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

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November-December 2008

Good Grief Living With Loss in the Struggle for Justice (*Part 2*)

By **Murphy Davis**

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles based on a talk Murphy gave to a group of about 200 anti-death penalty lawyers at a conference hosted by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

September 1, 1939

By W.H. Auden

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

If we stay with the fight against the death penalty long enough, it will unmask the lie of the American system. The use of executions and the process of death sentencing bring us to the crossroad of a moral midnight. And neither science, technology nor technique can help us here. This crisis is a matter of the heart: each of our hearts and our collective heart.

Immersing ourselves in the lives and legal purgatory, the legal hell, of our folks on death row is a place — a vantage point from which we see the truth about the United States of America. This is a place of dis-illusionment in which we come to know that the promises of democracy and fairness are true and real only for a certain few who have the power and resources to purchase them. For the poor, and especially for the poor who are people of color, democracy and democratic process are a sham; fairness is a lie; equality is an illusion.

Earlier in this conference we heard Brian Stevenson and Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt explain in excruciating detail the reality of how repeated instances and patterns of racial injury cause psychic harm. This is something we certainly know, because we experience it so clearly in our work. But sitting together and hearing it laid out with such precision and clarity was horrifying.

This is a truth we experience on the streets of Atlanta every day as well. Being present to the interaction between the police and our African-American homeless friends teaches us harsh truths about the functions of race and poverty among us.



We Shall Not Be Moved

Robert Hodgell

Many of us have heard Dick Burr say that our folks on death row are like the canaries in the coal mine. They are not some *other*; some aliens or group of sub-humans that we can put aside and believe they are not us; they *are* us, and what is happening to them and how they are being treated and prepared for execution is a warning. We can take it or leave it.

The Hebrew prophets of the eighth century said over and over and in many different ways that if you want to understand a society and its practice of justice and fairness, look at how the poor are treated in court. Start with the entire fifth chapter of the prophet Amos and go from there. It's hard truth when you take it seriously and apply it to what's going on around us.

In John's Gospel, Jesus says, "You shall know the truth and it will make you free." An organizer somewhere

Who Sees the Cross at Christmas?

By **Roger Cooper**

November 1963

Who sees the cross at Christmas?

For there is more to see:

The decorated houses — mausoleums of modern men.

A measure of prosperity and pride,
Rigid reindeer and stuck sleighs ride the roofs,
Gutters glare with fiery beads from edge to edge,
All is safe, until the lights go out.
Cut-out cardboard figures set in place by cardboard men,
Empty plastic Santa Clauses installed by empty men,
Buy bulbs and burn!
Electric companies rejoice,
Their meters spin to measure faith's impersonal price,
Their glare interpreted to children,
"So that Santa knows the way."
(God knows the way; he came through the glitter once before
— with tears.)

Feed your stereo sound system the songs you cannot sing,
Your true religious act.
The trees and grass must learn your state of mind.
It's important that the clouds reverberate
(For we all hear, have heard, and understand
The lie you don't yourself believe).
Make the trees shake,
The clouds bounce,
The grass chatter,
Make the dust move.
It won't point its accusing finger at you
Until it opens for you as a grave.

Who cannot see the cross at Christmas.

††

The mixed myths — the matrix of modern man.

The little child was laid in straw,
Along with plastic tommy guns.
Three wise men moved in from the East,
To seduce with perfume Eve on Christmas.
Dumb animals shared the Savior's stall,
While visions of sugarplums danced in their heads.
Shepherds watched their flocks by night,

Good Grief, continued on page 8

Who Sees the Cross, continued on page 9

Acting as Jesus Acted: Every Church a Peace Church

By Donald P. Edwards

Editor's note: Don Edwards is an Atlanta attorney, a member of the Open Door Community Advisory Board and vice president of ECAPC Inc. He produces and hosts "Every Church a Peace Church TV," seen at 7:30 p.m. Mondays and 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays on the Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasters Channel (Comcast Channels 5 and 239). For more information go to www.ecapc.org, or to see Don's 2005 interview with Eduard Loring and Murphy Davis about the Open Door, go to www.ecapc.org/media/video/ECAPC_037.wmv.

Peace. It's a word with many different meanings and measurements.

Peace can be felt, like a warm soaking bath with a touch of oil of lavender, carefully placed orange blossom-scented candles in the dark and quiet of a night, all the while listening to the sounds of Terence Blanchard as he cries through his trumpet of Katrina's sorrow, or perhaps the deep sonorous voice of Sarah Vaughn calling to "Send in the clowns.... Well, maybe next year."

**We boldly say now,
"NO WAR!
NO MORE!"
is the right and
righteous path.**

Peace can be a busy day when everything goes just as you prayed it would. Peace can be *in the still of the night* with tears on your pillow when it doesn't. Peace can mean simply quiet, as in "peace and quiet." Peace can be as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described it: "not the end of war, but the

presence of justice." Peace can mean just being left alone, or it can mean the conjoining of friends and family, recalling mostly the good times and forgiving most of the bad.

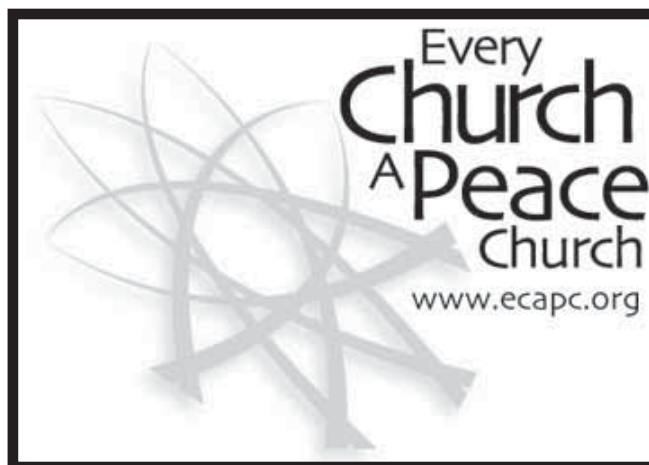
Is peace measured by how we feel when we smell the approaching spring, the sight of a soaring hawk, the taste of rhubarb pie, the coming of warming nights with comforting breezes bearing the freshness of new grass and blooming jasmine?

In the church, how do we, how do *you*, define peace? Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my own peace I give you; not as the world gives, I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid." (John 14:27, Lamsa's Aramaic Translation.) Do we accept this gift? He said that those who make peace are the blessed of the Creator. Are we comfortable with where we are, and wait for the peace to come to us, or do we do what Jesus did for peace: to teach and act forgiveness, to love above all others those whom we would call our "enemies"?

Where does our needle point on the *sacrifice meter*? Are we able to come close to His sacrifice and the sacrifice of those who followed Him, like martyrs Stephen and Penelope and thousands of others? Are we, as individuals and citizens of planet Earth, along that path, or not? Are we at least heading toward the correct path, the path of peace and love that in our human existence will still fail to fully understand love's true depth and strength? Are we ready and able to walk as Jesus walked, with courage and patience and sacrifice, bearing gifts of healing love that He said we too have within? Where are we as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of Jesus? Peace brings as many questions as it

does meanings.

The brothers and sisters of Every Church a Peace Church are a national organization of good-hearted humans who seek the peace that Jesus taught and acted, that same peace that encouraged Martin and all the martyrs who struggled, were wounded and died along the path of justice-seeking and peacemaking. Most of us have triumphed from that struggle of our ancestral heroes



and sheroes. Success in battles against the injustice of slavery, the greed that inspired the use of child labor, and many of the limitations on the role of women, and indeed all of us in our humanity: all of these struggles required faith and courageous action (James 2:14-18).

Yet battles that have been won do not mean that the war against war itself has been won. This is all too obvious and all too shameful, for we have had more than a million years to fulfill God's plan to be in unity and harmony with the universe. And yet we still fall short because of our greed, our ignorance and our fear; we fail to love without conditions or expectations.

Every Church a Peace Church, along with other organizations and individuals who work for peace, calls out that it is past time we acted as Jesus acted and taught. Our motto — "The church could turn the world

towards peace, if the church lived and taught as Jesus lived and taught" — is grounded upon the truth that the true fulfillment of the gift of humanity seeks Jesus' messages and examples as the way to peace. A way along a path of forgiveness, reconciliation and, the greatest truth, to love. Not a sentimental Luther Vandross type of love, but a daring kind of love that our nation has never embraced. Any advance has been only in halting, reluctant steps in response to the history of the sacrifices of others that demand a nation and people more just and more loving.

ECAPC is committed to the type of peace lived out by Jesus. All too many Christians and churches fear the sacrifice that rises to the level of the type of love Jesus commanded us (His only commandment): "that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34) and to "Love your enemies, bless anyone who curses you, do good to anyone who hates you, and pray for those who carry you away by force and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). This is the goal that ECAPC elevates — a *generational task* that must continue from the line of saints who reflected that love in the past and that we must live out in the present and project into our future.

It is humanly possible to be in that LOVE, and the church and its pastors, bishops, elders, priests, acolytes, monks and nuns who are called as Jesus was called, to be the shepherd with a staff to guide us to the meadow of universal peace, harmony, prosperity and love. We all should (must) accept that challenge as the flock accepts the gentle guidance of a caring and protective shepherd. I repeat, this is a generational task, but we boldly say now that "NO WAR! NO MORE!" is the right and righteous path. Join us as we walk it together. ✚

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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Calvin Kimbrough

A prayer circle at the Festival of Shelters 2008.

Newspaper

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School of the Americas No Torture or Murder in Our Name!

By Brother Aelred Dean

Editor's note: Aelred Dean is a member of the Episcopal Brotherhood of St. Gregory and a volunteer at the Open Door. The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation at Fort Benning, formerly the School of the Americas, is the subject of large protests every November. For more information, go to www.soaw.org.

I have never met Maria Delores Amaya Carlos. Until November 18, 2007, I didn't even know that this young girl existed, in El Salvador where she laughed, played, cried, went to school and had a family that loved her. I can imagine her home filled with the scents of *plátanos fritos*, *pollo encebollado*, *pupusas*, *tamales de elote* and *flan de leche*.

All these images of young Maria fill my imagination, but there is one fact that I know about her: at age 5 she was murdered by soldiers who were trained at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia.

My being present
is how I work out
my salvation
as I live out in my life
what I confess
with my mouth.

The School of the Americas, now renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, is a combat training school for Latin American soldiers in "counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, military intelligence and interrogation tactics." These graduates have consistently used their skills to wage war against their own people. Among those targeted by SOA graduates are educators, union organizers, religious workers, student leaders and others who work for the rights of the poor. Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been tortured, raped, assassinated, "disappeared," massacred or forced to become refugees by those trained at the "School of Assassins."

In a protest against the school, 25,000 men, women and children marched again last November in solidarity outside Fort Benning; not only for Maria Delores Amaya Carlos, but for the thousands of others who have been murdered by SOA graduates. The name of each assassinated person was read. After the reading of each name, those gathered chanted the Spanish word "*presente*," so that those who were killed by their states aren't forgotten but are remembered and brought present as a great cloud of witness against the school.

I can imagine much about Maria, but I cannot imagine how a 5-year-old girl, or anyone at any age, could be such a threat to the security of a nation that they must be murdered in cold blood. I cannot imagine how those who work for the poor and marginalized could be such a threat to the

powerful and wealthy that they feel they must silence those voices. I cannot make sense of such actions or of how the United States is training others to murder in the name of their governments.

As a Christian, I ask myself what should be my response to such actions, what I can do and whether there is any hope against such atrocities.

I read in Isaiah 1:16-7: "Go home and wash up. Clean up your act. Sweep your lives clean of your evildeings so I [God] don't have to look at them any longer. Say no to wrong. Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down and out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless."

Or in Isaiah 58:6-9: "This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The God of glory will secure your passage. Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'"

And finally, Matthew 25:34-40: "Then the Leader will say to those on his right, 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Mother/Father! Take what's coming to you in this kin-dom. It's been ready for you since the world's foundation. And here's why: I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then those 'sheep' are going to say, 'Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?' Then the Leader will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me — you did it to me.'"

Back in the 1980s, in the early years of the AIDS epidemic, a group called ACT-UP used the slogan "Silence = Death." As a lay brother, I know that I cannot remain silent while others are being tortured and murdered. Also I know that it is not my actions that will shed light on the evils done in our name, but I am only a humble messenger for the One who is the light so that through his light transformation can take place. I need to stand in solidarity with God and the people as I participate in God's continued work of reconciliation.

I know that I cannot change the world, but I can be "presente" for others, I can be "presente" to remember the Maria Delores Amaya Carloses of this world, so that her life, and the lives of countless others, aren't forgotten and erased by powers and principalities. I can be "presente" to be a messenger of the One who is the light. My being present is how I work out my salvation as I live out in my life what I confess with my mouth. I hope you can come too on November 23.

Thank you, Maria Delores Amaya Carlos, for teaching me what I should be doing with my life by your death. ✠

School of the Americas Watch

November 21-23, 2008



Ted Stein | www.ResistanceMedia.org

Converge on Fort Benning, Georgia

Human Rights Defenders from across the Americas will gather at the gates of Fort Benning to speak out for justice, dignity and reconciliation.

www.soaw.org



Linda Panetta | www.soawne.org

SOA Watch Benefit Concert Thursday November 20, 2008 7:30 PM

featuring
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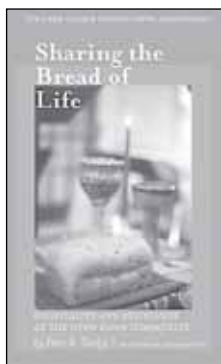


The Open Door Community Press Books

The Festival of Shelters A Celebration for Love and Justice

By **Eduard Loring**
with Heather Barger
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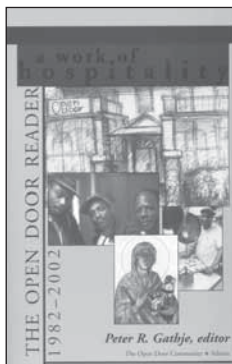
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I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door Writings from Hospitality

By **Eduard Loring**

Foreword by Rev. Timothy McDonald III

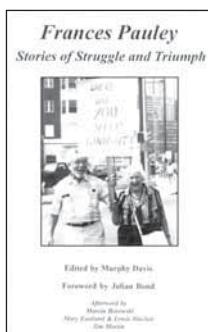
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From Inside the Belly of the Beast

By **Anonymous**

Editor's note: The author works in a women's prison in Georgia. Her identity is being withheld for her protection.

The first time I set foot in a prison was with a Zen meditation group for a day-long session. During one of the breaks, I led a short relaxation exercise. We took time to share experiences. I met the prisoners as human beings. Later that evening at some social function in the outside world, something had shifted inside for me; my former perspective would remain forever tilted. Prison consciousness had awakened, like a window to the inside.

Life on the inside is a lot like life on the outside except that the problems are multiplied by a thousand.

Years later, after I fell into the trap of taking student loans for a graduate degree, I stumbled across an ad for a job in a prison. My heart leapt. My head said, "Oh, no, you don't!" My heart said, "But I must!" My head agreed, "Just this once, just to see what this is all about." What a life-changing move it was, choosing to go to work in prison.

I have now worked for several years in a women's prison in Georgia. What can be said about what has taken place for me there, emotionally, professionally and spiritually?

What *can't* be said? Working there has kicked my ass inside out. It has worn me down to a nub at times, wondering how I can continue to cash checks coming from such a rotten system. The Work that I do there has lifted me higher, and on a more regular basis, than just about any other activity I know.

I would give away my anonymity if I mentioned what I teach — my chosen passion — inside. Suffice it to say that, like many of the chaplains, I trudge through a lot of bureaucratic muck in order to bring my particular version of light to the darkness, to create a temporary haven of peace amidst the chaos, to offer a helping hand should anyone be in the mood and have the ability to grasp it.

Anyone who knows me has heard me say that my job in prison is terrible, but the Work is amazing. Knowing that a lawsuit the inmates won for themselves in order to have more civilians working among them (chaplains and mental health staff) helps me to tolerate the intolerable. Often I feel like a witness to life inside a concentration camp. (No one is getting routinely lined up and shot, but that may be the only real difference I can think of.) I look at the rows of women in brown and I see the Brave New World marching closer to us with every step of their cheap black boots on the hard concrete walk.

Swimming Upstream

Life on the inside is a lot like life on the outside except that the problems are multiplied by a thousand. That is my best estimate. There is tremendous, ineluctable stress, which leads to illness both physical and mental. There is trauma — 25 percent of women in our society have been sexually abused, and that number jumps to 80 percent in prison. A history of trauma leads directly to drug abuse and addiction, which in turn lead to a host of other problems.

All are housed within the basic conditions of prison life: six women to an ugly concrete room with a metal toilet sticking out of the wall in the middle of it all, with no barrier of any kind for privacy. There are chemical smells from the endless floor maintenance that seems a much higher priority than anything else. There are thin mattresses, small

lockers, everyone ripped away from family, and very wrong food fueling all of this — a diet that will greatly increase the chances of ending up with diabetes or a host of other ailments. Insult upon injury as far as the eye can see.

As if seeing all that — and more that I could go on and on about! — was not draining enough for a compassionate corrections worker, there is a *very* thick layer of staff politics to overcome. There is cliquishness, back-stabbing, meanness and a heavy dose of ineptitude. Apparently the state is unwilling or unable to get rid of those who do a bad job, preferring instead to promote them. An inordinate number of power- and control-oriented human beings have embraced careers in corrections.

And then there are a number of workers who mean well, who see their work as a calling. But the tide is definitely against them, and I have often wondered, "How long can a person swim upstream?" When one must swim upstream all day every day, it is truly exhausting. My friends wonder why I am tired all the time. Why I don't go out. Why I get home and want to stay there and do whatever magic incantations are needed to detox from such an environment, enough to keep choosing to go back in.



Ade Bethune

Turning the Tide

But somehow, I keep being given the strength. Often I am recharged by the Work itself, the blessed moments where souls meet and spirits are lifted. I get to bear witness to women meeting themselves where they are and growing from there. I have seen, and so I can offer my experience to those in the midst of the struggle ("In the valley of the shadow..."), that true spiritual growth is possible inside prison, even probable if one is open to it, even given all the odds, or perhaps because of them.

I have heard great teachers say that enlightenment is possible anywhere, at any time, in all circumstances, for everyone. And I believe this to be true.

And at least part of how this takes place is to keep an open heart. To love ourselves and have our self-care skills well-tuned enough to keep us going, whether inside or outside the walls. We all need a great deal of support and nurturance while swimming upstream — doing the Work. When we do band together in community, the tide runs, however briefly, a little bit more in the direction we are heading.

I am so grateful to the ones who are making the effort to evolve within and toward the Beloved Community. It is so needed. And I pray that we all get there. In the words of the immortal Leonard Cohen: "Every heart to love will come, but like a refugee... Ring the bells that still can ring. Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

To all of the Open Door Community, I pray that we keep ringing each and every day in all the ways we can, in ways that are good for our total well-being and ongoing learning, growing, evolving, becoming! ✦

The Cry of the Poor

Cracking White Male Supremacy –

An Incendiary and Militant Proposal (Part 4)

By Eduard Loring

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of articles based on a lecture Eduard gave at Stetson University in March 2006 as part of the Howard Thurman Lecture Series.

The white man cometh: gold, land, forced labor, quick sex. The white man cometh, but he goeth not away.

The first encounter is white on Red. Kill them all, like Hitler and the Jews: a “final solution” winding westward toward the Pacific coast. Kill all the buffalo. The *Homo Americanus* will starve. Toward the end, 1890, rich white men would go on buffalo shoots riding railroad cars traveling west at 35 mph.

*Buffalo Bill's
defunct*

*who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver*

*stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive
pigeonsjustlikethat*

Jesus

he was a handsome man

*and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death
(e.e. cummings, 1923)*

They did it “just for fun.” And to exterminate the Native Americans. (Do you know what these rich white men called our Amerindian sisters and brothers? Well, I’m not going to put such racist, rich-boy abominations in this essay.) “Just for fun” – for in the end entertainment is all that is left for the hollow men and the snickering women who follow their lead. Buffalo left to rot and stink while the vultures clacked their bony beaks.

So the Native Americans began to dance; and dance they did. They believed and hoped for a resurrection, like first-century Christians waiting for Jesus to come again. They danced for their ancestors. They danced for the buffalo. They danced for their children. They danced for the white man to go to the unhappy hunting ground.

But it was the Ghost Dancer who fell to the ground. The last breath breathed. The American Indians were all but destroyed by White Male Supremacy. Gone were the braves from their home. Dead were they to the struggle for inclusion in the life of the nation. But the Red Ones lived on entertaining palefaces and, often, Blacks as well. Now they lived like warriors in cowboy movies, and human oddities at state fairs and White House affairs.

At their end they became gamblers in

their own casinos. Here people with money, who have lost the basic human gift of caring for others, come to throw away their money while on the side streets children go hungry and unemployment runs over 50 percent. Gambling like all capitalists do, finally the Native Americans themselves gave up their truth for the power of the greenback dollar bill. Though Red, they dreamed white. Those who survived the last Ghost Dance, who survived the FBI’s murder of Sitting Bull, were placed in concentration camps euphemistically rendered “reservations.”

Dead Men Walking

When the tribes’ power and resistance were almost obsolete, the U.S. Constitution, written by 55 land-owning white men, was amended to extend the vote to people of all races, but even then it took many decades before Amerindians were actually allowed to vote in all states.

Indian suffrage was a goal of the Progressive Movement. My grandfather, Harold Amasa Loring Sr., a member of the Indian Rights Movement, was such a suffragist. He worked with and lived among the Indians as the 19th century gave way to the 20th. He recorded and wrote out the notes of Native American music while living on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota.

These, too, hit the hard ground in utter consternation. They began to call white men “devils.” This new name began flowing eastward toward Harlem, New York, and Sandersville, Georgia (birthplace of Elijah Muhammad). Sandersville is not too far from Pin Point, Georgia, where in 1948 U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was born: all Black on the outside, all White Male Supremacist on the inside.

Years earlier, before the Iron Horse ran over 10,000 Chinese bodies, loved for labor, hated for being, the white man used biological warfare to kill Native American women, children and men. For gold, land and gewgaws, blankets contaminated with smallpox germs were traded, white to Red. This pox was not small. It killed and killed while the white man laughed, and the guffaws fell to the ground like vomit through the fingers of the morning after the big kill. Entertainment, like a pre-computer video game. And treaties too: pure, absolute, even limpid lies defined the pursuit of power and truth with truth dead by 1813 and Andrew Jackson loose in the South.

More than a century later, the recapitulation came from the deformed heart which had learned that killing is the means to having and killing is the means to white power. The government took the lesson from the success of smallpox germs in

blankets and dropped the atomic bomb on Yellow people. Many white people, even unto today, call it, as Yahweh-Elohim names creation, “good.”

From the atomic bomb, consumer capitalism mushroomed upon the shores of the United States, spreading like a buffalo stampede north and south, east and west. Suddenly the veil was lifted and white emptiness and moral vacuity shone like the noonday sun to all with dark glasses to see. Everything, everyone, everywhere, everytime is for sale. Love, medical care, housing, food and justice are commodities, available only to those with cash or a line of credit. In the meantime, we whites are dying with a whimper inside and big bombs over Iraq outside. For our children, the most popular major at the university is business, with a preferential option in marketing.

*Gimme, Gimme, Gimme what you got
Don't really matter if it's a little or a lot
Gimme a dollar
Gimme a dime
Gimme your house
Gimme your time.*

*All we want is what you got
We don't really care, but
We hope it's a lot.*

*Gimme, Gimme, Gimme what you got.
(Eduard-the-Agitator, 2000)*

There was one Red man in the U.S. Congress and he was, like Black Clarence Thomas and ebony Condoleezza Rice, Southerners both, a Republican. The white man won the West but lost Vietnam and Iraq. Today, he and his lickspittle are dead men walking, hollow men talking.

An Infernal ‘Yes’

The greatest tragedy of American history is slavery. All slaves belonging to one people: Black Africans. Beginning with the Portuguese.



Willa Bickham

In the fateful year 1441, the world shook and Western culture along with the Christian Church rattled and whirled. Even today and into tomorrow, we the Radical Remnant and Progressive Movement are slowly and with great effort attempting, by little and by little, to rebuild from the shattering of the West’s and the church’s moral and economic foundations.

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

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

This white “yes” to Black slavery continues to resound with fury and domination throughout the world. The

Cry of the Poor, continued on page 8

LACW Retreat

Murphy Davis, Eduard Loring and Hannah Loring-Davis all got to attend the Los Angeles Catholic Worker retreat in September. Workers from Southern California, Mexico, Philadelphia and Atlanta gathered at the beautiful Casa de Maria Retreat Center in Montecito, California. Murphy, Eduard and Hannah visited with longtime friends and workers in the struggle for justice Catherine Morris and Jeff Dietrich, of the LACW, Tensie Hernandez and Dennis Apel of the Guadalupe CW, and Elaine Ennis and Ched Myers of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries. Ched led weekend sessions on the themes of “death and dying” and “putting last things first.”



Festival of Shelters 2008

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough

Remember

“We remember that we are all homeless wanderers in a land that is not our own.”

(“The Festival of Shelters,” page 51)

Resist

“We resist the powers of pride and greed that create wealth for a few and poverty for many.”

(“The Festival of Shelters,” page 51)

Rejoice

“We rejoice that God has given us a Harvest which provides more than enough for abundant life for all.”

(“The Festival of Shelters,” page 51)



Photographs by Amanda Petersen



A Time to Move Outside

The Open Door Community celebrated Sukkoth in our front yard this year. Our shelter, booth, tabernacle was built from saplings brought from Dayspring Farm. Michael Hawkins, Lauren Boasso and David Christian (*top left, left to right*) figured out how to put it together. The community gathered to bless the shelter with prayer on Monday evening, with Nelia Kimbrough (*above, in center facing camera*) leading the blessing. We had all our meals on Tuesday and Wednesday in the front yard, and many of us spent the night together with our homeless friends in our yard. Serving grits, eggs and turkey sausage early Tuesday morning were (*left, left to right*) Erika Rembert, Emily Wilmarth and Steve Bacon, volunteers from Central Presbyterian Church.



Calvin Kimbrough

A Time for Thanksgiving and Justice

Bible study and reflection were part of each day’s activities. Dick Rustay, after serving the Tuesday morning breakfast, leads us in a reflection on Deuteronomy 8:11-20 (*left*). The children from New Life Covenant Church’s after-school program joined us Wednesday for a visit that included singing with Calvin Kimbrough (*below*), dancing and attaching the symbols they had made about homelessness to the shelter. Each day, folks in the yard, housed and homeless, made visual representations of the kind of shelter they need for their lives. Ivan Cooley (*bottom, left*) and Jennifer Brown (*bottom, right*) work on constructing their images of a home.



Amanda Petersen



Calvin Kimbrough



Calvin Kimbrough



Calvin Kimbrough



Amanda Petersen



The Festival of Shelters
A Celebration
for Love and Justice

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

66 pages
19 color photographs
Paperback
Free for the asking
(see ad on page 4 to order)

A Time for Abundant Living

We served many pots of grits, soup and chili. Lauren Boasso and Dick Rustay work the soup pots in 910’s kitchen (*above*). Peanut butter, jelly and bread were available all day for making sandwiches, and five- gallon thermoses of hot coffee and iced tea, along with clean cups, were always available in the front yard. On Wednesday evening, our friends from the Celebration Sunday School Class at Peachtree Presbyterian Church, who regularly bring supper at least once a month, prepared a feast of fried chicken, slaw, baked beans and brownies. Eduard Loring (*far right*) reminded us before each meal that “The Festival of Shelters teaches us the truth against lies, the hope against despair, and the way against wandering” (“The Festival of Shelters,” page 26).

Good Grief, *continued from page 1*

added, “You shall know the truth and it will make you free, but first it will piss you off.” Flannery O’Connor said, “You shall know the truth and it will make you odd.”

I think we could add, “You will know the truth and you will have an even harder time at family reunions. You shall know the truth and you will lose the capacity to chat and make small talk at cocktail parties. In fact, you shall know the truth and you won’t even be *invited* to the parties any more!”

To get to the truth about America, we have to be first dis-illusioned and de-schooled (in the term coined by Ivan Illich). No, it is *not* what they told us it was. And we have to come to terms with how we are going to bear and live with these harsh truths. And to do this, we have to find the resources to face and deal with our fear.

The Final Abuse

It helps a lot to get angry and stay angry. And then put the anger to work by doing something about it. Stand up for the poor. Give voice to the suffering — the unnecessary suffering. Gracious goodness, life is hard enough without all the suffering we cause each other that is absolutely unnecessary.

Stop the abuse of power. It’s really a relief that I don’t need to explain to *this* group that the police state has been growing and growing rapidly. Most Americans who are not poor or with the poor are oblivious. But if you go to court and prison with the poor, you are well aware.

The death penalty is the final and most extreme abuse of power — lethal power — but it is a signpost for our expression of values.

Is it so long a jump to believe that we are ever so willing to torture captives? How many of you have clients who were tortured into making confessions?

The death penalty makes space for the millions of abuses of power that run the gamut of our national life. The death penalty is a key element of the development and construction of a police state.

I’d love to invite you to our home on Ponce de Leon Avenue in downtown Atlanta, where we welcome hundreds of hungry and homeless sisters and brothers every day. Police power and presence have always been a harsh reality, but nothing like it is now. There has been permission for the abuse of power at every level for so long now that the police are cocky and swagger around like there is and will be No Accountability. And they are, I’m afraid I have to say, pretty much right.

In Atlanta about a year ago, three police officers, without warning, busted into the home of Mrs. Catherine Johnson, a 92-year-old African-American widow, and shot her to death. When they realized they had gone into the wrong house and that Mrs. Johnson was dead, they planted drugs in the basement and came up with the lame excuse that she was

dealing drugs. Accountability? A slap on the wrist? What about all the others who were “caught” and prosecuted and imprisoned because of the work of these same officers?

The way that the death penalty is litigated in this country has become the model for our criminal control system. We simply cannot risk accountability for police actions because of . . . what? Because why? Could it be our “fear of too much justice,” as the McCleskey dissent charged?

What planet are we on?

Fighting the death penalty and fighting for the rights and dignity of the poor are all part of a pro-democracy movement. This is true and it’s important to claim it: in this struggle we are part of a great band of courageous people in every place and nation who stand up for what is right and just. And this movement must become our reference point, rather than our death-dealing culture and its program of lies and propaganda. But it’s not easy.

We would rather be ruined than changed,
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.
— W.H. Auden



Kate Quigley

Solidarity at the Root

The second point in our struggle for depth: we need to deepen our solidarity with the suffering and the dying. In “Dust Tracks on the Road,” Zora Neale Hurston sang, “I have been in Sorrow’s kitchen and licked out all the pots.” Can we taste it?

To keep hope fresh and lively, we wait for justice and mercy with patient endurance. We go down: down to truth, putting roots down into the deep dark rich earth of life. To be alive is not necessarily to get down into the deep humus of life: it is a journey and it must be intentional.

A basic question that faces each and all of us is: to whom do you belong? Do you belong to yourself alone? You are in trouble. The truth of life is that we belong to each other; we know this or we die. There is human solidarity at the root, the base, of our meaning and experience of being human.

Our earlier focus on racial injury and

the resulting psychic harm was deeply painful. But for those of us who are white, we have to keep hearing it over and over and letting our hearts and minds be de-schooled and re-formed and transformed. We have to unlearn the purposeful ignorance and entitlement that comes to us simply because we are white. But to do something about changing this viciously racist society, we are really in the right place when we fight the death penalty. It is a privilege to be in a situation to be able to bear some of the weight of this burden of pain.

It is a privilege to be in a place where we can hammer on the wall of denial that exists in the hearts and minds of white culture. It is a privilege to be in relationships and a context where we know the truth of our own American apartheid and its deeply rooted violence. And if we open ourselves to this truth, we can receive the gift of solidarity: those with whom we serve can become sisters and brothers.

Finding Depth

To make it for the long haul, whether we count ourselves as religious or not, we must find resources for transcendence. In one sense, “spirituality” is a term for our attempts to find depth. It is the capacity that comes with self-awareness. This requires silence and contemplation: reflecting on ourselves and our lives and context. We need to bring all of it — including the pain of loss, death and failure — to consciousness.

We have to even anticipate more pain. What’s ahead for us in the execution chambers is not a pretty sight. We know that no matter who is elected this fall or whenever, justice is not going to arrive on a silver platter. We do hope some things will get better, but I think we can safely count on the fact that we will still have plenty of work to do.

There is a given and ongoing tension that merits our attention — our mindfulness, if you will. It is the tension between our values, our experience and our emotions. For instance, our values (“I am committed to a just and fair society”) — our experience (“I lost, I failed, my client, my friend will die”) — our emotion (“I am numb, I am in pain”). This is an ongoing struggle. You can count on the fact that when this tension is resolved, the Beloved Community will have arrived. But you can also count on the fact that we’ll keep struggling with the tension until it does.

Distinct from sadness and depression is what some have called Good Grief. This is not something that “happens”; it is a work and it requires being honest about what and whom we have lost, feeling the feelings, getting help, receiving the anger, crying, hollering, whatever it takes. We have to tell the stories and make the record of what has happened and who our people are. This is what keeps our folks alive even when the state thinks they’ve obliterated a person entirely. ♣

Part 3 will appear in the January Hospitality.

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Cry of the Poor, *continued from page 5*

human family was and continues to be shattered. The shatterers were and are white folk, men mostly.

Ah, but neither the pope, nor later most Protestants, nor the constitutions of the democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, nor the rise of capitalism with its secular ethics and law, no not one, had the ability to say the word of freedom and equality: “No.” No one, that is, except a few radicals on the margins of Empire, church and capitalism, said “no.” And they were persecuted by the big church and the big state. Therefore, to talk about slavery in Europe and America is to talk about white racism: White Male Supremacy. Reiteration of a central point of our human history: the folk who could not say “no” were and are white.

New Habits of the Heart

I am deeply anguished. I carry in my heart and in my flesh the wounds of white racism. Horrible and bitter are the fruits that continue into this night to set our teeth on edge, even as we attempt to wash the Black blood from our hands and find new hearts founded in justice. We the children of slaveholders and all beneficiaries of white privilege must root out the racist structures and institutions in our economy and culture. We must find love “and where there is no love, put love” (St. John of the Cross). We should be compelled to write obituaries, even attend funerals for the mainline churches and the conservative white supremacist U.S. Supreme Court.

As we tear this “filthy rotten system” (Dorothy Day) to pieces, as we join the movement for “a revolution of values” (Martin Luther King Jr.), we hope to reconstruct our church and society “in the shell of the old” (Peter Maurin), moving from affirmative action toward economic human rights (e.g., housing is a right), into reconciliation and new, mature, non-macho habits of the heart. The freedom and peace movement shall grow and radicalize as “Black and white together” sing and suffer, dance and march our way into shutting the domination system down.

Thank you, Black and white Abolitionists; thank you, Black Liberation Movement; thank you, Harriet Tubman, Mary Grace and Jefferson Rogers, Ella Baker, Connie Curry, Ezekiel Holly, Elijah Lovejoy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rev. Timothy McDonald. I love you and your marginalized, living, radical legacy with all my heart, soul and strength.

And what about you?

We are in the midst of a historical disaster. The facts and myths of slavery are at the core of our continuing calamity. Into the present hour white racist slavery and the oppression of Black Americans is the *fundamental sin of our history*, our present, and you tell me about our future. ♣

Part 5 will appear in the January Hospitality.

Eduard Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Who Sees the Cross, continued from page 1

By day they sold electric trains and ate cold sandwiches.
Herod’s anger stemmed from fear
That good Saint Nicholas soon would be here.

God is confused;
With Santa Claus.

The mind God gave you went to sleep,
Depression’s way to save the day
Ignoring night;
Shaving facts and mixing myths into a pleasing harmony,
A pot-pourri apart from pain,
Enough for you —

Who cannot see the cross at Christmas.

†††

Substituting gifts — the measure of modern man.

The registers ring out glad tidings of great joy
For skillful hucksters wading through piles of paper tape.

The customer is quite content
To know which way his savings went
— but not his self.

His guilt for having hurt is healed,
Transformed to toys and clothes,
And signs of deep affection
— with a price tag.

His generosity becomes a reputation,
Giving gifts a personhood,
Ways to avoid the final confrontation
— the giving of himself.

Life must be measured in those same terms
By which we measure wheat,
And chaff,
And dung.
For fertilizer and fraternity, each has its own price;
His money makes the measure of the man.

Conscience’s price is paid,
Guilt allayed
— gifts are given,
The goat is driven into the wilderness.

His self protected,
The world is safe again for him —

Who cannot see the cross at Christmas.

††††

Our sense for what is real
Is nearly dead.
The palliative powers, summoned at this season,
Are in themselves a light,
And a way of life.

God hears your soft and unconditioned prayer:
Don’t hurt me more,
Or spoil my joy,
Or take away my feeling for a while.
Life is so drab,
I’ve been so hurt,
That it feels good for a while to live a lie.
It’s better than my weekly work,
Or facing who I am.

For in our hearts we know that God is dead,
And that is why we decorate our houses
— to fill the void,
That is why we mix our myths
— to color up his corpse,
That is why we now give gifts of things
— and retain ourselves!

God is dead.
He does not require anything of us
— anymore.

Behind the fabric of distortion
Lies the coherence of the truth:
That all our ways are pendulous runs,
And in the end are bound to fail
Because they don’t exist.

And God’s enfleshment is the key:

The way he chose to be with us
Made him too thick to be seen.

God cannot be real and opaque.
God cannot be born and die.
God cannot love and work his will with weakness.
God cannot,
We will not let him,
You and I.

A crib,
A cross,
An empty tomb,
The signs of God’s decisive difference for the world,
That makes us free to cross the room,
And cross the world —

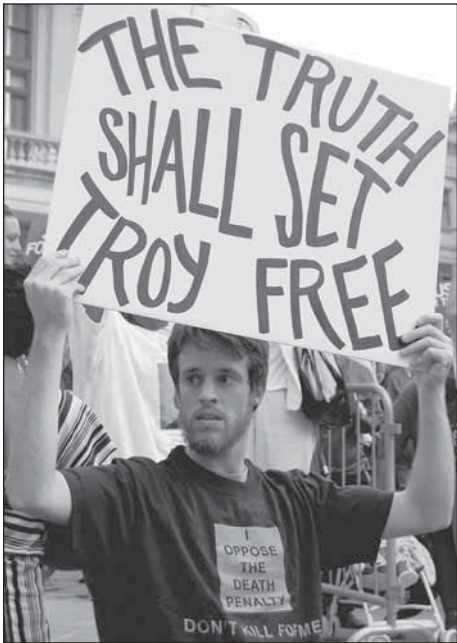
To see the cross at Christmas.

†††††



Anna Hogan

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



Amanda Petersen

Peter Crooke began his work as a Student Resident Volunteer at the Open Door in August. He attends Columbia Theological Seminary. He asks that you, too, call out for the truth to be known during the current stay of execution for Troy Davis.

Live in a residential Christian community.

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

Join street actions and loudandloving non-violent demonstrations

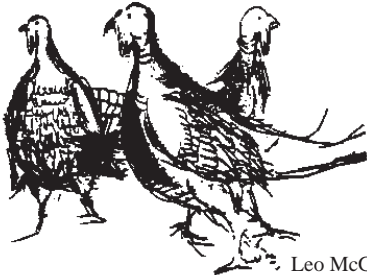
Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.

You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Chuck Harris
at odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net
or 770.246.7627
For information and application forms visit
www.opendoorcommunity.org

Turkeys Turkeys Turkeys



Leo McGuire

The Open Door Community needs turkeys to serve for our **Thanksgiving (Friday, November 28)** and **Christmas (Friday, December 26)** meals! Turkeys already cooked and sliced are most helpful.

Please Help !

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

We need **meat & cheese sandwiches** (no bologna please) individually **wrapped** on **whole wheat** bread.

Thank You!



this year give HOSPITALITY

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

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

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

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

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

name _____

address _____

email _____

phone _____



**volunteer
needs
at the
Open Door Community**

People to accompany Community members to doctors' appointments.

Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and cheese sandwiches (**no bologna or pb&j, please**) on whole wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends.

People to cook or bring supper for the Community on certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings.

Volunteers for Monday and Tuesday breakfasts (5:50-9:30 a.m.); Wednesday soup kitchen (9:50 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**

Praying for Joe Miller

By Amanda Petersen

It was in June that our dear friend and partner at the Open Door, Ira Terrell, began to pray for Joe Miller. Joe had been a longtime friend of the community, spending long nights and many hours arranging Hospitality mailings, playing spades, fixing watches and telling stories of life in the kudzu village where he resided with the four other members of the "Fabulous Five." There was not a trace of Joe up or down Ponce de Leon Avenue for over a month, and during those days, Ira remained faithful to pray at each gathering. "Still ain't nobody seen Joe Miller," he would say. And we would pray.

In mid-July the Good Samaritan, "Chicken George" Harris, found Joe at the Peachtree-and-Pine shelter. He promptly fetched an innkeeper, Eduard Loring, and Joe was brought to take refuge at 910. For the simple reason that I happened to walk into the living room at the right time on that Saturday, I became Joe's "Pastoral Friend." This was when I first met Joe.

We found that for the preceding month Joe had been in the hospital, where he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, AIDS, hepatitis C and an infection from pneumonia that caused him to lose his left eye. He had lost over 30 pounds and was a very tired man.

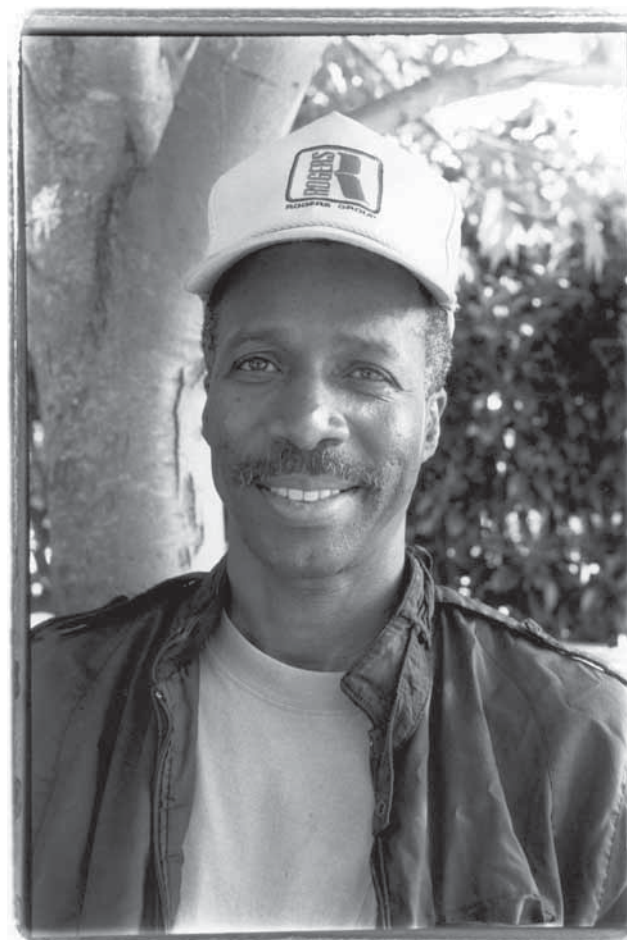
He spent his days here resting, visiting clinics and keeping all of us in good company. Joe was quiet and loving, and always thankful for the folks who cared for and visited him.

Joe and I spent several days a week visiting with doctors, nutritionists, counselors and other wonderful people through the Grady Health System. We were an odd couple wherever we went — me, a 25-year-old white woman with knotted hair and an arm full of tattoos, and Joe, a slight, 61-year-old Black man with a beautiful smile. One night in the emergency room, being careful to respect patient privacy, the doctor asked Joe if I was his wife. When I would remind Joe of this later, he could only shake his head and laugh.

I do not know whether I have ever been more awake to my expectations of dignity, need and race in my entire life. What could I possibly know about caring for a full-grown Black man who is very obviously in his final months or weeks of life? What could I possibly know about the boundaries between my dependence on Joe which is fueled by my choice to be with the poor, and his dependence on me to provide some sort of quality of life that the Peachtree-and-Pine shelter cannot? What could I know about what dignity actually is — his version of it, not mine?

I failed at caring for Joe every single day. Some of this failure revolved around the death that was stalking Joe — the weight loss, the shakiness, the shortness of breath. Other aspects of this failure I still do not have answers to. I feel as though I failed Joe when I began administering his pill regime rather than allowing him to do it on his own; I took his adulthood away. I failed Joe when I pressured him into riding in the wheelchair to his appointments rather than walking and risking a fall. I failed Joe when I felt like I did not have the emotional capacity to visit with him that day, or even to do something as simple as deliver his meal to his room. I failed Joe when I did not realize that the garbage can in his room had not been emptied for several days and was swarming with flies.

It was difficult to admit when we were no longer capable of caring for him here at the house. He did not have the strength to shower on his own, or even make it around the corner to use the restroom. He was not eating and was having a hard time even drinking water. But because of a team of incredible doctors and nurses, Joe was admitted into Grady and was able to choose for himself an aggressive treatment plan over the option of hospice care. This treatment



Joe 4/98

Calvin Kimbrough

plan never came to fruition because several days after being admitted, he suffered a seizure and then a stroke, and finally lost consciousness. On August 30, 2008, surrounded by his biological family, Joe Miller died in the intensive care unit at Grady Memorial Hospital.

It is my desire that the moments in life that bring up deep and painful questions would be kind enough to also answer them, but that is rarely the case. I still do not have a clue what it looks like to provide dignity to anyone, let alone this particular man. I do feel confident to say, however, that Joe's body did not die alone. He died in an environment of rest, quiet, safety and large amounts of love. That is not, by any means, a failure. ♣

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

Congratulations to

Viva House - Baltimore Catholic Worker



40th Anniversary (1968-2008)

**from your friends at
the Open Door Community!**

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door,

Please accept this donation in honor of my friend Father Daniel Ketter on the occasion of his ordination as a Catholic priest.

Your work is an inspiration and frequently brings me back to what is truly important. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susana Rangel
Atlanta, Georgia

To Mary Sinclair and the Open Door Community,

I think of all the years I saw Lewis [Sinclair] at the ACLU and at Emmaus House, with Mary, and still I didn't know all he had done. Thanks to Murphy Davis for a beautiful memorial for a wonderful human being in the July *Hospitality*.

Love,

Peter Joseph Bryg
Atlanta Georgia

Chelle Brings a Gift

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Dear friends and family,

Today in church one of our pastors gave us a dollar. She asked us to do what we think God wants us to do with the dollar.

What I want to do is have people match my dollar and donate the money to the Open Door Community. The Open Door is for people who are homeless and they don't have food and clothes. They need our help.

Please match my dollar. I have one week before I have to tell the pastor what I did with the money.

This is what God wants me to do.

LOVE,

Chelle

P.S. I will tell you how much I raise!



Stanley Leary

Chelle Leary (in the center with the money) brought her donation to the Open Door on Friday, September 26. Joining her on our front steps are (from left) Nelia Kimbrough, Clark Hand, Emily Hayden, Heather McVoy, Dorie Griggs (Chelle's mother), "Chicken" George Harris, Mike Lowe and Ralph Dukes.

Friday, September 26, 2008

Dear friends and family,

Thank you for donating to the Open Door Community. We have raised \$133. Today I delivered the money. They were very thankful. My dad took pictures. They had a welcome sign for me.

LOVE,

Chelle

By October Chelle's donation had increased to \$217.

You know I do pray you are doing well.

Eduard Loring's article "Why Is There Homelessness in the USA?" (February *Hospitality*) was well placed. The ever-growing epidemic of homelessness in the United States, especially since the "subprime mortgage" scandal, exhibits how uninteresting the issue of homelessness is to those who could do something about it. Instead of decreasing homelessness, they are increasing the numbers without any remorse nor end in sight.

I cannot believe the American people have become so complacent as to continue to allow their brothers and sisters to be treated with reckless disregard, exposing them and their families to life-and-death issues because of homelessness. There was a time when the American people would have hit the streets in protest in great numbers. These days, however, they are like sheep heading to slaughter, knowing they are to be slaughtered, and don't even protest.

So sad, that we as Americans are actually allowing this scandal of homelessness, in the richest country in the world, to go unabated.

Why are you numb, America? Why do you torture your children with homelessness, America? Why do you destroy your families with homelessness, America? Why do you destroy your communities with homelessness, America? Why don't you care, America?

I will continue to pray for you and yours. Thank you for the money order, which will be used for food.

Arnold Porter
Georgia prisoner
Alamo, Georgia

Dear Murphy,

Thank you for the obituary about George Britt (May *Hospitality*). I remember him from the beginning of volunteering for the Open Door. Mental illness is so difficult to deal with, and society has placed that burden on you. Praise the Lord for your wonderful ministry and caring for George all these years.

Andrea Davis
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Ed, Murphy, et al.,

I always enjoy reading *Hospitality*. Makes me think!

Sincerely,

Emily B. Calhoun
Cornelia, Georgia

Thank you for the continuing good works you do and the powerful, inspirational writing! May God bless you all.

Peggy Davis
Atlanta, Georgia

Thanks to Murphy for her amazing article on prayer in the September *Hospitality*. Her reflections were deeply moving and challenging. I will seek to draw deeply from her wisdom – and from the continuing witness of the whole community!

Much love,

Will O'Brien
Project H.O.M.E.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

September 1 was 21 years since Billy Mitchell's life was taken by the state of Georgia. I thought of Billy when I read Eduard Loring's "The Cry of the Poor, Part 1" (August). I enjoyed that article and Murphy's "Five Days, Two Friends, Two Deaths" in the same issue. It is sad that the United States continues to murder its own as well as others.

Chuck Reed
Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

Dear Open Door Folks,

I am sending you these clothes in memory of George Britt. It was comforting to know that when it was his time, he passed peacefully.

I have fond memories of George. On my first day volunteering at Thursday morning soup kitchen in the 1990s, I was dishing up the soup when George came in. He looked at my name tag, "Shirley," and asked, "Where's Laverne?" The years I worked there, he said the same thing every week. He made me feel part of his life.

We here in the North are used to cold weather and feel its bite. Our church (Congregational UCC) was having a rummage sale of good used clothing (our pastor calls it a "clothes exchange"), and I told the workers about the Open Door shower and clean clothes program for the folks in the community, and the need for warm things as winter approaches. The Women's Fellowship put together these clothes for you, and the Women's Sewing Group is paying the postage. These things are sent in appreciation of the love and caring of the Open Door for our sisters and brothers.

Shalom,

Shirley Babcock
Rhineland, Wisconsin



Dear Murphy,

I have been meaning to write you for ages to say how sorry we were to hear about dear George Britt and how much we loved your article about him. He always called me "buddy," and it never clicked until he asked me if I knew who Buddy Holly was! He was one of a kind, and we are so grateful he didn't die in the street. Thank you so much for your words, which truly celebrated his life.

Church of the Common Ground continues to be an amazing blessing in our lives, and a daily reminder of so much that must change in our world. We really miss coming to the Open Door, but we continue to stay connected through prayer and by having the same dream to end poverty and injustice. If you are ever able to join us for worship, we are in the park at 1 every Sunday – or drop in any afternoon at 170 Trinity Avenue.

You and Ed and your wonderful community are always in our hearts and prayers.

Blessings,

Holly and Bob Book
Atlanta, Georgia

"Bill Would Deny Parole for Armed Robbers.

"Armed robbers would no longer be eligible for parole under a bill that cleared a [Louisiana] House committee Monday.

"Currently, offenders convicted of armed robbery become eligible for 'old timer's parole' once they serve at least 20 years of their prison sentence and turn 45. House Bill 110, by State Rep. Simone Champagne, D-Jeanerette, would remove that possibility.

"The committee advanced HB 110 to the House without objection." (*The Advocate* newspaper)

Well, they are trying to steal the little hope of freedom that some of us do have. I guess we are just waiting to die here in the (graveyard) Angola.

Thony Green, 102340
Louisiana State Penitentiary
Angola, Louisiana

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.

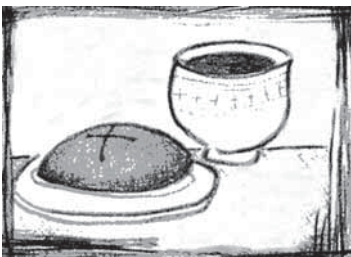
We are open...
Sunday: We invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m., and join
us following worship for a delicious supper.
We are open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. for donations.
Monday through Thursday: We answer telephones from 9 a.m.
until 12 noon and from 2 until 6 p.m. We gratefully accept
donations from 9 until 11 a.m. and 2 until 8:30 p.m.
Friday and Saturday: We are closed. We are not able to offer
hospitality or accept donations on these days.

*Our Hospitality Ministries also include visitation and letter
writing to prisoners in Georgia, anti-death penalty advocacy,
advocacy for the homeless, daily worship and weekly Eucharist.*

Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.
If you are considering bringing a group please contact us at 770.246.7628.
Please visit www.opendoorcommunity.org or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| November 2 | Worship at 910
Día de Los Muertos with Heather Barger and Nelia Kimbrough leading |
| November 9 | Worship at 910
Edward Loring preaching |
| November 16 | Worship at 910
Eucharist Service and music with E. Lise Witt |
| November 23 | No Worship at 910
Join us for the SOA Watch Vigil at Fort Benning, Georgia |
| November 30 | Advent Worship at 910
Nelia Kimbrough leading |
| December 7 | No Worship at 910
Advent Retreat at Dayspring Farm |
| December 14 | Advent Worship at 910
Eucharist Service |
| December 21 | Advent Worship at 910
Service of Lessons & Carols |
| December 24 | 6:00pm Thursday - Christmas Eve Eucharist & Supper
(please call ahead if you would like to join us) |
| December 28 | Christmas Worship at 910
Eucharist Service |



Nelia Kimbrough

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

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

Plan to join us for
discussion and reflection!



Daniel Nichols

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

Medicine Needs List

Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic

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

Foot Care Clinic

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

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

Needs of the Community



we need blankets!

Living Needs

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

Personal Needs

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

Food Needs

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

Special Needs

- ☐ backpacks
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ coats

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