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# HOSPITALITY

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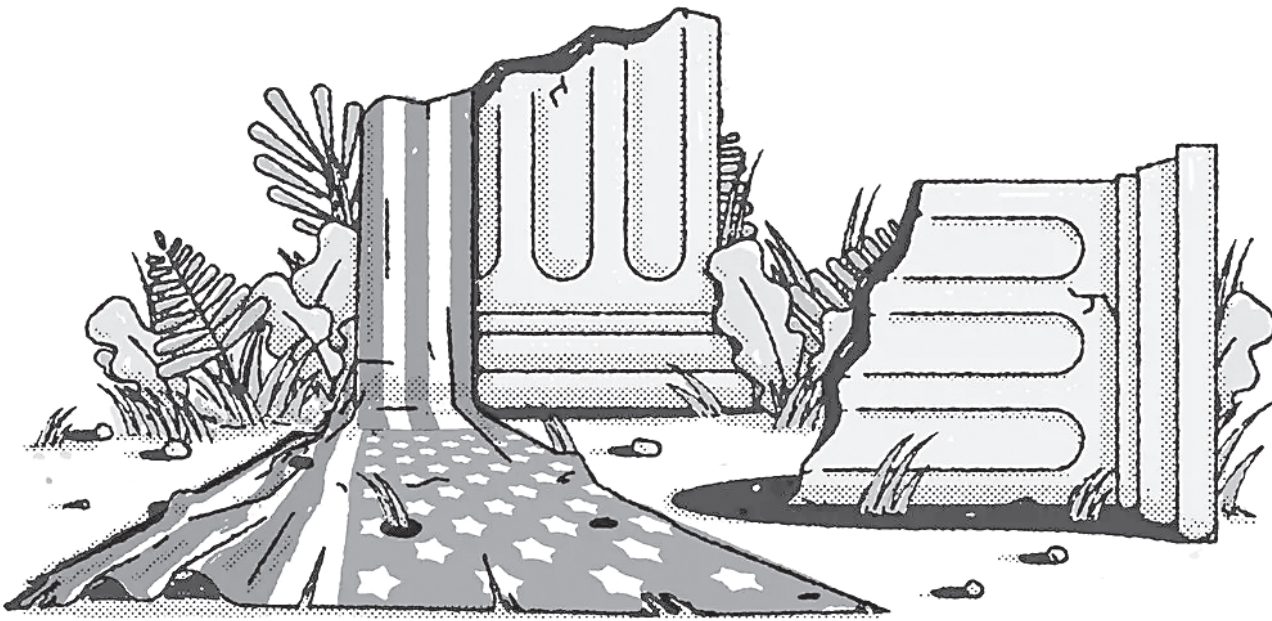
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Open Door: A Prophetic Discipleship Community Honoring The Black Jesus, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr.

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May/June 2022



Michael George Haddad | NYTimes

## Democracy

### We Can't Take It for Granted in 2022

By Rita Dixon

Daily, my television programs present two major wars going on in the world. Both are frightening. The expressed intent of the aggressors of both is to destroy Democracy and establish an authoritarian form of government. At the time of this writing the Ukraine war is in its sixth week of an increasingly brutal military invasion by Russia's President Putin. Ukraine's citizens know that President Putin wants to destroy their Democracy and establish rule by his authority. They are fighting valiantly to keep what they have, because they have experienced authoritarian rule and they do not want to go back.

In America the war is not so visible. We do not see a military with missiles, tanks and bombs destroying homes, hospitals and schools, nor frightened women fleeing with children. Rather, the invasion to destroy American Democracy is more subtle and cunning. It erodes by the manipulation of the democratic process. I am one of many Americans who believe that a corruption of the democratic process is in play to replace our current form of American Democracy with a more authoritarian form of government. Race is not the only polarizing issue, but it is a major issue.

In this article I emphasize my perspective that Democracy in America is in crisis, and that too many Americans are blind to the crisis because they take our Democracy for granted. Many Americans have not known any other form of government. They notice our form of government less than they notice breathing, living in it as a birthright, a given — eternal and invincible. I hope to heighten the awareness of those who are blind to the danger that we are about to lose a precious gift, and to motivate all who value America's Democracy to work harder to save it.

A brief look at history will place my perspective in a broader context:

I was born in 1934 in racially segregated Johnson County, Georgia. In school we were taught that we lived in a Democratic country and that made us the greatest country in the world. We were very proud to be Americans, although practically all the southern states of America had locked African Americans out of the democratic process since the Compromise of 1877. This secret unwritten agreement by a bipartisan congressional commission ended the brief Reconstruction era and the voting rights given to African Americans by the Constitution in 1870. Almost 100 years later, President Lyndon Johnson, pressured by a long Civil Rights Movement, signed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which banned racial voter discrimination, making American Democracy more fully democratic by extending the right to vote to all of America's citizens.

Thus, I view American Democracy to always be in a state of becoming more inclusive of all of its citizens with justice and fairness for all. As our country has become more diverse racially and more responsive to pressure from other marginalized groups, it has been moving toward what I call an inclusive Multiracial Democracy with equity or a Just Multiracial and Multicultural Democracy. In my world view this is an ideal which has not been achieved in any country of which I am aware.

After the 1965 Voting Rights Act, racial inclusion in the political process increased, but so did polarization between the Democratic and Republican parties, reflecting the

**Democracy** continued on page 7

## White South Rising

By Nibs Stroupe

As I listened to the insane (but not surprising) questioning of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson in the Senate confirmation hearings for her nomination to the Supreme Court, I noted many things. First, her responses and her demeanor during the hearings were astonishing. It is easy to see why she is being nominated to the Supreme Court, no matter her racial or gender classification. Second, it is easy to see why President Biden picked her to be the first African American woman to be nominated to SCOTUS — like Rosa Parks before her, she was the one to be called at this time. Third, I wish I could say that I was surprised at the questions from the Republicans, but it has come to be expected in the White South movement. Judge Jackson's nomination and the Senate hearings on that nomination may prove to be a turning point in the 21st century because they reflect powerful dynamics at work: the White South rising in reaction to the rising of people who have previously been shut out and denied the benefits of the idea of equality — people of all colors, genders, orientations and abilities.

When I was growing up in the Arkansas Delta of the Mississippi River, my only friends were classified as white. I didn't have Black friends; I didn't even know that such friendship was possible. In those days, we used a saying that reflected our white Southernness: "Save your Confederate money, boys, the South's gonna rise again." I heard it, and I said it. I think that I even sort of believed it. In those years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954, the "white" Southern way of life seemed under threat, though it was hard to imagine any big changes coming. Our imagination was truncated — we had not anticipated the creativity, the courage and the dedication of the Civil Rights Movement.

Things did change, but my own individual and communal history remind me that the White South is never far away. It is never far away because it has been with us since the European beginnings of the nation. The White South shaped the U.S. Constitution, with slavery allowed to stand (though the word "slavery" is never mentioned in the original Constitution). Those people counted as "slaves" were counted as only 60% human beings. The White South shaped the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850 — notice that the language of the law shapes our thinking — those escaping from enslavement are not called "human beings" but rather "slaves." It shaped the horrendous SCOTUS decision in 1857 in the Dred and Harriet Scott case, where the Court, using the "originalist" interpretation of the Constitution that adopted the 60% human definition of people held in slavery,

**White South Rising** continued on page 7



## poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

## Fall in Love

Nothing is more practical than finding God,  
that is, than falling in love  
In a quite absolute, final way.

What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination,  
Will affect everything.  
It will decide  
what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evenings,  
how you will spend your weekends,  
what you will read,  
who you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love,  
stay in love,  
and it will decide everything.

— Attributed to Fr Pedro Arrupe, SJ

*Fr. Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) was the 28th General Father of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), and many have called him the "second father" after St. Ignatius of Loyola, who was the founder. He placed a great emphasis on the need to combine faith with works of justice. He was living in a suburb of Hiroshima when the USA dropped an atomic bomb on the city in 1945, and he ministered to victims of that bombing.*

Sent from Beatitude House, Guadalupe, California

## Open Door Community Press

### Surely Goodness and Mercy

*A Journey into Illness and Solidarity*



**Murphy Davis**

*Forewords by Jürgen Moltmann  
and Bryan Stevenson*



Alison Reeder

### Surely Goodness and Mercy

*A Journey into Illness and Solidarity*

**by Murphy Davis**

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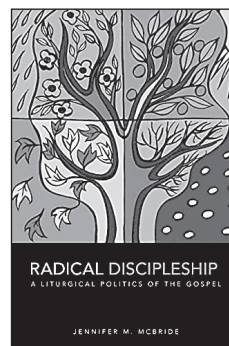
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## Correction

We want to note an error in our March/April issue of *Hospitality*, in which we reviewed Jennifer McBride's fine book, ***Radical Discipleship***. Although we gave the title of the book correctly in the headline of the article and in the focus point, the title of the book was misnamed in the body of the review. We apologize for this error and urge everyone to get Dr. McBride's excellent work.

**Radical Discipleship**  
A Liturgical Politics of the Gospel



# HOSPITALITY

*Hospitality* is published by the Open Door Community, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland. The Open Door is a Prophetic Discipleship Community honoring the Black Jesus, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr. 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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**Homegoing**  
*A Celebration of Murphy Davis' Life*  
is available online:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kp0i7-INvv0&feature=youtu.be>

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He/Him/His

**David Payne** Office Manager

Please join us on Facebook for the continuing journey of the Open Door Community in Baltimore.





# Murphy’s Living Legacy: Michaela Lillian Murphy Buc

By Ed Loring

Michaela is Hannah and Jason Murphy Buc’s 8-year-old daughter. Michaela, also known as Moolala, is Ed Loring’s granddaughter and joy.

Michaela is named for the wild, wooly Peacemaker of Atlanta, Mike Vosburg-Casey. Mike died at 38 of colon cancer. Murphy, Hannah and Ed had the high privilege and loving gift to be with Mike, his beloved Amy, their beautiful daughter Elena and Mike’s parents, Tom and Betty, at that time. We had a loving and sad, thankful and painful time together. I love Mike deeply as did hundreds of activists in Atlanta and hundreds upon hundreds of homeless friends. Hannah and Jason decided if their child was a boy they would name him Michael; if a girl, Michaela.

Michaela wears a holy mantle of many threads woven by Mike Vosburg-Casey and Murphy Davis. May God protect her. May God lead us to yell “No War” in the streets.



The Open Door Community  
joins a Baltimore Vigil  
to stop the Russian War  
against the people of Ukraine  
March 27, 2022

Top right: Michaela, no stranger to protests and vigils,  
stands tall for the children of Ukraine.

Right: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church



Above: Ed, David Payne and Michaela at the Vigil.

Far right: Ed waves to cars who honk  
or passengers who give a thumbs up, as they go by.

Right: Michaela prepares for a television news interview.

Photographs by David Payne | ODC/Baltimore





# Through Many Dangers, Toils and Snares

By Elizabeth Dede

I met Lekealem Elvis (called by his English name here) at the Stewart Detention Center in Stewart County, Georgia, in 2018. Detention Center almost sounds nice, like a neighborhood center, or something. But it's not. The Stewart Detention Center is an immigration prison.

In the late 1990s, the prison was built on speculation and the promise that it would provide jobs for residents of Stewart County, the poorest county in Georgia at the time. The private company that built it, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA, now Core Civic), planned to lease it to the State of Georgia. As it turned out, Georgia did not want another private prison, so it sat empty for several years, an eyesore in the community. No jobs were provided during the construction. They were all contracted outside of Stewart County.

Then 9/11 happened. Out of that horrible time, terrible things began to happen to immigrants in the United States. The Homeland Security Department was created, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service became Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and immigrants became criminals. Citizens of the United States grew to be afraid of anyone who was not a citizen, or even citizens from races, classes and faiths that were not part of the dominant white culture.

Arrests at the border and sweeps in neighborhoods and workplaces that were known to harbor people without documents began to grow exponentially. ICE needed prison space. Suddenly, CCA had a taker for its prison in Stewart County. Now it is packed full with people who are soon to be deported in a place leased by the federal government. When I first started visiting there more than six years ago, there were nearly 3,000 men there.

Atrocities happen at Stewart regularly. People suffering from sadness at their situation are diagnosed as suicidal, stripped and put in solitary confinement for an indefinite period of time. The sick have very little access to health care. Food is served in small portions and undercooked. Prisoners are housed in dormitories stuffed full with people; they are allowed a few hours of recreation each week. Because of Covid, there is no visitation.

So how did I come to meet Elvis in this prison, out in the middle of nowhere, outside a small, dying town in Southwest Georgia? For the past 15 years, I have been a member of Koinonia Farm, an 80-year-old Christian community in Americus, Georgia, founded by Clarence and Florence Jordan and Martin and Mable England in 1942. Koinonia has a ministry called Hospitality Beyond Borders. We pack bags of clothing for prisoners at the Stewart Immigration Prison who are about to be deported, so they at least have something to wear and a bag in which to carry their few possessions. Prior to Covid, we also visited regularly and developed many friendships with the people locked up there.

It was on a visitation day in the Spring of 2018 that I met Lekealem Elvis. Visiting at the Stewart Immigration Prison is not to be taken lightly. You enter through two metal gates with razor wire along the top. After walking up a sidewalk bounded by a well-manicured yard, you enter the waiting room and wait and wait and wait. After your paperwork has been approved, your wallet and car keys (the only things you can bring into the prison), are put in a locker and, without your shoes or belt, you pass through a metal detector. If the alarm sounds, but you still want to visit, you must submit to a pat-down and perhaps even a strip search. Finally, a guard unlocks the door to the hallway, you are led to a visitation room, the guard unlocks that door, and there are five stalls for visitation. There are no contact visits, even though the

vast majority of people in prison at Stewart are not convicted criminals. Visitation happens through a thick plexiglass window and with a phone handset. Since the prison listens in on phone conversations, there is a lot of static.

Elvis is from Amba Land, the English-speaking part of Cameroon. I wish I were allowed a sufficient number of words in this article to tell you all of the things I learned from Elvis about Cameroon, but give me a call, and we can talk about that. Amba Land has been seeking its freedom from French Cameroon since the early part of this century. In 2017, Elvis took part in several peaceful protests, including a march which he led, carrying the flag of Amba Land. During that

march he was arrested, sent to prison and tortured. Borrowing money and scraping together all they could, Elvis' family was able to bribe his way out of prison. He ran away to the jungle and has been in hiding ever since. Shortly after Elvis ran away, French Cameroonian soldiers went to his carpentry shop. Elvis had an apprentice working for him. The soldiers beat him to death because he would not tell them where Elvis was, and then they burned down the shop. A few weeks later, Elvis' brother was attacked by the same soldiers and beaten to death.



Image courtesy of Lekealem Elvis

After nearly a year living in the jungle, another brother of Elvis managed to get Elvis out of Cameroon on a flight to Brazil. From there, he walked all the way to the Mexico/U.S. border. It took three months of horrible suffering, but he was finally able to present himself legally to the guards at the border crossing, to seek asylum. Although he has a brother, Paul, a U.S. citizen living in Houston, Texas, Elvis was immediately sent to prison. He was then given a Credible Fear Hearing. Did he have a legitimate reason to flee to the United States, or was he just seeking better economic opportunities (as if that's not legitimate)? It was found that he did have a reason to be afraid for his life, and you might think that he

would have been released to Paul, but instead he was sent to the Stewart Immigration Prison. That's where I met Elvis in 2018. As we spoke that first time through the staticky phone, I found that it took me a bit to get used to his West African English, but soon we began to meet each week, talk on the phone and write to each other.

Some 12 months after I first began to visit him, Elvis made the phone call we were dreading. He was denied asylum and lost his appeal. Paul had borrowed \$20,000 to pay an attorney who had no experience with immigration law and really offered no case at all. Elvis had given me all of his documents — the photos, the wanted posters with his picture,

Arrests at the border and sweeps in neighborhoods and workplaces that were known to harbor people without documents began to grow exponentially. ICE needed prison space. Suddenly, CCA had a taker for its prison in Stewart County.

his father's arrest and imprisonment — and I put a packet together. The attorney did not properly present the packet that we had developed. The judge, who deports 98% of the asylum seekers who come before him, put Elvis in "deportation" status. In a very short time, Elvis was deported, and none of us knew what would happen to him.

Then, after a time, Paul told me to get WhatsApp, and Elvis and I have been texting each other most days ever since. Sometimes we're even able to have a video chat. Elvis is still in hiding. He is unable to work, and hunger is rampant in Amba Land. He does tend a small garden and goes into the jungle to harvest fresh tropical fruit. In August 2021, Elvis and Mukem Rosemary Anwi were married in the local Presbyterian Church where they are members. My dad and I sent them a special gift so that they could have beautiful wedding garments.

Please pray for peace and freedom in Amba Land and for safety for Elvis, Rosemary and their daughter, Keisha. ✝

*Elizabeth Dede has been a member of Koinonia Farm for 15 years. She is the hospitality coordinator there. Prior to her membership at Koinonia, she worked at the Prison & Jail Project with John Cole Vodicka, and before that she was a Partner at the Open Door Community for 15 years.*

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# Resistance and Resilience

By John Cole Vodicka

Thanks to Abram Colby, I am now friends with Mamie Hillman. She and I first met last October 16 at the grand opening of her African American Museum in Greensboro, Georgia. I attended the day-long celebration hoping to learn more about Abram Colby.

This much I already knew: Abram Colby was a former Greene County person held in slavery who, after the Civil War in 1868, was elected as a Radical Republican to the Georgia House of Representatives.

On October 29, 1869, Colby was taken from his bed and savagely beaten in front of his family by armed members of the Ku Klux Klan. While he was being pistol-whipped, Colby refused to back down, telling his assailants, “If there was an election tomorrow, I would vote for the Radical ticket.”

In 1872, Colby testified before a Congressional committee investigating racial violence in the South. He described the white men who beat him — one was a lawyer, another a doctor, others prosperous farmers.

“They hit me with five thousand blows,” Colby told the committee. “My drawers fell down about my feet and they pulled my shirt up over my head. They said I had voted for Grant and had carried the Negroes against them.”

The Klansmen left Abram Colby for dead. He somehow survived, but was left with debilitating injuries, leaving him unable to work. “They broke something inside of me, and the doctor has been tending to me for more than a year,” he told the congressmen. “Sometimes I cannot get up and down off my bed, and my left hand is not much use to me.”

A few months after the beating, the KKK told Colby they would finish him off if he continued to live and organize in Greene County. On another night, Colby testified, “They peppered the house with shot and bullets.”

Fleeing Greene County with his family, Abram Colby did not seek reelection.

No one knows for sure when Abram Colby died, nor where he is buried. Mamie Hillman and I are determined to find out. We both believe that Colby’s life should be fully acknowledged, along with the stories of so many other African Americans who fought for human and civil rights in rural Greene County, Georgia.

Before I met Mamie Hillman, I had already spent a good amount of time exploring Greene County. The county was once part of Georgia’s Black Belt and is situated halfway between Atlanta and Augusta. Initially, I went into Greene County looking for lynch sites and the graves of lynch victims, but I quickly discovered that Greene County’s African American history was also one of resistance and resilience.

By 1870, there were twice as many African American residents of Greene County than there were whites — 8,156 to 4,298. Blacks became well-organized following the Civil War and were a potent force in local politics. Two radical Republicans, Abram Colby being one, were elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1868. In that same election, thanks to the Black vote, Republican Ulysses S. Grant won Greene County on his way to claiming America’s presidency, despite the fact that statewide he lost nearly two-to-one!

Fiery AME Bishop Henry McNeil Turner (one of the African Americans elected to the Georgia legislature in 1868) helped organize Greene County freedmen and their churches into what was known as the Equal Rights Association. All the

while, Bishop Turner dared the local KKK to stop him. (It was the provocative Bishop Turner who told the white religious establishment that Blacks had “every right to believe that God is a Negro.”)

Adam Daniel Williams, born in 1863, was the son of Willis Williams, a preacher held in slavery. The Williams family were members of Shiloh

Newspaper clippings and a copy of Abram Colby’s chilling congressional testimony are framed and now hang on the wall in one of those rooms.

“The museum is the first step in encapsulating the long-overlooked history of Black leaders in Greene County,” Hillman said. “I want this to be a sacred place to help my community feel ownership. I want the museum to be a resource for those hoping to learn about African American history and to commemorate forgotten Black leaders in Greene County. I want to give voice to those people, like Abram Colby, who came before me and to pass our history on to the children who come after me.”

W.E.B. Du Bois could have been describing today’s Greene County when he wrote in 1924, “Georgia is beautiful.

Yet on its beauty rests something disturbing and strange... something furtive. There lives a brooding on the land.”

When driving through present-day downtown Greensboro, a visitor can’t help but notice the quiet streets lined with Greek Revival-style homes restored to their antebellum beauty. Charming antique stores and curio shops await downtown shoppers. But you will also spot the two-story granite monument honoring dead Confederate soldiers. Erected in 1898 by the Women of Greene County, the edifice stands prominently on the courthouse lawn and reads, “In honor of the brave who fell defending the right of local government.” A little further down Main Street a historical marker is planted at the entrance to the United States Post Office. Titled “The Burning of Greens-

borough,” it reads in part, “During the early years of settlement Greensborough and Greene County suffered greatly from the depredations committed by Indians.” Still another historical marker stands in the whites-only city cemetery. It informs visitors “unknown Confederates” are buried there. Southern battle flags mark the graves.



Top left: Mamie Hillman

Photographs by John Cole Vodicka

Above: The African American Museum of Greensboro, Georgia

Baptist Church, located in the county’s Penfield community. Adam Daniel Williams was nine years old when his father, along with Abram Colby and Bishop Turner, was empowering Blacks in his community, holding meetings even while they were being terrorized by white vigilantes. Between August and September 1868, twelve Black men were report-

To Greene County African Americans, all this must be a stark reminder of an earlier brutal, segregated time, as well as a present-day confirmation that their community’s Black history has been erased, not recognized at all.

edly beaten and two killed in Penfield by white supremacists. The Klan burned the Freedpeople’s School to the ground. Later, Adam Daniel Williams would, like his father Willis, become a minister, and in 1893 was called as second pastor of Atlanta’s Ebenezer Baptist Church. Rev. “A.D.” Williams was Martin Luther King, Jr.’s grandfather.

“I’ve been pregnant with this museum for twenty-six years,” Mamie Hillman told me during one of my recent visits to Greensboro and the African American Museum. “I came to this house practically every week until I was finally able to birth it.” Ms. Hillman, who is 69 years old, purchased the old house in 1995. Built in 1924, it was the home of Dr. Calvin Melvin Baber. “He was Greensboro’s second Black doctor,” Ms. Hillman said. “The city was going to demolish it. We thought it should be placed on the National Historic Register.”

In the two and a half decades between the purchase of the building and the museum’s grand opening last fall, Mamie Hillman and her husband, John, were able to raise some money, make repairs to the building and accumulate items to be displayed in the museum’s half-dozen rooms.

To Greene County African Americans, all this must be a stark reminder of an earlier brutal, segregated time, as well as a present-day confirmation that their community’s Black history has been erased, not recognized at all.

Mamie Hillman and the Greene County African American Museum want to change all that. “It all goes back to when I was a child growing up in White Plains” (a small town in the southeast corner of Greene County), Mamie explained. “I always wanted to know how did I enter into history? My schools were segregated. I couldn’t use the public library. I didn’t really know the history of my own people. I didn’t know my people’s strength and fearlessness, their resilience. I want this museum to be a place of truth-telling and empowerment.” ♦

*John and Dee Cole Vodicka and sons were Resident Volunteers at the Open Door Community in 1985-86 and 1992-93. John founded and, for 15 years, directed the Prison & Jail Project in Americus, Georgia. Today he is an activist, writer and community organizer who lives in Athens, Georgia. (johnvodicka@comcast.net)*



# A Vision of Restored Abundance

Luke 5:1-11

By Ched Myers & Elaine Enns

*This sermon was shared at St. Michael's Episcopal University Church in Isla Vista, California, on February 6, 2022.*

In today's gospel (Fifth Sunday in Epiphany), Luke powerfully stitches together two traditions of memory: the miraculous catch of fish (also found at the end of John's gospel, Jn 21:1-14), and the call of fishermen (also found at the beginning of Mark, Mk 1:16-20). Let's look at both themes, each so important to the vocation of following Christ.

Jesus' encounter with workers on the shores of Lake Galilee is typically romanticized in our churches: Oh, how quaint, *fishermen!* But this trivializes a powerful, real-world scenario that communicates both defiance and delight, resistance and renewal.

Every story has a context, not least those in the Bible, which too many people read as if it took place in Disneyland! We know a *lot*, from both history and archaeology, about the scene depicted by Luke. Scholars have determined that the Sea of Galilee in the early first century C.E. was ground

zero for Rome's efforts to exploit and extract resources in the occupied territory of Palestine. When Jesus was a young adult, Tiberius had become Emperor in Rome after the death of Caesar Augustus, and the local Judean ruler Herod Antipas was building a city on the shores of Lake Galilee (naming it Tiberias in order to curry imperial favor). The primary function of this new administrative center was to regulate the fishing industry around the lake, the most prosperous segment of ancient Galilee's economy. A new wave of colonization had put the lake's fishery firmly under the control of Roman and Herodian elites, who restructured the industry for export markets. New state regulations benefitted the wealthy managerial class, while disenfranchising peasant boatmen.

Native fishermen, who had traditionally harvested these waters in a sustainable fashion for local consumption, were now required to buy fishing leases from the regime. The Herodians taxed them *and* controlled their markets in order to fund roads, harbors and factories. Processing plants (such as one at Magdala, where Mary was from) turned fish into salt preserve or sauce for export. Elites looked down on fishermen even as they depended upon their labor: one ancient papyrus called them "the most miserable of professions."

So, when Jesus of Nazareth showed up at the sea, as narrated in all four of our gospels, he was walking right into a distressed economic landscape — boom for a few, bust for most. Top-down strategies of economic and infrastructure development inevitably enrich the few and impoverish the many, as we still see in our world.

The ancient fishing village of Capernaum, just up the coast from Magdala and Tiberias, was profoundly impacted by Herodian policies. This made it a logical place for Jesus to commence building a movement of dissent, beginning with restless peasant fishermen who had little to lose and everything to gain by overturning the status quo. Like Gandhi's

mobilization of the "untouchable" classes in India in his 1930 Salt March to the sea or Martin Luther King's fateful decision to stand with the Memphis sanitation workers' strike in 1968, true change can only come from *below*.

Our gospel text depicts Jesus organizing a teach-in among these disgruntled workers. He borrows a boat from a crusty peasant named Simon, and pushes just offshore so he

He and his compañeros are amazed, but they are *also* paranoid. This subversive memory of abundance might animate a Messianic "uprising" against unjust resource over-extraction by the Romans. On the other hand, this copious catch would certainly be criminalized by the authorities as contraband, inspired by an itinerant preacher without a fishing license! So, should these hard-pressed peasants joyfully gather the illegal windfall, or run for the hills? You see, wildcat resource redistributions were, and still are today, *very* risky business.

Jesus understands their anxiety, and offers them something more powerful than a bumper harvest: a paradigm shift and an alternative vocation. "Do not be afraid," he says compassionately, then invokes hope: "From now on you will be catching *people*." (5:10) Rest assured, this trope is *not* some sort of Billy Graham-like summons to go door to door saving souls. Rather, Jesus is remembering the promises of his people's prophets that Creator demands justice from those who oppress the poor. Such as Jeremiah, who envisions Creator "sending for many fishermen" in order to *catch* the leaders of Israel "who have polluted the land . . ." (Jer 16:18) Or Amos, who warns the elites of Israel that Creator will "take them

away with fishhooks" to justice. (Amos 4:2) Or Ezekiel's rant against Egypt's Pharaoh: "Creator will put hooks in your jaws, and . . . pull you up from your rivers," along with the fish to which *you* claimed exclusive rights. (Ez 29:3-4)

For Jesus, who not only knew the prophetic literature, but sought to *embody* it anew in his context, this "fishers of people" idiom was a divine invitation to poor folk to join him in overturning structures of power and privilege in the world in order to restore both Creation *and* justice. In modern parlance, the rabbi was calling them "to help me catch some Big Fish." Indeed, Luke concludes his story by noting simply that those fishermen "dropped everything, and joined the movement." (5:11)

can use the water and beach as a natural amphitheater. (Lk 5:3) He concludes his analysis of their plight with an object lesson: instructing Simon to shove off into deep water and try casting one more time. (5:4) The boatman's response is poignant: "We worked through the night, but caught *nothing*," he laments bitterly. (5:5) His local waters were becoming fished out, depleted by industrialization — like diamond mines in Africa today, or rain forests in South America, or tar sands fields in Canada.

It's testimony to Simon's desperation that he follows the stranger's advice anyway. Then comes the moment of revelation: Suddenly there are "so many fish that their nets begin to break," and when hauled in they "filled both boats so that

Top-down strategies of economic and infrastructure development inevitably enrich the few and impoverish the many, as we still see in our world.

they began to sink." For this mystical-yet-material moment of hope, the abundance of creation had been restored, with a catch that might break their nets, but also the cycle of their poverty. Like Luke's later story of multitudes sharing bread in the wilderness, God provides enough for our *need*; just not for our *greed*, as Gandhi used to say.

These fishermen have been given a glimpse of how their waters *used* to be, before the artificial scarcity wrought by extractive colonization. Sociologist Avery Gordon, in her important book *Ghostly Matters*, talks about the animating power of lingering, ghostly presences of unresolved past and continuing violence among places and people. No wonder, then, that Simon's visceral response is one of shame: What empire does to Creation entangles us all in a "sinful" system. (5:8)

Our lands and waters, too, have been degraded by genocidal colonization, and the ecocide of industrial overdevelopment has destroyed so many of the homeplaces and cultures of Indigenous caretakers. It's a haunted history with which we settlers here *must* come to terms, as we explore in our recent *Healing Haunted Histories: A Settler Discipleship of Decolonization*. May we follow in the footsteps of those fishermen of old, and rededicate ourselves to following Jesus in our Creator's movement for restorative justice and abundance for all, right in our own watersheds. Amen! ✠

Ched Myers & Elaine Enns work with Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries ([www.bcm-net.org](http://www.bcm-net.org)) in the Ventura River Watershed on unceded Chumash land. ([chedmyers@bcm-net.org](mailto:chedmyers@bcm-net.org), [elaineenns@bcm-net.org](mailto:elaineenns@bcm-net.org))



Above is the late artist John August Swanson's beautiful rendering of this story. ([www.johnaugustswanson.com/default.cfm/PID%3D1.2.30.2.7.html](http://www.johnaugustswanson.com/default.cfm/PID%3D1.2.30.2.7.html)).



## Democracy: We Can't Take It for Granted in 2022 *continued from page 1*

growing political divisions in our society as a whole. These divisions became more visible and severe when Donald J. Trump emerged as a Republican presidential candidate for the 2016 election with the campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again.” He won. President Trump’s confrontational style, expressed proclivity for violence and lack of respect for established democratic norms shocked the nation. His open friendship with dictators who were previously considered enemies of democracy, support of a White Supremacy ideology and tolerance for racial discrimination exploded the existing political divisions into polarized camps of Americans. This was an intentional strategy used to undermine the democratic process.

President Trump’s expressed values became the revealed values of many Republicans. The leadership of the Republican Party has coalesced under the Make America Great Again (MAGA) agenda. They have created a MAGA movement which is openly opposed to a Just Multiracial Democracy. In the 2020 election the Democratic Party’s Candidate, Joe Biden, won. The former President has not yet acknowledged this win, thus there’s been no peaceful transfer of power to President Joe Biden. The MAGA Republicans claim that the election was stolen even though all official election sources of both parties say that the election was fair and just. The MAGA members are experts at publicly spreading *lies, disinformation and conspiracy stories*, which keep people confused and unable to recognize true facts. These are

major weapons used to dismantle democracy.

Voter suppression and the changing of election rules for partisan advantages are also weapons against democracy. In at least 11 states, MAGA Republicans are passing laws under the pretext of decreasing voter fraud. These laws make voting harder for people of color, young people, seniors and those who have mobility disadvantages. The laws also allow MAGA Republicans to change the election results when those results do not match their expectations. At the same time, MAGA leaders are promoting the belief among their supporters that voting does not work, thus there is no need for elections in America. Voter suppression and dismantling elections are deathblows to Democracy.

We can applaud, celebrate and support the actions of protest, advocacy and other forms of resistance that many Americans throughout history and today faithfully exercise to make this country a better place for all of us. Every privilege we enjoy has been fought for by people who make a sacrifice. These people are ordinary citizens and elected leaders, young and old from every race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. They work long and hard to make our Democracy better serve a multiracial society with equity. All of us owe them our prayers, gratitude and financial support.

The November mid-term elections this year are critical for the fate of Democracy at the local, state and national levels of our government. Democracy is the major issue on the ballot. All who value our American Democracy and see the

danger of losing it must work harder to save it and continue to make it better. This work requires prayerful discernment, commitment to justice for all and dedication to act from such values as truth, love, kindness and goodness.

We can join some of the groups that are actively working on such issues as voter preparation and education, voting rights, fair elections and legislation that strengthens Democracy. We can create small group coalitions around a shared goal of electing candidates who support Democracy. Individually we can work to heighten the awareness of family and friends who may not be aware of the significance of the dangers by sharing information from trustworthy sources. We cannot be silent. We must use our gifts to stay informed, act to support our values and inform others while respecting those who disagree with us.

I believe that most people want a society that values truth, justice and love for everyone. Our vote must reflect our values for a Just Multiracial Democracy. We must not be distracted by candidates who will appeal to our pocketbooks around economic issues and other hot topics, but vote for the ones who best support our prayers for justice and equality for all. ✠

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## White South Rising *continued from page 1*

denied that people classified as “Black” were human beings at all. Even after the death of over 700,000 people in the Civil War to end slavery, the White South made its comeback to re-establish slavery as “Jim Crow,” or as it should be known, “neo-slavery.”

The White South tenaciously held on to neo-slavery until the Voting Rights Act dealt it a severe blow in 1965. The White South was not eradicated in 1965, as many of us thought that it might be. It has been biding its time and once again establishing its rootedness in American culture. The White South is rising again. When I use “White South,” I do not mean it as a geographical term, although its base is in the old Confederacy. “White South” describes a spiritual force that is taking hold in all parts of the country, a phenomenon that believes in white male supremacy and seeks to enforce it, all the while keeping an eye on the demographics. My state of Georgia has passed many laws intended to limit the opportunity for voting, with the knowledge that the demographics are pushing us quickly to the time when there will be no majority “racial” category in the state or in the country. Eighteen other states have passed such laws, and obviously these are not all in the South. The voice of the White South spoke in the SCOTUS decision *Shelby v. Holder* in 2013, which gutted a key portion of the Voting Rights Act. The White South spoke in the presidential elections of Richard Nixon with his Southern strategy, of Ronald Reagan with his distrust of government, of Bill Clinton with his welfare reform and stronger prison terms, of George W. Bush with his “Don’t Mess with Texas” approach and of course of Donald Trump with his overt emphasis on white supremacy.

One main difference so far in the current rise of the White South is that most of the vigilante violence — violence that made the “Mississippi Plan” of the 1880s and 1890s so horrible and powerful — has not been re-ratified YET. The guilty verdicts in a south Georgia courtroom for the killers of Ahmaud Arbery tell us at this point that some vigilante violence will be punished. We know, however, that many more such acts of violence go unpunished and even



Leah Millis / RUETERS

The White South violence on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, reminds us that the life of the White South pulses through us as a people, and that we can never assume that it is over and vanquished.

unacknowledged by the majority “white” culture. We also know that violent acts against people of Asian descent are on the rise. Even in the midst of these whirlwinds, police violence against Black and Brown people continues to be tolerated.

The pressures are rising. The White South violence on the Capitol on January 6, 2021, reminds us that the life of the White South pulses through us as a people, and that we can never assume that it is over and vanquished. The election of Donald Trump was a clarion call to the White South raiders, and whether Trump runs in 2024 or not, the White South has heard the call and is responding, seeking to repress and suppress all those who stand against it — people of color and white allies.

What can those of us who believe in the idea of equality do? There are several steps that stand out. First is recognition — recognize that the White South is rising and that this rise is not an aberration but rather is part of the DNA of American

culture. Remind everyone you meet of this fact.

Second, testify and contact your representatives in state legislatures (like mine) that are considering banning the teaching of this kind of American history, banning what they are calling “critical race theory.” Such a ban would mean that no school can teach what you have read in this article.

Third, your voice and presence are essential. Show up to demonstrations; raise your voice and put your feet on the ground in places where the White South is rising. Show up to legislative hearings. Spread the word to neighbors, friends and colleagues about the rise of the White South. To paraphrase Faulkner’s famous quote from *Sanctuary*: “The White South is never dead — it’s not even the past.”

Fourth, donate money and time and energy to grass

roots progressive organizations, especially those controlled by Black and Brown people. Let us make ourselves “repairers of the breach and restorers of the streets,” to use those great metaphors from Isaiah 58.

Fifth, remember that currently this is fundamentally about voting, so register yourself to vote and make sure that you find ten people who are not registered to vote and get them to register and to vote. The elections of 2022 are fundamental in determining the trajectory of this rise of the White South. If their candidates win, there may not be many more viable elections. ✠

*Nibs Stroupe is a longtime friend of the Open Door; retired pastor and author of Deeper Waters: Sermons for a New Vision. He and Catherine Meeks are authors of Passionate for Justice, a book about the life and witness of Ida B. Wells for our time. He writes a weekly blog at [www.nibsnotes.blogspot.com](http://www.nibsnotes.blogspot.com). ([nibs.stroupe@gmail.com](mailto:nibs.stroupe@gmail.com))*



# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Ed,

I hope this letter finds you and David in the best of health, you two are always in my thoughts and prayers and may God continue to bless the both of you. I got my *Hospitality* and the money this week, and I thank you and the community for all the love and support over the years. I really do appreciate it, it really means a lot, you and Murphy have been like family to me especially during those dark days when I was on death row. Your love and support really helped me through those dark days. And after I got off death row y'all stayed in my corner and until this day y'all still continue to be there for me and for that I will always be grateful.

Anyway, I read Lee's article on Gladys passing. Wow, I was blown away to read that her and Dick were married for 63 years, man, that's love for you. She was a very educated woman and could easily had a career in teaching like you and Murphy. Her calling in life was to serve others. She saw that there was a big need in this country for that, people are really hurting and she were very passionate about helping the homeless. May she rest in peace.

Before I forget, Lee got me a lawyer from the Southern Center for Human Rights, his name is Patrick Mulvaney and he wants to schedule a call with me soon. It doesn't seem like the Parole Board want to give me a break, it would be nice if he could get my case back in court. When the Parole Board commuted my death sentence back in '94, did that mean I could not appeal my case? I don't know because I never had a lawyer to take my case after it was commuted in '94 to 25 to life.

I read your article on The Welcome Pantry. I got a chance to see y'all house in this issue and seeing how y'all have the Pantry in front of the house which I know is the reason for y'all putting it out in front of the house is because of the pandemic. From just looking at the house and the house next to y'all, it looks like y'all live in a nice quiet neighborhood. Seem way more quieter than Ponce De Leon, where it was way more traffic and where you have more traffic you are going to have a lotta noise. So, my question is, where y'all living in a nice quiet neighborhood, do homeless people come to get stuff out of the Pantry? I know that is who the pantry is for (the homeless). Y'all have homeless people living in the neighborhood? Or, is there a nearby homeless encampment near the neighborhood? How will the homeless know you have a pantry out in front of the house, how did you get the word out to them?

Well, Ed, this just about does it for me, just want to let you and David know I love y'all and I wish I was somewhere on the lake fishing, I love fishing!

God Bless! Take Care!

Happy Black History Month!

Love,  
Eli  
Prisoner, Georgia

Dear Ed,

It's been over a year now since Murphy died. I should have written much sooner. I'm sorry.

I know how close you and Murphy were, and I hope you are doing okay. I'm so glad Hannah is nearby and you can be with her.

Murphy was remarkable — faithful to the gospel, a real disciple. That goes without saying. I read Joyce's eulogy, and I cannot say it any better. Murphy was one of my teachers while I was a professor. I learned so much from her.

I still remember celebrating the Lord's Supper with the two of you in your apartment during one of her early bouts of cancer. That remains an unforgettable and formative experience for me. I will also never forget a remark Murphy made to me about John Howard Yoder. We were having dinner together following the revelations of Yoder's abusive behavior. I commented that I couldn't recommend Yoder to women anymore. She, of course, replied, "Why would you recommend him to men?" I haven't used Yoder since. Finally, I have often told classes about Murphy's ringing a bell at Columbia when professors used masculine language, as well as about the time she wore a mini-skirt and men's black socks to preach in (Wade had apparently told the students to wear dark socks). I trust these stories that have come down to me are true. But, anyway, they certainly capture Murphy's spirit. I am deeply grateful for her witness and for the time we spent together.

I also want to thank you. I'm retired now, and I've been "ruminating on life's mysteries," to borrow a phrase from Daniel Berrigan (quoted in Bill Wylie Kellermann's new book). I am deeply thankful for the six years we spent together at the Open Door and especially on the streets. You too were my teacher. The experiences and reflections we shared were formative in my life. You taught me to see the world differently, to discern God's activity in new ways. I still remember a question you posed to the first class I brought to the Open Door. We were sitting in the front yard and you asked, "Why are all of you at Columbia Seminary and not these people?" as you pointed around to the homeless people standing in the yard. I believe, hope, that this perspective has stayed with me throughout the years and shaped my teaching. I am, by the way, also currently reading back through all of Stringfellow, to whom you introduced me. For twenty-five years I used his *Ethics* in preaching classes, so I'm grateful for the introduction. In short, thank you for the mystery of our shared life in Atlanta. We were an odd couple. But, of course, the gospel is foolish and odd.

I'm sure you are still resisting the powers of death. I hope you are also finding some sabbath rest at this point in your life. Take care.

The unsettling peace of Christ be with you,  
Chuck Campbell  
Durham, North Carolina

**HOSPITALITY Prays**

*Prayer is the heart of a genuine Christian radicalism.*  
— Ron Ferguson

## A PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION

By Lee Carroll

O ever-present Friend, again and again,  
You astound us with your generosity.  
Yet, far too often we fear that we won't have  
what it takes to be safe or satisfied.  
Please purge such fear from us!

Transform our *despair* ...  
into assurance of your presence  
and your love.  
Transform our *anxiety* ...  
into the joy of your peace; and  
Transform our *greed* ...  
into compassion and justice for *all*.

O generous God, inspire us  
to *love* You and all humanity,  
just as You have loved us.

Amidst the clouds of chaos,  
confusion and war,  
let us discern *your* way.  
Amidst our woundedness,  
let us experience *your* healing.  
And amidst so many voices  
vying for our attention,  
let us hear *your* voice.

Transform us in our walk with You,  
that we shall gladly and courageously  
go wherever you lead us.  
And may all humanity be transformed,  
so that all are forever thankful  
for your compassion and generosity,  
so that all embody your justice and peace  
in the world that you dearly love.

*Lee Carroll is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Associate Professor Emeritus of Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia. He is the current chair of the Board of Directors of the Open Door Community. (lcarroll@ix.netcom.com)*

## The Box

Compiled by Ed Loring

**Paul and Jesus**

To make the same point differently, people like Jesus and Paul were not executed for saying, "Love one another." They were killed because their understanding of love meant more than being compassionate toward individuals, although it did include that. It also meant standing against the domination systems that ruled their world, and collaborating with the Spirit in the creation of a new way of life that stood in contrast to the normalcy of the wisdom of the world. Love and justice go together. Justice without love can be brutal, and love without justice can be banal. Love is the heart of justice, and justice is the social form of love.

Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 26, 138, 204–205.

— From "Daily Meditation" by Richard Rohr

### Welcome Pantry Needs:

- ☐ Pop Tarts
- ☐ Single Serve Oatmeal Packets
- ☐ Assorted Small Cereal Boxes
- ☐ Pretzels
- ☐ Crackers
- ☐ Granola Bars
- ☐ Baby Wipes
- ☐ Travel Tissue Packs
- ☐ Canned Goods, Small OJ Bottles, Shelf Stable Milk

We have an Amazon Wish List: [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1Q9TWJ0HZPJAX?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1Q9TWJ0HZPJAX?ref_=wl_share)

