for the value of the vote and my sense that it was futile and even deceptive, giving us the sense that we could influence the powerful machine when in fact we could not. A lot of water under the bridge since those days, but the issue still remains.

I find myself in agreement with you now, that the vote is essential and even can provide some life. In the days of 1968 when I refused to vote for Hubert Humphrey because he supported the Vietnam War (and got Richard Nixon and the infamous Southern Strategy as a result), even then I felt some smugness and self-satisfaction that I was not being co-opted. I did not recognize then that I had choices because of my white male, middle-class status, choices that elections could limit but not terminate. What I've learned over the years from many traditions, most especially the African-American tradition, is that voting is an opportunity to exercise power in a form that is fundamental. It is deeply connected to voice, to one's self-expression, and because of that, it should never be taken lightly. Its power to shape social policy may be limited, but its power of self-expression is central. I think that is why those in power have so often tried to limit who can vote. If people feel that they can vote, that they will vote, that they will have a voice and express themselves, then there are many possibilities like movement towards more sharing of resources with those in need and less resources for those in greed. So, thanks for your push on this!

Peace and love,  
Nibs Stroupe  
Pastor, Oakhurst Presbyterian Church  
Decatur, GA

Dear Eduard-the-Agitator and Murphy,

Thank you for your gracious invitation to the 25th anniversary celebration of the Open Door. Hooray! Hooray! Thank you Lord.

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend inasmuch as I will be recovering from knee replacement surgery which I will be having on July 13. I am getting good at this; hip replacement in '91; left knee replacement in '97. Kathy asked me, how many parts do they replace to the point where we are no longer married!!! I told her, When we get to the heart and the brain, we have a problem.

Peace! I hold each and all of you by name before the Lord each morning as I begin my daily prayer.

Jim Powers  
Tucker, GA

Dear Lauren,

My October *Hospitality* just arrived — in time for me to share your beautiful poem "BreadLine" with Westminster volunteers tomorrow during the Pacem training. We will be hosting the Charlottesville homeless the two weeks leading up to Christmas. Your heart would be glad to see this cooperation of Charlottesville churches — and Fellowship Hall filled with cots and ample food for all. Thank you for sending *Hospitality* — it brings a dimension too often neglected in my life.

God surely delights in your life work.  
Anne Andrews  
Charlottesville, VA

*Editor's note: Anne Andrews is an Elder in Westminster Presbyterian Church where Lauren Cogswell was previously Associate Pastor.*

# Open Door Community Ministries

**Weekday Breakfast:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 – 8 a.m.  
**Showers:** 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 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

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

*Our Hospitality Ministries also include visitation and letter writing to prisoners in Georgia, anti-death penalty advocacy, advocacy for the homeless, daily worship 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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

- January 7    Worship at 9:10  
 Epiphany  
 Eucharist Service
- January 14    Worship at 9:10  
 Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
 Anthony Granberry preaching
- January 21    Worship at 9:10  
 Eucharist Service
- January 27    no worship at 9:10  
 Winter Retreat at  
 Dayspring Farm



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*Advent Retreat at Dayspring Farm*

### 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 Thursday evenings!**

## Needs of the Community



*We need warm blankets for our homeless friends*

#### Living Needs

- jeans
- men's work shirts
- men's belts
- men's underwear
- women'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
- cheese

#### Special Needs

- backpacks
- double bed
- 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!**