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

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March 2009



Babylon

Susan MacMurdy

‘Go Out From Babylon With a Shout of Joy!’

Re-hearing Isaiah’s and Jesus’ Word to Trust YHWH Elohim Anew

By Wes Howard-Brook

Editor’s note: Wes Howard-Brook teaches Bible and theology at Seattle University, and shares with his wife, Sue Ferguson Johnson, the ministry “Abide in Me” (abideinme.net). His books include “The Church Before Christianity,” “Becoming Children of God: John’s Gospel and Radical Discipleship” and (as co-author) “Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now.”

“And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:32)

“See, my servant shall succeed; he shall be exalted and lifted up. . . .” (Isaiah 52:13)

“Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of YHWH been revealed?’” (John 12:37-38)

Babylon has fallen! Indeed, we can feel and hear and smell its collapse all around us, as the stink of the dead economic Beast penetrates our pores. For so long, this Beast, disguised as a Seductress, drew us into the lure of luxury without end. But now we have the hangover after the wine of

fornication has worn off.

In a similar situation long ago, an anonymous prophet in the tradition of the great Isaiah — who has become known to scholars as “the Second Isaiah” — was commissioned to proclaim YHWH Elohim’s call to the exiles of Israel to come out of a collapsing Babylon as it was falling to the Persians around 530 B.C.E. This prophet’s words became part of the biblical book of Isaiah. His message contained within Isaiah 40-55 echoes with the repeated, joyous cry to trust in YHWH Elohim once again, the one-and-only God, Creator of heaven and earth, who was doing a new thing. Listen to one representative passage:

But now thus says YHWH, the One who created you, O Jacob, the One who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I AM YHWH your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. . . . You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you . . . Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the

Wrong-Way Georgia

By Murphy Davis

While most of the nation turned out last November to say a decisive NO to the failed politics of war and greed and the accelerated transfer of wealth upward to the already wealthy, Georgia, like most states in the Deep South, continued to affirm the values of the Old Confederacy: white supremacy, poor public schools and public health, and lots of jails, prisons and death sentences.

I’m surely not going to try to tell you that the inauguration of Barack Obama has brought or is about to bring the massive change we so desperately need. But his election has at least clarified that most voters are fed up with sending our children off to wars while the super-rich continue to plunder the public good. There is, at least, the first opportunity we’ve seen in years to get out there and push our president to move us in the right direction: toward peace and repairing the badly damaged social fabric. In the midst of the deepening depression, more Americans are hungry, losing their homes and unable to afford health care.

The Georgia Republican one-note samba of cutting taxes and cutting spending for public services means that the budgets of state agencies had already been cut to the bone.

As usual, the patterns of inequality in the nation as a whole are exaggerated in Georgia and our neighbors in the South — especially the patterns of racialized inequality.

Our state’s declining revenues are expected to push this year’s deficit to more than \$3 billion. The Georgia Republican one-note samba of cutting taxes and cutting spending for public services means that the budgets of state agencies had already been cut to the bone. While an out-of-control system of police, courts, jails and prisons gobble up a huge portion of state dollars, the Legislature is aiming the cuts squarely at the health and human services that are more desperately needed than ever. A heralded reduction in the budget of the Department of Corrections was to cut one meal each week from food services for prisoners. (Fridays have been added to Saturdays, Sundays and holidays as days that only two meals are served.) There are also reports of food portions being cut and many prisoners say they are “hungry all the time.”

So what else will be cut? School budgets. Our children,

Go Out, continued on page 8

Wrong-Way, continued on page 8

Joy in the Morning

By Murphy Davis

*Weeping may endure for a night,
but Joy cometh in the morning.*

— Psalm 30

After three months of chemotherapy, Dr. Amy Langston ordered a routine CAT scan to assess our progress. The report was grim. The nodes between my lungs seemed to be dying, but there were new lesions on my liver and spleen that did not appear in the August scan. It was hard for her to be very encouraging: new tumors growing while chemo is being administered is simply bad. It would mean the end of this journey of treatment unless there might be a clinical trial.

She ordered a PET scan (like a CAT scan except with a radioactive sugar injected into my veins to literally "light up" in red any malignant cells). It was a fairly gloomy ten days as we waited for the test and then the results.

Imagine our surprise: radiologist's report in hand, Dr. Langston said, "I have nothing but good news. Whatever is on your spleen and liver is *not* cancer. We don't know what it is, but it's not going to hurt you!"

We had gone in fully anticipating a conversation about hospice care — now? or later? I never imagined being so happy to hear, "So we're going to do a few more cycles of chemo and then another scan."

Jubilation! Since we began this journey 14 years ago, we have experienced one miracle after another. I wasn't "supposed" to live in 1995, and now I'm in treatment for the fourth occurrence of non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

We are more than thankful — for Dr. Langston and all the wonderful doctors, nurses, PAs, desk clerks and floor scrubbers at Grady Memorial Hospital, the Emory Winship Cancer Institute and Emory University Hospital.

And for you, dear friends, for the many times you have stormed heaven on our behalf — with prayers from churches, Catholic Worker communities, human rights organizations, cat holes, courtrooms, street corners, jail cells and death rows. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

And thanks be to the God of Life. ♦

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

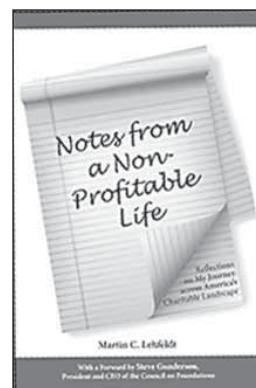
Notes from a Non-Profitable Life

Reflections on My Journey across America's Charitable Landscape

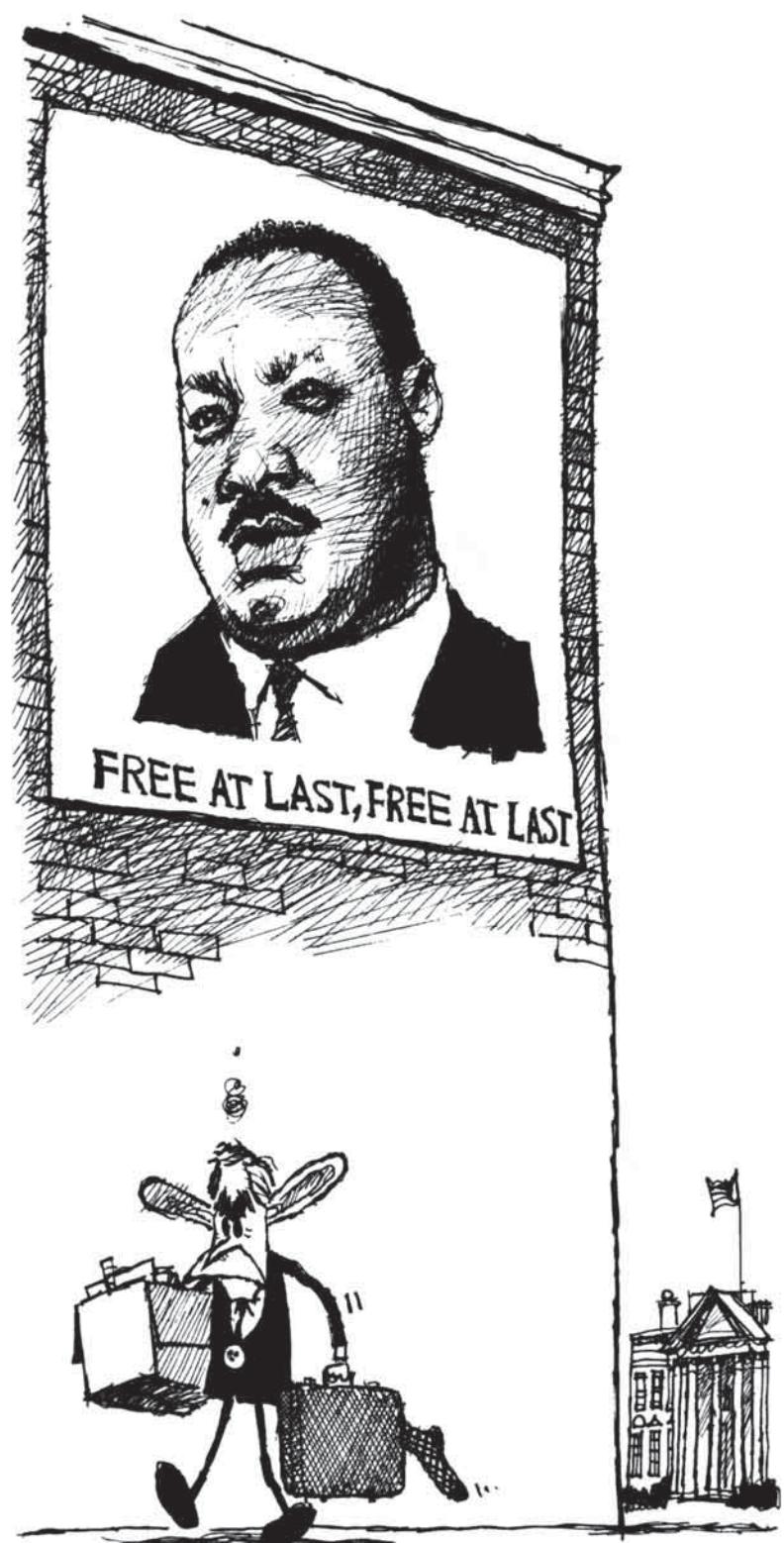
By Martin Lehfeldt

Martin Lehfeldt, a veteran not-for-profit leader, writes about his experiences as a foundation program officer, fund raiser, consultant, and CEO of a regional association of grantmakers. Martin has served on the Open Door Community's Advisory Board for many years. His wisdom, humor and warmth are among his fine gifts to the Open Door Community.

available at: www.lulu.com



SKETCHBOOK BY MIKE LUCKOVICH



The New Yorker Magazine 1/26/09

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.

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Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
www.opendoorcommunity.org
404.874.9652; 404.874.7964 fax



Ivan 12/08

Calvin Kimbrough

Newspaper

Editor: Murphy Davis

Photography and Layout Editor: Calvin Kimbrough

Associate Editors: Eduard Loring, Gladys Rustay, Anne Wheeler, Brother Aelred Dean, Amanda Petersen, Jonathan Hovey and Emily Hayden

Copy Editing: David Mann and Julie Martin

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Subscriptions or change of address: Anne Wheeler

Open Door Community

For more information about the life and work of the community, please contact any of the following persons.

Anne Wheeler: Mailing List and Administration

Alice Tudor, RN: Harriet Tubman Clinic Coordinator

Gladys Rustay: Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator

Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator

Heather McVoy: Administration & Finance and Hardwick Prison Trip Coordinator

Eduard Loring: Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host

Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough: Worship, Art, and Music Coordinators

Chuck Harris: Volunteer Coordinator and Resident Volunteer Applications

Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry

The Sin of Sodomy

By David R. Weiss

Editor's note: David Weiss, a lifelong Lutheran, is a writer, poet and theologian who has taught religion and theology at the University of Notre Dame, among other institutions. He is the author of "To the Tune of a Welcoming God: Lyrical Reflections on Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Wideness of God's Welcome" (Langdon Street Press, 2008). He and his wife, Margaret, and their blended family of five children live in St. Paul, Minnesota, where they are active in St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church.

This country has a sodomy problem. And until we have the wisdom and courage to be honest about what that means, we're not going to resolve the question of civil rights for homosexuals. We need to be clear about why sodomy is such a threat to the common good of civil society, why it undermines the family, and why it is such an evil when afoot in faith communities. It's not going to be easy. But it needs to be done.

The word "sodomy" comes from a biblical text (Genesis 19) wherein the ancient city of Sodom is marked out for divine destruction because its evil ways so angered God. Sodomy names those who act like the inhabitants of Sodom.

Fine. But listen carefully. *Not in this text — nor in any other biblical text — is there a condemnation of committed same-sex relationships.* Not one. Not anywhere. There is a handful of texts that condemn same-sex prostitution in pagan temples, and perhaps military rape and pederasty. But nowhere in the Bible is there a single word that condemns committed same-sex relationships.



Mark Harper

To vote for Proposition 8 in California, or for any of the other state initiatives seeking to ban same-sex marriage, based on the Bible is the moral equivalent of using biblical texts to support slavery or apartheid. It is obscene.

So let's talk about the real problem here: sodomy, or acting like the inhabitants of Sodom.

The prophet Isaiah knew something about the reputation of those who lived in Sodom (Isaiah 1:10-17 and 3:9-15). He says that they despised justice, especially for widows and orphans — those at the edges of family structures in the ancient world. And he says they built an economy that stole from the poor. Likewise, the prophet Ezekiel (16:49) was acquainted with the sodomy "lifestyle." He rails against the Sodomites because in the midst of their abundance they were indifferent to the needy.

Even Jesus, some 2,000 years after its destruction, can employ a reference to Sodom with full effect. Twice (Matthew 11:23-24 and Luke 10:12) he invokes the memory of Sodom as a city condemned for its treatment of the marginalized and its lack of hospitality to sojourners.

For both the Hebrew prophets and the Christian Messiah, sodomy is not about acting on same-sex attraction. It is clearly and unequivocally about social injustice and horrendous breaches of hospitality.

For both the Hebrew prophets and the Christian Messiah, sodomy is not about acting on same-sex attraction. It is clearly and unequivocally about social injustice and horrendous breaches of hospitality, of which the attempted gang rape of Lot's guests is simply one final bit of damning evidence.

Sodomy, understood biblically, is the sin of creating social structures that systematically isolate those already at the margins of society. It is roundly condemned by the prophets and by Jesus. And for good reason.

It destroys the fabric of families by teaching even the youngest children to dehumanize people simply because of difference. It undermines the common good of society by scapegoating a minority in ways that contradict the very ideals we claim to hold in a democracy. And it is simply an unforgiveable evil in faith communities, where it betrays the very messages of justice, mercy and compassion that are at the heart of religious faith.

So let's be clear: the desire to close off the protections of marriage to people living in committed same-sex relationships (and to their children) *is itself an act of sodomy and has no place in civil society or in communities of faith.*

Further, when African-Americans and Hispanics vote in large numbers alongside conservative white Christians to ban same-sex marriage, they ally themselves with the same strand of Christianity that in the past quoted other biblical texts just as effectively to justify genocidal policies toward Native Americans, xenophobic laws against immigrants and abominations such as slavery, Jim Crow and apartheid.

So, yes, this country does have a sodomy problem. But so long as we think it has anything to do with gay sex, we've missed the point of God's outrage. Sodomy happens when any group uses its majority or its power to abuse and marginalize another group. That's what happened in California, Arizona, Florida and Arkansas last November. And it's time for us, as citizens and as Christians, to stop acting like the inhabitants of Sodom. ♦

The Death Penalty in 2008

The Death Penalty Information Center has released its 2008 year-end report on the death penalty in the United States. The complete report can be seen at www.deathpenaltyinfo.org. Here are some highlights:

Decline in the Number of Executions and Death Sentences

- 37 executions took place in 2008, marking a 14-year low and continuing a downward trend that began in 2000.
- 95 percent of U.S. executions in 2008 occurred in the South; 49 percent were in one state, Texas.
- The annual number of death sentences has declined by 60 percent since the 1990s.

Innocence and Clemency

- Four death-row inmates were exonerated and four had their sentences commuted to life in prison without parole during the course of 2008. The total number of exonerations since 1973 is 130.

Costs of the Death Penalty

- A California commission reported that the state is spending \$138 million per year on a death penalty system that it described as "broken" and "close to collapse."
- A study in Maryland indicated that the state had spent \$37 million for each execution when all the costs of the death penalty were included.
- With the average time spent on death row increasing to 12.7 years in 2007, death penalty cases continue to place a significant financial burden on state budgets.
- State supreme courts in Utah and New Mexico have warned that the death penalty will be stopped unless more funding is provided for indigent defense.

Expansion of the Death Penalty Denied

- In June, in the case of *Kennedy v. Louisiana*, the Supreme Court rejected the expansion of the death penalty to non-homicide crimes against individuals.



Fellowship of Reconciliation

Holy Week and Easter with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship with our friends on the street during Holy Week.

**Palm Sunday
April 5**

Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue
5:00 pm

**Monday
April 6**

Grady Hospital
Jessie Hill, Jr. Dr.
5:00 pm

**Tuesday
April 7**

City Jail
Peachtree St. SW
5:00 pm

**Wednesday
April 8**

Woodruff Park,
Five Points
5:00 pm

**Maundy Thursday
April 9**

City Hall
Trinity Avenue
5:00 pm
with celebration of the Eucharist

**Good Friday
April 10**

State Capitol
Washington Street
5:00 pm

**Holy Saturday
April 11**

Pine Street Shelter
Peachtree and Pine Streets
5:00 pm

**Easter Morning
April 12**

Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Avenue
8:00 am

Breakfast with our homeless friends followed by worship and Celebration of Life Over Death and Oppression



Mark Harper from
Fritz Eichenburg

Tickets

December 31, 2008

Tomorrow morning
I give out the tickets.
hungry men
hungry women
old hunger
New Year: 2009
Janus: eyes closed
ears shut.

"Happy New Year 2009"
Old famine: 7000 BCE

On the streets of Atlanta
On the streets of Philadelphia
In the machinations of us all.

Ham Baked
Greens boiled
Black-eyed peas and rice steaming
Pecan pie dripping
Stomach ripping.

Cold hands handle the knife. The fork.
Some tremble
Coffee steams the windows
The old man
Licks his fingers
Fumbles his juice
Leaves our home
In joy and gratitude. says

"Happy New Year."



poetry corner

January 1, 2009

This morning I gave out the tickets.
28 degrees.
Hypothermia nipping its way through
Cheap shoe soles.

For 5 hours.
And 300 hungry hands
Clasped mine.
"Happy New Year."
Not one single police car.

(Desmond locked down on the
13th floor of Grady's insane asylum
How will the rich get fees from him?
"Oh, just let him die in the streets as a
Vulture-treat." They never speak.)

"Wow, this cup of coffee's worth
5 bucks!" sang he in the dark morning
cold as ice. ground frozen under wood chips.

All morning long they came
they went.

Some drunk.
pain medicated against cold famine.
words slushy like melting ice.

then.
I saw:

Red Blood streaked on
4 palings of our picket fence.
Someone stopped by in the
Cold dark night bleeding.

Was it the Lamb of God?

— Eduard Nuessner Loring

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.



By Amanda Petersen

The grief of an unjust death is never far from our door on Ponce de Leon Avenue, and with the death of our longtime friend Geraldine Lee, it could not have come much nearer.

On September 8, 2008, Geraldine spent her last minutes with friends before she was struck by a van as she crossed our familiar Ponce. With her arms full of newspapers that would be used to lay down a pallet for the night, our friend

Calvin Kimbrough

Remembering Geraldine

was tossed through the air in front of her friends and landed only feet from our front steps. Those who were gathering a final breath of fresh air on the porch before bed found themselves at Geraldine's side, as they held her hand and spoke words of encouragement to her silent body. Our friend Geraldine had gone home.

Why was Geraldine not given an earthly home? Why did we not care so much that this woman should live? Why is housing not a human right in this famously excessive nation of ours? Why did our dear friend die as she retrieved newspapers, instead of tucking herself into a proper bed with a warm cup of tea?

We have missed you, beautiful Geraldine. Your honest words and sassy ways have not left our imagination. Emily and Joan think of you often as they cull the most well-matched and colorful clothes for women's showers. Thank you for showing us the value of a home, and forgive us our trespass against you. ♦

Amanda Petersen is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy – An Incendiary and Militant Proposal (Part 7)

By Eduard Loring

Editor's note: This is the seventh in a series of articles based on a lecture Eduard gave at Stetson University as part of the Howard Thurman Lecture Series.

Place: The Open Door Community front yard. Former Creek Nation land. Former territory of the Confederate States of America. Today, sanctuary for the disinherited.

Time: 4:30 a.m.

The front yard of the Open Door Community in Atlanta, Georgia, faces Ponce de Leon Avenue Northeast, a major thoroughfare getting folk in and out of the city. Some 38,000 vehicles pass our yard daily, carrying people journeying into or away from the city, which is known worldwide for mind-boggling reasons. In this article, this little light of mine will shine on two of them.

First: the most American and most globally successful corporation in history lives and is drying up in Atlanta. On a symbolic level, Coca-Cola is *the* way to view White Male America. Its product is worthless. Brown sugar water for a moment of relief from life: no content, no meaning, no nutritional value.

Coca-Cola controls Atlanta politics and education. If one Pepsi machine were placed on the campus of either Emory University or Columbia Theological Seminary, the schools would fold. Coke has told each institution that if any competition comes to campus, Coke will withdraw its syrup and its money.

Monopoly, lack of choice, lack of competition and lack of institutional freedom is one of the principal findings on the seamy underside of the Atlanta mapquest. Surplus wealth comes from economic exploitation; there is no other source. That is why Jesus Christ raised so much hell against the wealthy and the religious elite in his short lifetime. He taught, "You cannot serve God and money." (Matthew 6:24b GNB)

They killed him quick.

Second: one of the most important works of fiction in human history was conceived and written in Atlanta. It was masterfully written by a White Lady, Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949), who understood the power of the Magnolia Myths. Nary a day blows by in Atlanta, and other places in the world, when the racist, duplicitous novel "Gone With the Wind" is not studied, celebrated or seen on film as one of the most viewed and influential movies in the history of cinema.

The house in which she started putting words to paper just 20 years after the Atlanta Race Riot and Massacre of 1906 has been restored and financed by the German automobile corporation Daimler-Benz. What



Ceramic tile by Chuks Okeke

better deal for a European corporation than to get its name up and out in the waters of Coca-Cola and aligned with a novel of white supremacy?

The book portrays slavery as a happy time, with the darkies picking pale cotton and singing while the white folks act mannerly and tolerant of the stupid African-Americans, who are simply inferior and must be helped, cajoled and babied. *The dreadful consequence of the Civil War, according to the novel and movie, is that whites suffered the most.* But the most dreadful fact of American history is that no white people were slaves or counted as three-fifths of a human being. According to Mitchell, only raw power, by any means necessary, in the hands of white Southerners and a few co-opted former slaves could save and rebuild the New South, which was founded on Black backs by cheap, forced and convict slave labor.

On the truthful and realistic side, Mitchell reveals the sources of wealth accumulated by Rhett Butler: trickery and profiteering from the misery and anguish of Southerners and Yankees alike. The modern business spirit and bottom-line-profit morals had moved to Atlanta.

In "Jesus Land" (the old Confederate states), most contemporary white literary responses to "Gone With the Wind" were panegyrics. The realism and historical accuracy of the novel were outstanding

achievements, reviewers wrote, while Billie Holiday moaned before Harlem audiences about "strange fruit" swinging in the wind down in Dixieland. In the wink of an eye, the book appeared on reading lists at Southern institutions of "higher learning."

Unfurling the Flag of Hate

"Gone With the Wind" was published in 1936. Maybe some bleeding-heart liberals and Black freedom fighters sensed each page sliding off the press, like a wet weasel slipping down a sewer pipe. For this tale told by a white woman is full of sound and fury, signifying everything and filling the bitter hearts of White Male Supremacy.

In 1937, a first fruit entered the Atlanta skyline: the Confederate battle flag was raised in the heart of downtown Atlanta. The bright war flag of the vanquished re-entered American history as the banner for devotees of Jim Crow segregation and the humiliation of African-Americans. It represented the mythic reality of the vast majority of white Atlantans born when Robert Edward Lee dismounted Traveler in front of Appomattox Courthouse.

Today in Georgia we see this flag sneering at us daily: on trucks, cars, tattoos, caps, scarves, shirts, in truck stops and gift shops. A huge plaster Confederate flag besmears a wall at the OK Cafe in north Atlanta, a favorite restaurant among sports elites.

Appomattox Courthouse: on April 9, 1865, General Lee, manners impeccable, morals spewing venom, signed the papers put before him by General Ulysses S. Grant. These documents of surrender to the USA were sealed and sent to the commander in chief, Abraham Lincoln, one of the few fine presidents in American history.

The Civil War was over, the Confederate battle flag mostly furled except at night, when the Ku Klux Klan hid behind it and white sheets while riding through "ni-er town" terrorizing former slaves and their children. But out of the night and into the light murderous White Male Supremacy, North and South, East and West, continued its steel-heeled boot-march across this land toward the chainless slavery and oppression of our new citizens, African-Americans. "This land is my land; this land is your land," sang Woody Guthrie.

This hate movement used prison, chain gangs, sharecropping, poor (really poor) education, tenant farming, lynching, burning, castration, low wages, legal violence as with the Scottsboro Boys, prison, convict leasing, unemployment, race riots, torture, rape, bullying, killing, maiming, executions, serfdom and psychological dehumanization and interiorization of inferiority, along with daily terror tactics of humiliation, to control our new fellow citizens during their journey toward liberty, equality and freedom. So little had actually "gone with the wind."

The not-yet-gone wind blows into our yard, bending the bodies of men and women, Black, white and brown, into the ground of poverty and prison even while they wait for coffee and grits.

The not-yet-gone wind blows into our yard, bending the bodies of men and women, Black, white and brown, into the ground of poverty and prison even while they wait for coffee and grits. Even while they wait for God and God's people to act for justice and the death of White Male Supremacy.

A minority believed, and some on the margins hoped, that the Old South was, in



Johnny 1/09

At Our Home

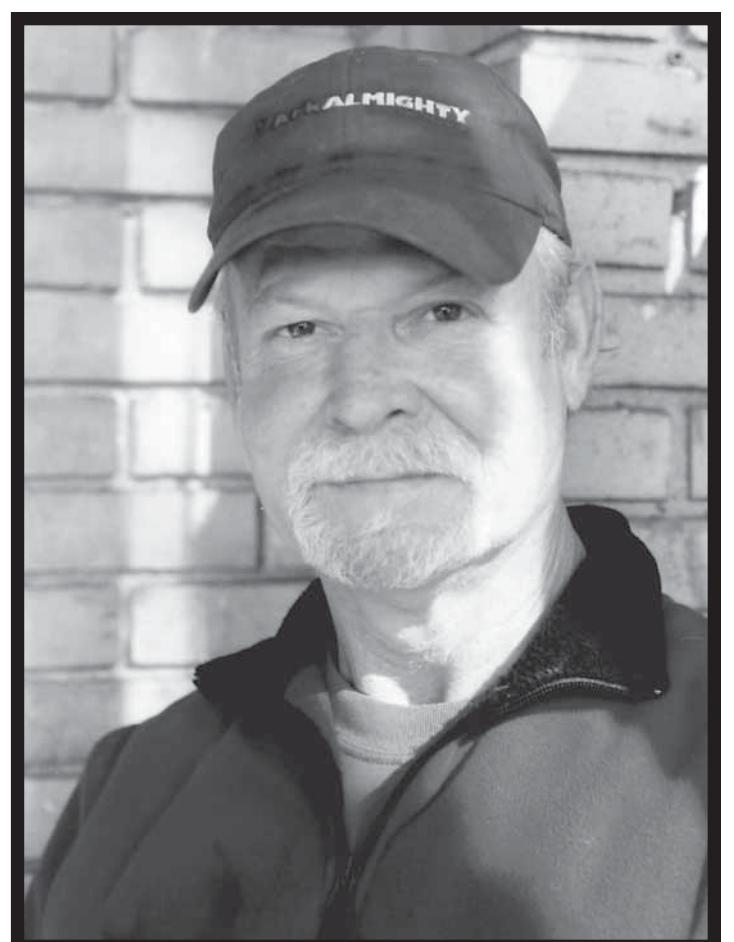
photographs by **Calvin Kimbrough**



Lusha 11/08



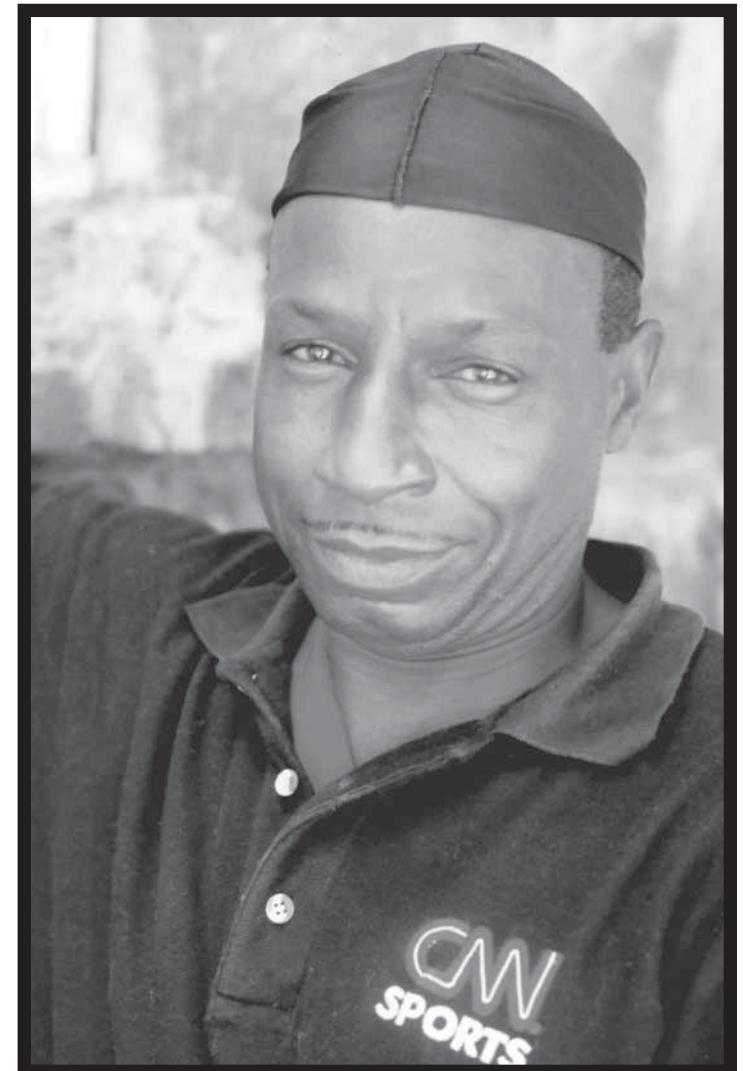
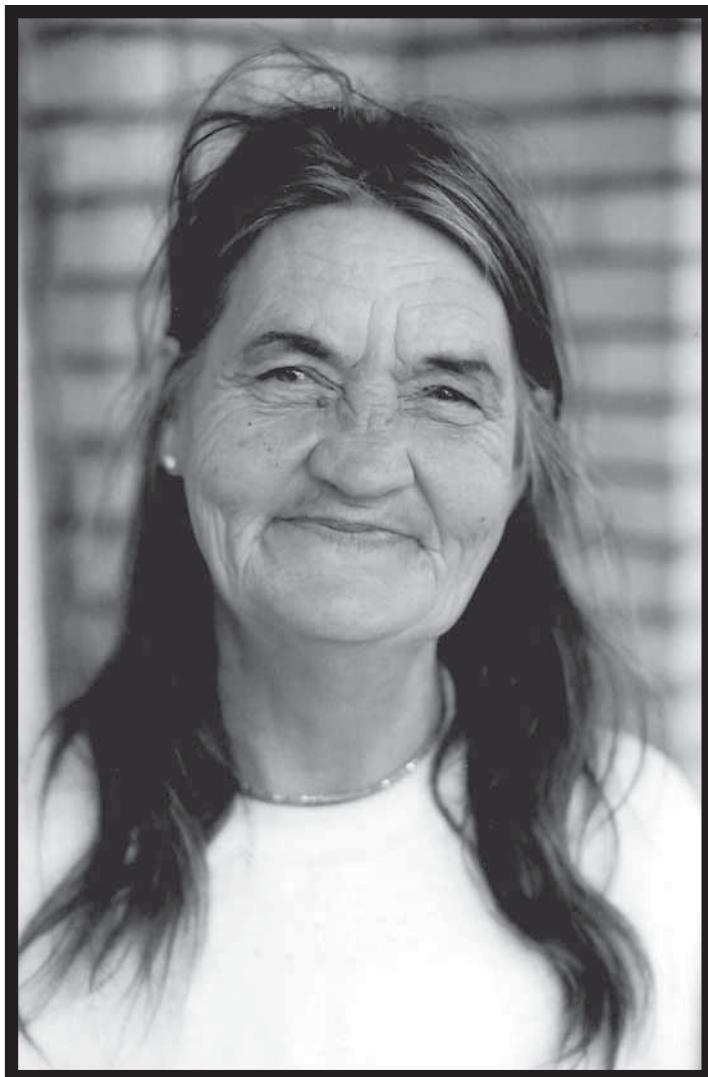
Perry 11/08



Bill 11/08

Terrence 5/08

Judy 12/08



Aaron & Sheldon 12/08



Sandra 12/08

Go Out, continued from page 1

west I will gather you; I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth — everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, "It is true!" (Isaiah 43:1-9)

"Do not fear ... I AM." Again and again, the prophetic voice sings the refrain. Ten times in these chapters we hear "do not fear." An astounding 22 times we hear the great "I AM" (but never in Chapters 1-39). Another refrain: "There is no other god," heard nine times. One might think that the audience got the message.

But tragically, this prophet's words fall on a people whose "neck is an iron sinew" and whose "forehead is brass" (48:4). Why this metallic resistance? Because the Word offered is calling the people to leave all that is familiar in Babylon and trust that their God, the only god there is, has released them from bondage and is calling them home. Even amidst the falling rubble of "the Great City," as the Persian warrior Cyrus crushes Babylon in defeat, the people will not budge. They, like the Sodomites, including Lot and his family, know no other way of life. So enmeshed was Lot in the world of urban domination and violence that it took an angel to yank him away from the impending disaster (Genesis 19:15-22).

Israel in Babylon was not rescued by an angel, but through the person of the Servant of YHWH. Beginning in Isaiah 49, the narrative focus shifts from the failed vocation of the people as a whole to the embodied witness of one anonymous, faithful person. The culmination of the story comes in what scholars have traditionally called the Fourth Servant Song, Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12. It became, in the hands of the evangelists, virtually the script for Jesus' passion. What is often missed by Christians, however, is that the suffering and rejection of the Servant is for the purpose of *getting YHWH's people finally to leave the crumbling shell of imperial Babylon and go home*.

In this powerful passage, we hear the voice of YHWH Elohim enclosing the voice of the people themselves (52:13-15 and 53:11-12, surrounding 53:1-10). "Behold! My servant shall succeed! He shall be exalted and lifted up!" This emphatic overture is followed by the dismal description of the Servant's rejection and suffering.

Paradoxically, this pain is both YHWH's "plan" and a result of the people's own sins. *The Servant's suffering is a*

direct result of the people's lack of faith. As the text puts it, "He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities" (53:5). His terrible experience reveals the consequences of the people's refusal to trust in YHWH's loving call to a totally different way of life. Through this witness of a single person who takes on violence rather than inflicting it, Israel is shown the way out of exile. This is what generates the conversion moment, where the people suddenly recognize that they have been "like sheep ... all turned to our own way, and YHWH has laid on him our iniquity" (53:6).

John's Gospel reads much of this section of Isaiah as a framework for its narrative. The great "I AM" repeated throughout Isaiah 40-55 attaches, of course, to Jesus himself. He has done many "signs" — not "miracles" in the sense of magical violations of the natural order — words and actions that draw people's attention away from the seductions of empire and back toward the Way of God embodied in and through Jesus.

But still, belief is rare or hidden in fear (John 12:42). The narrator summarizes this sad outcome by quoting the very Servant Song we've considered. The entire Gospel of John mirrors the pattern of Isaiah by shifting its focus from the collective people of Jerusalem and Judea (John 1-12; as Isaiah 40-48) to Jesus himself and the little discipleship community gathered around him (John 13-21; as Isaiah 49-55).

The chapters that follow attempt, through a similar process of repetition and comforting assurance, to inspire the disciples into a trust that will lead others out of exile. In their world, it is the exile resulting from imprisonment within Roman imperial authority. They are terrified of the prospect of taking up this vocation, one that will involve, Jesus promises, the risk of being killed by those who in doing so think they are serving God (John 16:2). Their only hope — and ours — lies in their experience of the "lifting up" of God's Chosen One, the Human Being, the Savior of the World. For John, as for our Isaianic prophet, human rejection and divine restoration are part of one continuous action (e.g., John 3:14-15 and 8:28). There is no separate "crucifixion" followed by "resurrection," but only a single "lifting up" and "exaltation" that witnesses to YHWH's power to bring the people out of Babylon/Rome and back home.

For Christians, of course, "home" is not a specific land but, rather, a place where the Way of the Creator God is lived in the Beloved Community with rejoicing and gratitude. As we watch our own Babylon crumble day after day, how will we respond? Will we have "foreheads of brass" that prevent the Word from penetrating us? Or will we allow YHWH Elohim and the Risen One to inspire us to new trust that we really can "come out"?

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19) ♦

Wrong-Way, continued from page 1

who are already way behind national standards, will find classrooms more overcrowded than ever. School nurses got the ax, so sick children will find no help there. Dwindling services from county health departments and community clinics will leave the growing numbers of uninsured families with no option other than hospital emergency rooms, a path that spells bankruptcy for many. Level IV Trauma Centers are so few in Georgia that many victims of accidents die before they can get to a staffed trauma center.

Even the U.S. Congress has finally passed an expanded version of the State Children's Health Initiative (which was vetoed twice by George W. Bush). But the requirement for Georgia matching funds (25

officials.

Governor Sonny Perdue never misses an opportunity to kiss babies for the cameras and talk about his many foster children. But his record as governor has been one uninterrupted disaster for Georgia's children.

In the meantime, a small group of highly committed human rights stalwarts hold their ground at the Statehouse: Senators Vincent Fort and Nan Orrock, Representatives Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, Alicia Thomas Morgan, Mary Margaret Oliver and others. Pray for them — for their strength and courage and for their capacity to endure.

More people in Georgia are losing their homes and jobs every day. We desperately need decent schools, health care, mental health and addiction services, housing, safe



B.M. Kavanagh

percent for PeachCare) will probably limit its availability to sick and disabled children in our state.

In 2003, after several years of lawsuits and courageous challenges from the Southern Center for Human Rights, the state finally came out of the dark ages and set up a unified public defender system for Georgia. We were one of the only states without such a system, and it was a major victory. However, from the very beginning, lawmakers have used various ploys to defund and dismantle the system. It appears that the public defender system — not even six years old — might take the final plunge into the grave before the gang leaves town.

In the meantime, bills that would expand use of sentences of life without parole and allow less than unanimous juries to impose the death penalty are enjoying broad support and might well pass.

We can glibly cut health care for children while we expand the most expensive and self-defeating criminal justice institutions among us. The grotesque irony is lost on most of our brain-dead public

communities and nutritious food. But Georgia has it all backward and is rushing like a staggering drunk over a cliff.

The prophet Isaiah railed against the greedy elite of ancient Israel and said that the punishment would be: "The Lord will let the people be governed by immature boys. Everyone will take advantage of everyone else." (Isaiah 3:4-5)

One of the best things President Obama said in his inaugural speech is that it is time for us to "put away childish things."

This will happen in Georgia only when people of faith and conscience find the gumption to demand a change of mind and heart and direction. If insanity is "doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results," then it is time to give up on the insanity and go to work. Raise taxes and provide for the children first of all. And then for all those in Georgia who live and die in unnecessary misery.

Let's grow up, Georgia. ♦

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Cry of the Poor, continued from page 5

fact, gone with the wind. The Confederate States of America lost the battles but won the war. After the presidential election of 1876, Lincoln's Republican Party began its death march of betrayal and abandonment of the civil and human rights of African-Americans. Today the Republican Party is the party of White Male Supremacy, conservative Christianity and our dirty wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gone with the wind? Hardly. The wind continues to drive and cry over the land, tearing our nation apart, hurling debris into the faces of all people of color, gays and lesbians, human rights activists, anti-death penalty workers, peace and justice activists, homeless boys and girls, mentally ill men and women, radical disciples of Jesus, the Human One.

Looking With New Eyes

"How can we know the dancer from the dance?" asks poet William Butler Yeats ("Among School Children," 1928). Margaret Mitchell's life story is not exhausted by her belief in White Male Supremacy. She loved to help Blacks and did so, not without the "cost" of crossing class and racial boundaries in Atlanta. She was a volunteer and spokesperson for Grady Memorial Hospital's colored clinics. For this, in 1920, she was "whitelisted" by the Junior League when she was "coming out" as a debutante. She co-operated with Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, president of Morehouse College, in providing 40 to 50 medical scholarships for Black students. She supported Atlanta Police Chief Herbert Jenkins when the pressures were fierce enough for the cry to be heard, "Integrate the police force now."

"There remains an experience of incomparable value ... to see the great events of world history from below; from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled."

The writer of the most famous novel in American history, the woman who claimed that all the content of her story was history, true and accurate, will never die in discussions of White Male Supremacy. "Gone With the Wind" is to the white supremacist understanding of plantation slavery and Reconstruction what Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was to the understanding of slavery for Abraham Lincoln and the Abolitionists.

On August 11, 1949, Margaret Mitchell was struck down by a car while crossing Peachtree Street. She lay dying at Grady Memorial Hospital for several days. I wonder what she would say today as the White Male Supremacists in the Georgia Legislature attempt to defund Grady.

"Life is just a question of hermeneutics," says Don Beisswenger. In a prison epistle from a Nazi compound, Dietrich Bonhoeffer tutors us toward a re-reading of our shared stories: "There remains an experience of incomparable value ... to see the great events of world history from below; from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled — in short, from the perspective of those who suffer ... to look with new eyes on matters great and small." ("Letters and Papers From Prison")

The deformed spirituality of white supremacy and the political interests of the Domination System are complemented and nurtured in Atlanta and across our land by the Margaret Mitchell House & Museum. Here is a museum

that, like the novel and movie, helps to keep the dreams of vanquished Confederates and their flag alive.

Those dreams are fodder for the Republican Party, rebirthed in the South by Strom Thurmond 101 years after the Battle of Gettysburg. A few months after the implementation of the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964, Senator Thurmond of South Carolina left the Democratic Party for the more racist Republicans. The Republican "Southern strategy" was born. White "rights" and corporate wealth were linked in a bed of unrighteousness. Civil rights for people of color are too much for White Male Supremacy, (unless one is a white male supremacist like Condoleezza Rice or Clarence Thomas).

The Mitchell museum also provides lectures and programs of interpretation of Southern history and literature. These are for the benefit of the upper classes. The costs are prohibitive, of course, for the poor.

Abolitionists Win Again

For an alternative interpretation, please read "The Wind Done Gone" by Alice Randall, published in 2001, which retells the story from the slaves' point of view. Modern minions of Ku Klux Klan founder Nathan Bedford Forrest attempted to stop the publication of this novel. Many acted as though freedom of the press was a terrorist tactic.

The legal battle against publication and distribution of this woman's words was fought to protect the lies and myths, to keep the big bucks flowing, and to keep chinks from occurring in the wall of white racism and domination. Meanwhile, rumbles of George W. Bush's hurricanes were blowing like a wind blustering toward a torturous "homeland security" landscape. These well mannered rich folks took off their sheets and walked in the light.

Big people, big banks, Coca-Cola, the Mitchell family, lawyers with silk socks and nylon stockings fought the publication of "The Wind Done Gone." The ostensible reason was copyright protection, but beneath the covers lay the dying American Bill of Rights. Freedom of speech and press: NO. Freedom of artistic invention: NO. Threat to the myths and lies of Ms. Mitchell's tale: YES. Threat to big business: OF COURSE.

Ms. Randall is an African-American. One of her forebears was likely a Confederate general. The response to her and her book establishes the truth of the insidious nature and consequences of "Gone With the Wind." But the Abolitionists won again! The novel was published.

Atlanta is a difficult place to tell the truth in. It is one of the most segregated urban areas in the United States. It is a city where the business community, the mayor's office and the City Council breathe together to put the poor, especially Black men, young and old, in harm's way.

Too little has gone with the wind, and what is not yet gone blows into our yard at the Open Door. Bodies are bent earthward: men and women, Black, white and brown. Bent downward. Ground into broken bits even as they wait for coffee, grits, a welcome, a phone call. Even as they wait for God and God's people to act for justice and the death of White Male Supremacy.

At the end of our alley, on the side of a telephone power box, a message is sent to us by an unknown graffiti prophet: "Initiative comes from those who wait."

Beware. ♦

Part 8 will appear next month, with Point 3 of seeing Atlanta from the perspective of the Open Door Community and her solidarity with the homeless, hungry and prisoner: Martin Luther King Jr.

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.



Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Calvin Kimbrough

After a year of planning, Oliver Wnuck joined us as a Resident Volunteer in January. He comes to us from Berlin, Germany and will be with us for 9 months.

Live in a residential Christian community.

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

Join street actions and loudandloving nonviolent demonstrations

Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.

You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Chuck Harris

at odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net

or 770.246.7627

For information and application forms visit

www.opendoorcommunity.org

Please Help!

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

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

Thank You!



this year give HOSPITALITY

A \$10 donation covers a one-year subscription to *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://opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

name _____

address _____

email _____

phone _____



volunteer needs at the Open Door Community

People to accompany Community members to doctors' appointments.

Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and cheese sandwiches (**no bologna, pb&j or white bread, 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 (5:50-9:30 a.m.); Wednesday soup kitchen (9:40 a.m.-1:30 p.m.); Thursday showers (7:30-11:00 a.m.) and bag lunch (8:00 a.m.-12 noon).

Volunteers to help staff our foot clinic on Wednesday evenings (6:45-9:15 p.m.).

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

The Mystery of Our History

The Catholic Worker

After Dorothy:

Practicing the Works of Mercy in a New Generation

By Dan McKanan

Reviewed by Amanda Petersen

I have grown up in a time and place that teaches narcissism as if it were the last great hope for humankind. I am self-centered in countless ways and make habitual and intentional choices that compromise the integrity and well-being of my fellow humans.

Yet I am confronted with homelessness, hunger, an embarrassment of a health care system, militarism, prison industry and a host of other ills that plague my generation and those before me. I am told by many that these are problems too great to solve and issues too great to tend to. Self-obsession? I am a young woman who is cursed with the ability to imagine that I am the only bleeding heart who has ever existed.

Thank God for Dan McKanan, who has written "The Catholic Worker After Dorothy: Practicing the Works of Mercy in a New Generation." In a book that was eight years in the making, McKanan provides a succinct and poignant timeline of the Catholic Worker Movement from its founding by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933 to the present time. The final chapter, titled "The Future of the Works of Mercy," offers a heartfelt projection and challenge regarding the future of the movement.

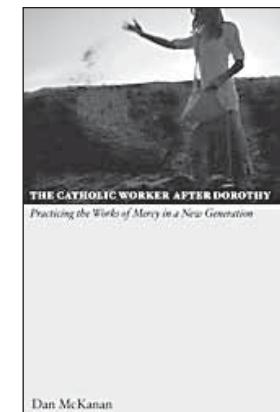
My acquaintance with and participation in the Catholic Worker Movement has only recently begun. What a gift to have a book that ties me to the past and the future. This history that we are caught up in is rich and includes an inconceivable number of stories. The history is a mystery in and of itself – how has such an eclectic and vast network of folks carried on this work for decade upon decade, especially after the deaths of its founders? "The story of the Catholic Worker's survival is thus also the story of those thousands of people. ... Dozens of these individuals are still feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and comforting the afflicted as this book goes to print," McKanan writes.

I would maintain that exploring these communities and individuals is the foundation of his book. Perhaps I find its title ill fitting, as it seems that McKanan in fact focuses less on the movement since Day's death in 1980 than on its people during her lifetime and her leadership of them. But McKanan of course makes no mistake in telling us that the Works of Mercy are as warranted today as they were in the 1930s. Time and time again the history of the Catholic Worker addresses the ills of the present generation.

"People who volunteer at local Catholic Worker houses are often unaware of the national scope of the movement," McKanan writes. This is true. Might we know our history? Might we move beyond the notion that we are the answer and the one who has come to do good? Might we allow ourselves to be merged into the generations of folks who have worked before us? Let us all be so eager to know the reasons we are here with one another today. The odds tell us we shouldn't be.

Thank God for the Catholic Worker Movement, Dan McKanan, Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day. ♦

Amanda Petersen is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.



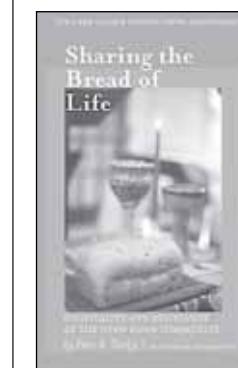
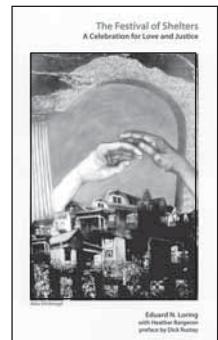
The Open Door Community Press Books

The Festival of Shelters

A Celebration
for Love and Justice

By Eduard Loring
with Heather Bargeron
preface by Dick Rustay

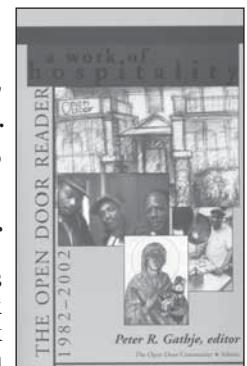
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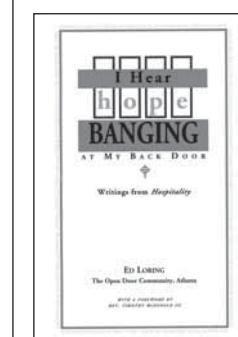
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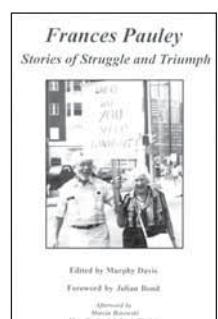
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Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door Community,

Thank you all for carrying the torch and proclaiming prophetic truth. Through illumination of God's word you light a path through our darkened cultural wilderness. Thank you for reminding me constantly of the important things in life — not just the urgent. Thank you for crying out in the wilderness.

Blessings and peace to you,

Paul Scouten

Black Mountain, North Carolina

Paul Scouten was a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community in 1994-95.

Dear Open Door Folks,

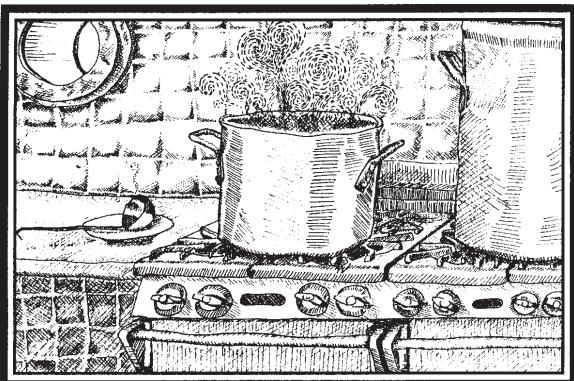
Thanks for the wonderful work you're doing in the world. Your lights shine in distant corners of the world, even here in Western Canada, when we read your news.

In peace,

Aggie Black

New Westminster,

British Columbia, Canada



Hello, Calvin & Nelia,

Thank you, again, for spending a few hours with our Martin Methodist crew! Our trip to the Open Door Community was by far the most transformative experience for the students on the trip! And they've taken action since then!

The day after we were with you, we visited the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Site. The students saw several homeless folks near by. So when we returned on MLK Day for the service at Ebenezer, the students completely skipped the service and went in search of the homeless folks, whom the police had run off to keep them away from park visitors for the day's events. The students talked to the police to find out where they had pushed "them" off to, and it took the students nearly an hour to find the folks. Once the students found those in need, they shared ALL of our team's remaining food from the weekend, shared some of their belongings, and money.

As we drove back to Pulaski, they brainstormed about 10 different ideas for collecting shoes for the Open Door Community. They have finally concentrated their efforts, and our students will be holding a campus- and community-wide closed-toe Shoe Drive as part of this coming week's Homecoming Festivities! Who knows how many shoes we'll have for you, but every time I turn around I'm hearing someone say, "Oh, I have more than one pair of shoes to share!"

Our campus spring break is just around the corner, so we were thinking about bringing the shoes sometime between February 28 and March 4.

Well, that's the latest from MMC!

Blessings,

Rev. Laura Kirkpatrick

Campus Minister, Martin Methodist College
Pulaski, Tennessee

Dear Saints,

We appreciate the difficult work you all are doing. Please be encouraged — Psalm 41:1 and 2: Blessed are those who consider the poor; the LORD will deliver them in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve them and keep them alive, as a blessing on the earth.

In the mighty name of Jesus — AMEN!

John and Beth Blake

Alpharetta, Georgia

Murphy, Hannah and Ed (by voice mail),

This is a New Year's greeting from Dan Berrigan in New York City to my dear friends at the Open Door Community. May God keep you all in God's love and even in this difficult, painful and beautiful time. God Bless and prayers from all of us here.

Dan Berrigan
New York, New York



COME·FOLLOW·ME

Ade Bethune

Hi Calvin,

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

When I left you I vaguely remembered hearing about Open Door Community as an assistant pastor at Butler Street C.M.E. Church. I served under a Rev. Thomas Brown who is now a Bishop in the C.M.E. Church [in Jackson, Mississippi]. I did not realize your organization provided all that food for Butler Street Church. Now that I think about it I think I was in your house at least twice. I remember getting up early and going somewhere to cook grits and cheese. I was told that the cheese was placed in the grits to get protein in the people. It was my first experience of eating cheese grits. I occasionally cook it now at home and my children really like it. I remember putting what seemed like a half of pack of pepper in that big pot. Those were some very defining moments in the ministry God has called me to.

Thanks for *taking me there*.

Blessings,

Dr. Zawdie K. Abiade
Nashville, Tennessee

To Ed, Murphy and Open Door Community!

MARY-CHRIST-MASS

Thank you for continuing to send *Hospitality*. I enjoy reading your stirring essays and editorials. You all sure do have a deep Christian instinct for Social Justice issues. I hope Obama's Presidency will help get the Federal Government involved in funding programs like yours.

May our Triune God continue to bless your ministries. Enclosed gift to pay for some postage!

May Jesus, become Human, and Bread Broken, fill you and your works with His Spirit of Love.

Love,

Fr. Tom Francis

Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Monastery
Conyers, Georgia

Open Door Community Ministries

Breakfast: Monday and Tuesday, 7 – 8 a.m.

Women's Showers: Wednesday, 8 a.m.

Soup Kitchen: Wednesday, 10:45 a.m. – 12 noon.

Harriet Tubman Medical and Foot Care Clinic:

Wednesday, 7 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 join us for our **Peace Vigil** from **11:55 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.** and for **Worship at 5 p.m.** with a delicious supper following worship. 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, weekly Eucharist, and Foot Washing.

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 or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

March 1	Worship at 910
Lent 1	Nelia Kimbrough preaching
March 8	Worship at 910
Lent 2	Heather Bargeron preaching
March 15	Worship at 910
Lent 3	Bearing Witness: Fannie Lou Hamer Lauren Scharstein preaching
March 22	Worship at 910
Lent 4	Anthony Granberry preaching The Spiritual Journey of Addiction & Recovery, Part 1
March 29	Worship at 910
Lent 5	Calvin Kimbrough meditation in song
April 5	Worship at 910
Palm Sunday	Leo Chang preaching
April 12	Worship at 910 Breakfast 8:00 am Easter Celebration following
April 19	Worship at 910 Bearing Witness: Ella Becker Amanda Petersen preaching
April 26	Worship at 910 Anthony Granberry preaching The Spiritual Journey of Addiction & Recovery, Part 2



Calvin Kimbrough
The Vagrant Christ on Maundy Thursday at City Hall. Please see the schedule for Holy Week Worship on page 4.

Needs of the Community



Living Needs

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

Chad Hyatt

Personal Needs

- shampoo (all sizes)
- lotion (all sizes)
- toothpaste (all sizes)
- combs & picks
- hair brushes
- lip balm
- soap
- multi-vitamins
- disposable razors
- deodorant
- vaseline
- shower powder
- Q-tips
- used prescription containers for lotions

Food Needs

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

Special Needs

- backpacks
- coats
- single bed box spring & mattress

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

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

Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!



Daniel Nichols

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 404.874.9652 or visit www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medicine Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

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

Foot Care Clinic

- epsom salt
- anti-bacterial soap
- shoe inserts
- corn removal pads
- exfoliation cream (e.g., apricot scrub)
- pumice stones
- foot spa
- cuticle clippers
- latex gloves
- nail files (large)
- toenail clippers (large)
- medicated foot powder
- antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

We are also looking for volunteers to help staff our Foot Care Clinic on Wednesday evenings from 6:45 - 9 p.m.!