

# HOSPITALITY

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

vol. 24, no. 9

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212, 404-874-9652, [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)

September 2005

## Beggars at the Table

**By Chrystal Cook**

*(Editor's note: Chrystal Cook, a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community, preached the following sermon at worship on July 17.)*

If you know very much about the South, or about the Southern Appalachian mountains where I'm from, then you know that when someone is about to tell a story (especially a *true* story, which isn't always the case when my people sit around and chew the fat), a very common opening statement, in my experience, is "You ain't gonna believe this."

I've got more than one story to tell you, and these are true stories. For example, you ain't gonna believe this, but our very own Pastor Chad Hyatt proposed marriage to his lovely wife Camille before they ever went on a date! You can't make up stuff that good—it has to be true! Are the stories I'm going to tell you second- or third-hand stories? Sure. Has there been a little embellishment to dress them up for company? Maybe. But I contend there is great truth to be had in these stories, even though I start them with, "You ain't gonna believe this."

I was inviting some folks to worship this week, trying to persuade them it would be a good time regardless of who was preaching, and one person asked me, "Are you going to speak the truth?!" The only answer I have for that is, "This is the Open Door. This is 910. The truth is all we have." My prayer is that God will bless us with truth, and help us not only to believe it, but to live it.

You ain't gonna believe this, but there was this guy a while back, and about the most you could say about him was that he was a liar and a thief and a mama's boy (although, to his credit, they say he was a pretty good cook). He was a fugitive, on the run because of what he had stolen and from whom he had stolen it. I mean, this guy was a real manipulator: withheld food from a hungry person until he got what he wanted; lied to an old blind man to trick him and steal from him; betrayed his own brother and his own daddy; turned against his own flesh and blood because greed and power meant more to him than love and community. He was what you'd call a real piece of work (those of us who've never done anything wrong like to make those kinds of value judgments and place those kinds of labels on other people). Do you know anybody like this guy? Somebody who would sell her own grandmother to the highest bidder? Of course

**Beggars, continued on page 10**



PHOTO BY CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Atlanta city council member Derrick Boazman were also arrested. The "Resurrection City 7" will go to trial on October 4, the Feast of Saint Francis, the beggar. Look for more in the October Hospitality.

As we go to press, the Atlanta City Council has passed the ordinance to outlaw begging in downtown Atlanta, and Mayor Shirley Franklin has signed the law. After the council vote, the homeless and advocates were ejected from City Hall for our (non-violent) response. Seven advocates were arrested, six from the Open Door Community. In this photo, Atlanta police, police riot squad, and Red Dog squad members twist Eric Garbison into a hammerlock as they cuff him for jail. In the background are Heather Barger, Kyle Thompson, and Amy Cantrell, community members also arrested. The Open Door's Ed

## Peter Waldo: A Life and Legacy of the Radical Remnant of the Discipleship Movement

**By Eduard Loring**

Peter Waldo is one of our ancestors, a bright fluffy cloud against the sparkling blue sky of our witness to the Radical Remnant of the followers of Jesus, The Human One.

The Radical Remnant is today small, dismissed, persecuted, marginalized and time warped. But it has always been that way and always will be that way. In the year 850 B.C., the Prophet Elijah was sitting in a cave on Mt. Sinai. Elijah had been complaining to Yahweh-Elohim that the King Ahab and Queen Jezebel wanted to kill him and there were no faithful Hebrews left. He felt defeated, alone, without hope. Yahweh-Elohim told him to stop his belly aching; there was a remnant of 7,000 folk in Israel who were faithful and not afraid of the police, jails, church courts, or Central Jerusalem Progress and their "Leper Removal Act."

This is a promise from our Compassionate God. On the margins there will always be enough folk for us to do the work of the Radical Remnant. 7,000 is an important number in Biblical numerology. This is the

number of fullness, completeness. Now, it is true we often do not feel that the 7,000 of us are enough. We cry out, "The harvest is large, but the workers are few." Well, we needed someone to do PM House Duty on Saturday this week. Tony Sinkfield said, "Here I am. Send me." We wish we had 7,000 Tony Sinkfields, but he is working in the fields, bringing in the sheaves, doing the best he can till he can't.

Peter Waldo did what we do. *He questioned the model of the church and Christian life he was given* (a Hermeneutics of Suspicion: to always question what the powerful say from the point of view of the oppressed, wrote Dietrich Bonhoeffer). When Peter heard of an alternative way, narrow and hard, he took it. He and his communities ended up hiding in the Alps and all over Europe. Hiding, running, but preaching, practicing. The illusion of the powers of death, from mean little groups of business people like Central Atlanta Progress to the President of the America Empire, is that violent power can silence the Radical Remnant. Oh, they can jail and even kill the flesh, but they cannot

**Waldo, continued on page 8**



# Please Leave Our Children Behind

By Kyle Thompson

In 2001 Congress passed legislation entitled the "No Child Left Behind Act." This legislation, among other things, has given the federal government greater control over the nation's public schools by increasing standardized testing and funding. What many do not realize, however, is the same legislation also mandates, according to Donald Rumsfeld, that "military recruiters are entitled to receive the name, address, and telephone listing of juniors and seniors in high school."

While it came as a surprise to me that the forced provision of student information was included in already questionable legislation, it was not a cause for great action on my part. It simply came as another tragic instance of the coercive power of the U.S. American Empire. It was not until I learned from my parents that my younger brother Jesse, who is a rising senior in a public high school, was being heavily recruited by the Navy that I began to tangibly sense the insidiousness of this legislation.

Navy recruiters first contacted Jesse by a flashy mailer promising educational opportunity and job security. Upon responding to the mailer, recruiters have pursued him to take the military placement exams and to go to a pre-boot camp. Now the recruiters call on a regular basis and Jesse says that they will continue calling until "you sign up or tell 'em to shut up." While I have sought to redirect my brother's desires with regular pleas concerning the centrality of the cross as an act of non-violence and decrying the heresy of "patriotic" Empire worship, it is hard to compete with the recruiter's promises of financial security, world travel, and patriotic glory.

Through Jesse's recruitment, the distant "No Child Left Behind Act" became personal. But the story had not reached its end. As if God had decided I was not impassioned enough in my anger or loud enough in my protest, I received an email myself from a Marine recruiter.

I have been at the Open Door now for two months as a Resident Volunteer and in that time have come to appreciate the common vision for the peaceable kingdom, or as they say around here, the "beloved community," that we daily celebrate. My journey in search of the cruciform patterns of non-violent resistance began before my arrival here, while I was attending a private, Christian liberal-arts university in Los Angeles, Azusa Pacific University (APU). APU is in no way a "pacifist" school, but it does have its pockets of Christian radicals.

Needless to say, I was surprised to find that APU had given my email to a Marine sergeant who invited me to "enhance my career" by taking the "chance of a lifetime" and becoming a Marine Corps Officer. Providentially, the Marine sergeant included in his email the addresses of fifty-five of my fellow graduates. I took the moment to be an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of Christ's peace to both this recruiter and my peers at APU. Below is the letter with which I responded:

*Dear Sergeant Borrell and friends from APU,*

*I have to admit that I was greatly disheartened by your invitation to join the Marine Corps. It would seem that you are unfamiliar with the fact that Azusa Pacific University's mission is to encourage students to embark on the radical path of discipleship to Jesus Christ. As such, committing my life to the proliferation of systems of violence, fear, and coercion would be a direct affront to the education that I have just received.*

*At the center of the path of Christian discipleship and the story of Jesus Christ is the cross, the paradigm act of non-violent resistance to Empire. Jesus had the option of violent overthrow of the oppressive Roman occupiers but instead he chose to truly take the "challenge of a lifetime" and did not fight evil with evil, but fought evil with good. Christ died a violent, gruesome death in active resistance to the patterns of violence that are perpetuated through institutions*

*such as the U.S. Marine Corps. As Christians, we not only memorialize this courageous resistance in our Eucharistic worship, but also pray and hope that it is Christ who embodies us as we resist the way of violence by loving our enemies and caring for those who are injured by violent systems. This being the case, becoming a Marine would not "enhance my career," but would set me on a path that is diametrically opposed to the practices of my faith community.*

*Thus, as you and your fellow officers plan and develop the weapons of violence and war, I will plan and act in the ways of mercy and peace. As you and your fellow officers rely on the might and power of the United States and its military, I will rely on the Lord Jesus Christ and actively live in faith hoping for his coming reign.*

*Jesus came to proclaim the Gospel of peace not war, of mercy not violence, of reconciliation not division, of liberation not occupation. My friends, I encourage you to search the life of Jesus, to remember the story of the Church, to pray earnestly and seek the Word of God concerning the radical path of Christ. Only when Christ breaks in to heal our hearts from the patterns of violence will we truly know the God of peace.*

*Grace and peace,  
Kyle Thompson*

While we witness the growing energy put toward recruiting young people to the U.S. military, we must allow the Spirit to embolden our voices. Here at the Open Door, we often pray for my younger brother, that he will reject the wide path of violence and war and walk the narrow Way of compassion and love. We pray you will join us in our proclamation to the powers that be: in your march to war, we beg you, *leave our children behind!* ☩

*Kyle Thompson is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.*

## HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of 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. For more information about the life and work of the Open Door Community, please contact any of the following:

**Gladys Rustay and Tony Sinkfield:** Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator  
**Ed Loring:** Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host, Resident Volunteer Coordinator, Agitator  
**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator (with Nelia & Calvin Kimbrough)  
**Phil Leonard:** Administration and Finance, Hardwick Prison Trip, Resident Volunteer Applications  
**Dick Rustay and Lauren Cogswell:** Dayspring Farm Coordinators  
**Jodi Garbison:** Volunteer Coordinator



### Newspaper

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

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

### Open Door Community

910 Ponce de Leon Ave NE  
 Atlanta, GA 30306-4212  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)  
 (404) 874-9652; 874-7964 fax

# All the News Not Fit to Print

*(Editor's Note: On June 22, an editorial in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, excerpted below, criticized Ed Loring and the Open Door Community as well as Concerned Black Clergy as being in a time warp and concerned about the wrong things. The following letters were sent to the AJC but none of them were printed.)*

*Do homeless advocates help the poor and homeless by defending their right to beg? Shouldn't they be more concerned with helping the poor find employment that prevents the need for begging?*

*The Rev. Loring and his compatriots, including the Rev. Richard Cobble, a vice president of Concerned Black Clergy, are behind the curve, fighting the previous battle. Because they have misread the future, they have missed the chance to home in on the issues that should concern them -- including the disappearance of low-cost housing in the city.*

—Cynthia Tucker, AJC editorial page editor, from "Advocates for the poor in time warp," June 22, 2005

When you live and work with the homeless, you get to know a different Atlanta than the glitzy haven for the affluent that Cynthia Tucker dreams about. You quickly recognize that the "anti-begging ordinance" has just one real purpose: to drive the poor from downtown. Ms. Tucker describes a city where, as she says, the "poor will have been banished to the aging, inner-ring suburbs," like "Smyrna, south DeKalb County and south Gwinnett County." After all, why do the hard work of putting an end to poverty, when it is easier just to move the poor somewhere else?

No, Ms. Tucker, the city of your dreams is a nightmare. Thankfully, Martin King and others had a different dream, one in which "all God's children" were included. Let us make our beleaguered city the Beloved Community of King's dreams, not the model for a new segregation Cynthia Tucker envisions.

Peace,  
Chad Hyatt

Recent criticism of Ed Loring is not fair. There are many ministries and organizations in our town dealing with the various aspects of the homeless. The problem is huge. One ministry cannot do it all.

The Open Door Community offers hospitality to the homeless, clean clothes, meals, hot showers, water, a free medical clinic and foot care. They also minister to those in prison, work on peace and justice issues, and advocate for the poor.

In doing these things, the Community is following Matthew 25:31: "For I was hungry and you gave me food" or "thirsty and you gave me something to drink" -- which are not "yesterday's useless solutions."

Muriel Lokey

The problem is not homeless people, but a city that values entertainment and profit above human

lives. Cynthia Tucker and "her compatriots" want to use the police to criminalize homelessness. We should view it as a human rights issue instead. Atlanta would rather house fish than people, build jails rather than affordable housing, and exploit cheap labor rather than support living wage jobs.

Thank God for Richard Cobble, Ed Loring, and Murphy Davis. They envision an Atlanta where everyone is welcome and enjoys quality of life. Rather than trying to "zone" Atlanta as segregationists of old did, why not strike all of the so-called quality of life ordinances that criminalize the poor? Let's create a city where all enjoy free speech and public space—not to mention shelter, food, clothing, healthcare, and meaningful work.

If that is backward thinking, then I want to go back to the future.

Rev. Amy Cantrell

Often Atlanta's informed conscience, Cynthia Tucker missteps in her column "Advocates for the poor in time warp" which errantly blasts Ed Loring, the Open Door Community and others opposing the new proposed "anti-panhandling" ordinance. Great cities need great prophets. Great prophets shout from the mountains to remind us of injustices faced by the poor. Ms. Tucker calls on Loring and other advocates to focus on policy issues that will transform the homeless into fully employed, MARTA riding, suburban-housed mainstreamers. The United Way, local government, business leadership, churches and community groups should work to develop needed jobs, transportation and housing. But the poor will always need a voice. As we work to build a better Atlanta, we must constantly be reminded that thousands of our brothers and sisters live on the streets. Panhandling ordinances are designed to help us forget this cold reality. Thank God for the voice of Ed Loring and The Open Door Community...lest we forget.

John O'Callaghan

*John O'Callaghan was formerly a member of the Atlanta City Council and the Fulton County Commission.*

Bob Cramer from the Task Force for the Homeless did an excellent job setting straight your misguided editorial on homelessness on 6/22. It's interesting to note that many conventions were cancelled or boycotted while we argued about the Confederate flag. Our city lost millions because we were perceived as backward rednecks. Also the Home Builders canceled their mega million dollar convention because they feared getting robbed by our tourist industry -- not being panhandled by our homeless. Quit blaming the poor and Ed Loring for our problems. I think the homeless are afraid of our meanness.

Rick McDevitt

*Rick McDevitt is the founder and director of the Georgia Alliance for children and the owner of an Atlanta restaurant.*

What accounts for Cynthia Tucker's blind spots on certain political issues? Why did she attack Rev. Ed Loring of The Open Door and Rev. Richard Cobble of Concerned Black Clergy, accusing them of not being concerned enough about unemployment and the disappearance of low-cost housing?

The Open Door, led by Ed Loring and Murphy Davis, and Concerned Black Clergy, led by Rev. Timothy McDonald and Rev. Derrell Elligan, have long functioned as Atlanta's social conscience, calling attention to government policies that condemn tens of thousands to joblessness and homelessness. They are working on the ground every day for programs promoting life, not early death.

Rather than accusing Rev. Loring and Rev. Cobble of myopia, Cynthia Tucker needs to avoid this condition herself. She should stay focused on the big cheese who think up policies widening the income gap rather than on activists who point out the consequences of these policies.

Ann Mauney

*The following letter was sent directly to Ed Loring:*

The reaction to Ed Loring's shameful slander of Atlanta citizens as racists has drawn a universally negative response. As Cynthia Tucker's editorial and today's letters to the editor demonstrate, Atlanta citizens are tired of having their neighborhoods made unlivable by belligerent thugs so Ed can stroke his ego and have a platform for his ideological zealotry.

Perhaps Ed could listen to his neighbors and understand how his disrespectful and arrogant actions and rhetoric undermine the attempts of the rest of us who are trying to build a livable city that creates more jobs and tax revenue for the city. Ed's tactics hurt the homeless as well, although I doubt he cares. Ed just wants to stroke his ego and the rest of us can go scratch.

Chris Lydle



# Help!

The Open Door urgently needs the following items:

- COFFEE
- T-SHIRTS
- (L, XL, XXL, XXXL )
- SOCKS
- LAWN MOWER

For more information about donations, call 404-874-9652.



# How Do We Spend Our Resources?

By Elizabeth Dede

I must begin this column by confessing that I love cats and dogs. I've owned several in my life, and they have brought me great joy and comfort. Their companionship and unconditional love have often been a balm for my lonely, aching spirit. So what I am about to say is not a disparagement of animals.

Recently I was monitoring city court in Americus, which is one of my usual Wednesday morning activities for the Prison & Jail Project. Most cases are rather perfunctory and take only a few minutes to resolve.

On this occasion, however, I observed only one case. It involved the abuse and malnourishment of a dog. The case was three months old and had been continued until all parties – the defendants, the police, the humane society representatives, the veterinarians – could be present. The case took nearly two hours.

First, one of the defendants argued that the dog did not belong to him, so he should not be charged with cruelty to animals. The other defendant argued that the dog was naturally small and skinny, that she loved the dog with all her heart, and that sometimes he ate, and sometimes he lost weight.

The veterinarian testified that when the dog came into his office to be boarded for a weekend, he was so emaciated and fragile that they thought the dog might have diabetes. The dog ate and drank constantly and gained more than a pound over the weekend. This caused the veterinarian to call the police, who arrested the owners for cruelty to animals.

Custody of the dog was then turned over to the Humane Society of Sumter County. They took photos of the dog, which were entered as evidence. The judge said that the photos almost made him cry. While in the custody of the Humane Society, the dog was put into foster care so that he would "be able to have a normal life and play in the sunshine." As he was playing one day, the dog dislocated his hip and had to be brought to another veterinarian. When the owners learned this, they were so outraged that they called the police, who arranged for the dog to stay with the veterinarian, rather than returning to the Humane Society or to the foster home. The dog remains with the veterinarian to this day.

After hearing all the testimony, the judge found both defendants guilty

of cruelty to animals. He told them that they could appeal his decision within the next 30 days, and one defendant said that he intended to appeal. Since that meant that the case was still active, and the dog is part of the evidence, the dog could not be released back into the owner's custody. So the dog will remain with the veterinarian.

Then the representative from the Humane Society asked what the legal procedure was for petitioning for custody of the dog. She did not want to see ownership and care of this dog revert to the defendants when the case was finally resolved.

The case took nearly two hours and is still continuing. The matter will be taken up next in the State Court of Sumter County on appeal.

I was shocked by the resources

that have been spent on this dog, so I came back to the office to look up some statistics on Sumter County. According to the 2000 Census, the highest percentage of household income was less than \$10,000. 25.5% of families with children under 18 were living below the poverty level. 31.2% of families with children under 5 were living below the poverty level. A staggering 63.3% of families with female householder and no husband present, with children under 5, were living below the poverty level.

That same evening I read a story in the newspaper about the Department of Family and Children Services in Florida. They had "lost" a foster child for three years. The social worker had failed to meet with the child, had failed to make reports, had

failed to notice that the child was no longer present. It was a tragedy. It turned out that the foster mother had murdered the child and the State of Florida didn't find out until three years after the fact.

In Sumter County, our school children are without a School Superintendent. We are in the midst of fights about leadership.

Those of us who are citizens of Sumter County, GA, should focus our resources on the *people* of Sumter County, who are suffering from the burden and oppression of poverty. ✦

*Elizabeth Dede, a non-residential Partner at the Open Door Community, works with the Prison & Jail Project in Americus, GA.*

## poetry corner



JULIE LONNEMAN

## Hiroshima, I Remember

By Lauren Cogswell

It is a family affair.

August 6, 2005; Hiroshima Day.  
I kneel in prayer  
My hands outstretched like a beggar  
Please no more bombs,  
No more nuclear fire,  
No more burning rain,  
No more days to remember the dead.  
Veni Sancte Spiritus

August 1955  
My grandfather was the air raid  
foreman for the neighborhood  
In the dark of the night  
The siren cuts through the warm  
summer air.  
Under his metal pith helmet  
My grandfather takes his flashlight and  
covers it with a sock,  
so he won't be seen.  
He walks the streets.  
Are the children safe?  
I wonder, Was he afraid?  
Was there someone like him walking the  
streets in Japan,  
Praying for the life of his children?

My aunt, just a girl,  
pushes her baby buggy  
Down the sidewalk, too far from home.

The siren shrieks  
in the middle of the afternoon.  
She cannot move her feet, she screams  
and melts into tears.  
Would she too become ashes?  
My grandmother rushes out  
to find her lost child.  
Hush, hush, little one. It is not real.  
There are no bombs here.  
I wonder, Was my grandmother afraid?  
Was there a mother like her in Japan  
searching the sidewalks  
for her crying child?

Five years later, my uncle boards a train  
in Japan.  
He would later marry that little girl  
stranded on a sidewalk.  
But now he is a soldier  
in the Korean War.  
On the train, the Japanese women tap  
his shoulder as they near, and point  
Hiroshima, Hiroshima.  
You must not forget.  
On an empty street a deformed man,  
scarred by nuclear fire  
Holds in his outstretched hand  
A piece of gnarled glass.  
For sale. Hiroshima.  
You must not forget.

1985, I am eleven years old.  
Playing four square, an explosion

The army ammunition plant  
across the river,  
we children, know the sound too well.  
Will someone lose their father today to  
the making of war?  
I am afraid.

In the cool of the evening,  
stories are told,  
of the lives of our family,  
of odd relatives, escapades and  
embarrassing moments,  
told and retold over supper,  
passed around like communion bread.  
But these of fear, of war, I never knew.  
Until I asked. Do you remember?

The next day I kneel in prayer  
In front of the Enola Gay  
A beggar for peace  
My outstretched hands are burning.  
A piece of gnarled glass.  
My eyes fill with my aunt's tears  
My grandfather's protecting hand rests  
on my shoulder.  
Hiroshima, I remember. ✦

*Lauren Cogswell is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community. She spent Hiroshima Day with other Catholic Workers at the National Air and Space Museum in a witness against war.*

Send us your poetry! We especially welcome poetry from people in prison and on the streets.

Mark M. Bashor, Poetry Corner  
The Open Door Community  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

# Murphy Davis and the Journey Toward Health, Peace, and Justice

Dear Friends,

This week we got the gift of life: Murphy Davis has been taken off the Bone Marrow Track. She is not heading toward a transplant. Over a year ago, after her third recurrence of cancer, on the Sunday after our first clinic appointment, Rev. Anthony Granberry preached at the Open Door Community about Murphy's cancer and our journey in faith and practice with her. His sermon was "Faith or Fear." He challenged us to claim life, live life, pray for life, believe in life, practice life, and to be alive. Rev. Granberry's sermon, like your caring, prayers, visits, letters, emails, contributions, bone marrow drives and bone marrow testing, has been basic to this time of healing and recovery of health.

Dr. Amelia Langston and her team at Emory University Hospital and the Winship Cancer Clinic are among the most loving, sacrificing, and committed people we know.

What can we say? Thank you. We love you. What can we do? We believe that this healing is for a purpose. God is alive and well inside Murphy Davis and the Open Door Community. The work for which she has been called is not yet completed. We will continue to build a discipleship community of the widest diversity, for that is our vocation. We are Protestant Catholic Workers. Murphy will continue to deepen her life and give her time in performing the Works of Mercy, especially visiting the

prisoners, fighting the death penalty, editing *Hospitality*, writing, and trying to rebuild Atlanta in a way that all are welcomed and none are poor or homeless. We are Peacemakers, working for the end of war and establishment for justice.

Murphy and I are also "changing stride." We will spend more time at Dayspringfarm and try to live our lives with less stress and more Sabbath. Yet, we know that the passion for life, the compassion for the poor, the vision of the Beloved Community and the courage to engage the powers of American Empire come from the streets, the prisons, reducing the distance in suffering and renunciation of privilege and power.

This week Dr. Langston interpreted the CT scan of two weeks ago for us. The cancer continues to be in full remission. The fungal pneumonia, which may last the rest of Murphy's life, is stable and, if anything, it has healed a wee tiny bit. Murphy is well, strong, beautiful, joyful, and raising hell in city council, so Dr. Langston removed her from the Bone Marrow Transplant Track.

We know, and you should know, there are no guarantees that the cancer will not return. Let us live by faith and hope, fully, embracing the days and sleeping long and at peace at night. Murphy will continue to receive oversight and care; Dr. Langston will continue to be her healer and shepherd.

Every three months Murphy will have scans, blood work, an infusion of an anti-cancer drug called Retuxin, and meet with Dr. Langston.

We rejoice. We give thanks. Without Murphy being on Disability and Medicaid, what would we do? Please work so that everyone in the United States of America will get all the medical care they need and medical students, nurses, and techs can leave school without debt. Jubilee!!!

Murphy never found a bone marrow match. Yet, hundreds and hundreds joined the bone marrow registry for her and others. Thank you. Many people gave their blood; many people organized drives. What a source of life and energy this has been for

## Join the Movement for Life for Shawn Mitchell, Fulton County Firefighter!

The movement for life continues in our search for a bone marrow match for Fulton County Firefighter Shawn Mitchell, who's been diagnosed with leukemia. Those of you who live in the Atlanta area, please take note and spread the word about the following upcoming drives organized by Fulton County.

**September 19, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

**September 22, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

For information on locations, please contact Ann Littlejohn at 404.224.0518 or [ann.littlejohn@co.fulton.ga.us](mailto:ann.littlejohn@co.fulton.ga.us).

## would you like to receive *Hospitality*?

If you would like to give *Hospitality* every month to yourself or a friend, please fill out, clip, and send this form to:

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

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

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

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

Name

Address

Email

Phone



## volunteer needs

- People to accompany community members to doctors' appointments
- Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna, please) on whole-wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings
- Volunteers for Monday and Tuesday breakfasts and for Wednesday and Thursday soup kitchens

**For more information on  
volunteer opportunities, contact  
Jodi Garbison at 404-875-1472 or  
[odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net](mailto:odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net).**

Murphy and those of us who surround her. Again, thank you. A special word goes to Lauren Cogswell of the Open Door Community, and our long haul and great friend Mary Sinclair who have led the way, learned the ropes, untied the knots, and spent hours on the phone and email helping many other great friends (Lee Miller, Erskine Clarke, Jay and Suzanne Hobby-Shippen and lots of Catholic Workers and Presbyterians among them) plan and sponsor drives and/or give marrow. We rejoice. You all have given life from your life to Murphy Davis. Thank you.

Thousands need transplants. Our marrow is likely a source for others. Let us give. The homeless are dying on our streets. Let us give. The hungry are starving. Let us give. The prisoner is languishing. Let us give.

Thank you. Rejoice. Serve the Lord with Gladness.

Peace to you,  
Eduard Loring



# In, Out & Around 910

## Summer 2005

compiled by Calvin Kimbrough  
and Murphy Davis



ERIC GARBISON

*There has been plenty of coming and going around nine-ten this summer. Several community members have visited co-workers, supporters, friends in prison, and other communities, and our house has been full of visitors.*

*In June, Jodi Eric, Henri, and Ana Garbison made a surprise visit to Eric's parents in Iowa for Eric's father's retirement as a special education teacher. Along the way there and back they visited Karen Catholic Worker in St. Louis (Jodi and the kids are pictured on the steps on the left), the Des Moines (Iowa) Catholic Worker, and Emmanuel House in Memphis. Meridith Owensby visited Viva House and Jonah House in Baltimore. Tony Sinkfield visited the Voluntown Peace Trust in Voluntown, Connecticut. He spent three weeks with long-time friend and Open Door volunteer, Danny Malec, helping with a summer camp for children of the inner-city whose parents are chemically addicted or in prison. He also visited the Hartford (CT) Catholic Worker and St. Francis House in New London, CT. And Lauren Cogswell visited the Albany New York Catholic Worker and the Voluntown Peace Trust.*

*In May, Elizabeth Dede, Murphy Davis, and Ed Loring went to visit Open Door Partner, Thony Green (left) in the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. Then Ed and Murphy went on to Daytona Beach, Florida to enjoy a visit with Open Door supporters Mary Ann Richardson and Phoebe Smith (below, between Murphy and Ed). Phoebe was, for several years, the leader of our Friday soup kitchen. We are so thankful for the ties that bind and for visits that strengthen and renew our friendships and shared commitments.*



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, former Resident Volunteer Betty Jane Crandall came to visit with her good friend Chris Berg. They helped us serve the holiday meal for our homeless and hungry friends and cheered our spirits with their presence.*

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hungry, homeless, and imprisoned.*

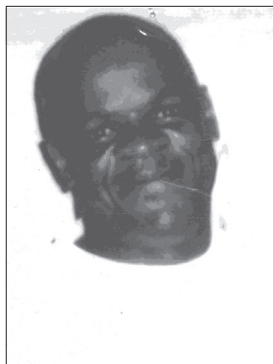
*Join street actions and  
peaceful demonstrations.*

*Enjoy regular retreats and  
meditation time at Dayspring Farm.*

*Join Bible study and theological  
reflections from the Base.*

*You might come to the margins  
and find your center.*

**Contact: Phil Leonard**  
For information  
and application forms, visit  
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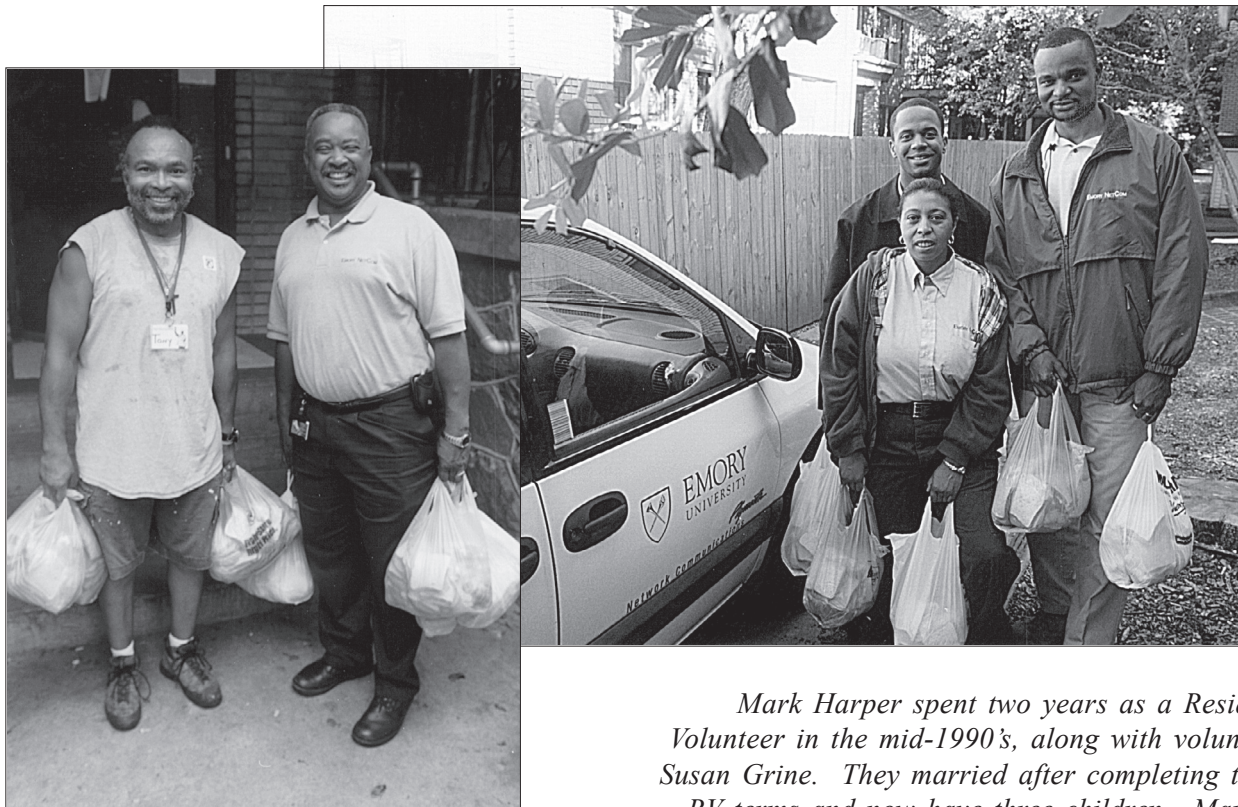


*Mary Ellen Mitchell (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) has been a part of our lives as she has visited her dear friend Meridith Owensby (in the wheelbarrow) over the years of Meridith's life at the Open Door. This summer Mary Ellen spent two weeks with us and recruited friends to landscape our side yard and put up a new swing set for our children. Left to right are Pierre Gerardin, Scott Driscoll, Dave Garth, Dan Brozouski, Barb Murray Donovan Gerty, Nelia Kimbrough, Mark Bashor, and Stanley Kinnard.*



CALVIN KIMBROUGH





For many years, a wonderful group of friends from the staff of Emory University have delivered hundreds of sandwiches and other gifts of food for us to serve from our kitchen. On the left, Tony Sinkfield receives bags of sandwiches from Winfred Sneed. On the right, Mauice Ricard, Jerri Martin and Bernard Sanders deliver food during their lunch hour. A close relationship has grown among these friends and our Thursday kitchen volunteers. Tony says he can set his clock by their arrival in time for the door to open and provide plenty of yummy sandwiches. We are so grateful.

Mark Harper spent two years as a Resident Volunteer in the mid-1990's, along with volunteer Susan Grine. They married after completing their RV terms and now have three children. Mark is Pastor of the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens, GA. In July, Mark brought a group from Covenant to work with us for a week. Left to right, they are Paige Campbell, Chris Todd, Chris Harper, Mark Harper, Wyatt Pless, Gabe Harper, Ssempe Kisaalita, and Betsy Pless. We look forward to their return to help serve our Labor Day holiday meal.



Georgia continues to execute its own citizens. In July, Robert Conklin was executed in spite of compelling evidence from the medical examiner that he killed in self-defense. The Open Door Community joined as usual with other death penalty abolitionists in front of the State Capitol to protest the execution and pray for an end to the cycles of violence and revenge. On the above right, Murphy calls us to remember Robert as well as George Crooks, who was killed, as children of God in need—as are we all—of forgiveness and mercy. On the right, Heather Barger leads the group in prayer. In the photo below, Sister Denise Laffan, a Buddhist priest who was a resident volunteer at the Door in 1990, chants and drums to lead us into silent meditation at the time of the execution. Please join in to bring an end to the death penalty.



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DAN MAUK



**Waldo, continued from page 1**  
silence the truth, the love, the pursuit of peace and justice. “You can jail the dissenters but not the dissent.”

As Murphy said recently before the Atlanta City Council, we come with the stories of *dangerous memory*. Monday, June 20th, the dangerous memory was the story of the 1950s and the Negro Removal by Central Atlanta Progress. Today, I stand before you with the Dangerous Memory of the Radical Remnant of the Discipleship Movement. The Homeland Church of the Holy Roman Empire tried to implement a **Peter Waldo & Waldensian Removal Act**. The Popes were less successful than our racist, slave trading, American Indian murdering, Presbyterian President Andrew Jackson and his Indian Removal Act of 1836. Removal of the unwanted is an ongoing process by the powers of evil and exclusion.

On Thursday, June 30th, we went to Woodruff Park, practicing the works of Works of Mercy, as we feed the hungry and publicly cried out and wailed the dangerous memory of the starvation of 25-day-old Enestae Kessee Jr. two years ago.

Our action was an unmasking, naming, and engaging in the death works of the Shirley Franklins, AJ Robinsons, and Cynthia Tuckers whose continuation of the Negro Removal for their privilege and benefit is racist, classist, and oppressive. The city, obeying the idols of greed and exclusion, are attempting to hide, jail, and demean the poorest of the poor in the center of our city. All the while we study, learn, plan, organize, believe, love, and hope that our ancestors will hear us and help us. Today let me tell you about Peter Waldo.

Peter Waldo was born with a silver spoon in his mouth sometime around 1140. He died with the words of Jesus in his mouth in 1209. Like the rest of us Peter did not choose the most important givens of his life: his parents, class, country, language, his socialization into cultural values. No one gets to make such choices. We face the choices of what to do with what we have been given. “Today I put before you blessing or curse; life or death. Choose life” (Deuteronomy 30.19). Only a small Radical Remnant is able to make the choice of blessing and life for reasons still unknown. But you, the reader, can. This reflection on our good ancestor Peter Waldo is an offering for you and me to choose life like Peter did.

Like Moses, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mahatma Gandhi, Peter grew up in style. His dad got him going in business and he was a good entrepreneur. In fact he was such a good businessman that he began to accrue surplus. Waldo, his wife, and daughters had more than they needed. Therein, he faced the most important question of the spiritual and social life that anyone, family, or nation

must face: *What do we do with what we have when we have more than we need?* Human life is lived in the tragic dimension. Having more than we need makes us want more. Surplus is a root cause of greed. The holding and saving of the resources that lead to surplus make us “blind,” “deaf,” and “afraid,” to use basic biblical metaphors.

Peter Waldo’s success and surplus made him want more. Why does surplus tend to create greed at a more aggressive level and with greater social harm than scarcity? Another one of those tragic dimensions of the human journey. In the Middle Ages, the days before the Magisterial Reformation and the rise of Calvinist businessmen to unprecedented power in shaping the morals and economies of Europe, usury was forbidden by Canon Law. Usury is the charging of interest on a loan of money. The need to borrow money, until the modern era, was based on need and very often misery. Charging interest among Israelites is forbidden in the Old Testament. Special laws of protection were added for the poor, orphan and widow. When the rich broke the Mosaic Code and charged interest, the Prophets railed against them, condemning such an evil practice and the money making method.

Peter’s surplus made him hungry, like a satiated person whose eating never satisfies (*You shall eat, but not be satisfied, and there shall be a gnawing hunger within you*, from Micah 6.14a). He turned to usury; worked the other side of the tracks; made people swear to confidentiality, and grew richer and richer and richer. His life, at this point, foreshadows the developed nations that suck resources and loan money to the poor nations of the world (read Paul Wolfowitz).

Peter Waldo grew up in Lyons, France. He went to Mass, was respectful and respected. Was a member of Central Lyons Progress, paid his dues on time, stayed home with his family in the evenings. He was, by the standards of the day, “a good man” like a Christian slaveholder who gave the slaves an extra peck of corn to celebrate the birth of the Proslavery-Christ each Christmas.

But as the wind would have it, one day while strutting along the earthen street, Mr. Waldo heard a person who could read and who was reading from the Vulgate Bible. Suddenly a fiery, living, radical Word began to shake his foundations:

**The Rich Young Man**  
*Once a man came to Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what good thing must I do to receive eternal life?”*  
*“Why do you ask me concerning what is good?” answered Jesus. “There is only One who is good. Keep the commandments if you want to enter life.”*

*“What commandments?” he asked. Jesus answered, “Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; respect your father and your mother; and love your neighbor as you love yourself.”*

*“I have obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else do I need to do?”*  
**Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect [mature] sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.”**

*When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he was very rich.*

*Jesus then said to his disciples, “I assure you: it will be very hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of heaven. I repeat: it is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”*

*When the disciples heard this, they were completely amazed. “Who, then, can be saved?” they asked.*

*Jesus looked straight at them and answered, “This is impossible for human beings, but for God everything is possible.”*

*Then Peter spoke up. “Look,” he said, “we have left everything and followed you. What will we have?”*  
*Jesus said to them, “You can be sure that when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne in the New Age, then you twelve followers of mine will also sit on thrones, to rule the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake, will receive a hundred times more and will be given eternal life. But many who now are first will be last, and many who now are last will be first. (Mark 10.17-31; Luke 18.18-30)*

. This event which probably took place in 1170. Just get the Word on the streets! Think of the Loan Officer at your branch bank taking a break from computing interest on home improvement loans to old widow-women in a gentrifying intown neighborhood. He goes outside for a little walk after checking the stock market report. Boom! The Wind swoops down and grabs him because some wild street preacher was just balancing on the curb and reading the Word. The Loan Officer repents, never returns to his little desk in its pleasant prisoned cubicle; instead, he joins the Peace Movement and goes to Woodruff Park and teaches the Police that Jesus was a Peacemaker and gave all he had to the

poor. The man is put in jail because the police thought he was panhandling. After being lost at the Fulton County Jail for three days, his pastor finds him. Unfortunately, the pastor is a professional and thus could not have this irrational behavior in his congregation; so they ship him to the Los Angeles Catholic Worker. Something like that could happen to our Mayor Shirley Franklin. Something like that happened to Peter Waldo just 835 years ago and is still going on.

Peter’s conversion must have been rooted in some deep restlessness and stricken conscience. Anyone who charges interest, practices usury, even in a capitalistic system which is based upon usury (our Presbytery charges interest on loans to churches), knows it is against the will of Yahweh-Elohim.

Peter’s conversion is much like another rich man and usurer whom Jesus engaged. Just before entering the Capitol city to take on the powerful, Jesus met Zacchaeus (Lu 19.1-10). Zacchaeus, like the quisling Zell Miller, was short. He was a tax collector who lived off the usurious profits of his covenantal partners; enough so that Zack was a rich man. Zack, like Peter Waldo and like Dorothy Day and we ourselves, was caught in “a filthy rotten system,” to borrow from Dorothy. Jesus saw Zack up in a sycamore tree and invited himself to Zack’s home for supper. Again, like Peter Waldo, Zacchaeus experienced a sudden conversion of the Radical Remnant type. Repentance is a form of political and economic concientization whereby the death of domination system and the call to a life of resistance is revealed and formed in the heart of the new believer.

Zach said to Jesus: “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” This is the “cost of discipleship.” When Billy Graham or Bishop Eddie Long or any TV evangelist talks of the numbers of conversions they  
*continued on page 9*

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LEO MCGUIRE

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*continued from page 8*

have notched on their belt, test them out. Have the believers given their possessions to the poor? Has restitution been made for the way people or cities have used their surplus? What if a city had 10,000 homeless people and the benefactors used their surplus to build the biggest fish house in America? What if the lovers of classical music raised \$300 million dollars for a hall where the highest notes raised high the roof beams? Yet, these same people did not tithe and give \$30 million to build housing for those who cannot pay rent? What doom awaits such a hardened folk? (Zack did half to the poor and restitution of four times. This is the New Testament model based on the Jewish Scriptures). Let me note as well, please dear reader, that the stories of Zacchaeus and Peter Waldo are stories of rich men who are embedded in the system and are successful by those standards. Again and again in these pages, we suggest that our relationship with Yahweh-Elohim and Jesus, The Human One through Holy Spirit, teaches us that God is on the side of the poor. However, God loves and yearns and suffers for the rich as well. These two stories are examples of God's love for the rich and her care to point out the road to redemption, salvation, and practice for the poor. Oh, what a loving Parent we rich folk have in our God! Thank you O Lord!

In 1995 when Murphy was first diagnosed with cancer and we were told she did not have long to live, Dr. Marilyn Washburn told me to get my “desk” in order. She also wanted to know if our marriage and life of intimacy were strong enough to go into this “death watch,” like our friends on death row when the state is hungry for flesh and the good people remain silent (Amos 5.13). So it was with Peter Waldo, as it had been with Zacchaeus: first things first. Peter’s began by lying down his fishing net. He gave most of his land to his wife and daughters. The remainder of his land and possessions he did what the Rich Man was invited to do by Jesus: he sold his “stuff” and gave the money to the poor. Unlike the Rich Man who was gloomy and went away from the liberation of the Gospel as if he had just had thrown up crack cocaine after breakfast, Peter Waldo was filled with glee and he leaped in the streets for joy. Now this former money-monger, loan shark, system-sustainer was a disciple of the most radical man in human history: Jesus, the Jew from nowhere named Nazareth.

Next step: Read the Bible. The domination system does not want people to understand the meaning of Scripture, because amidst all the trash and patriarchy in the Ancient Holy Texts are the most revolutionary and abundant life giving visions and directions that humankind has in its possession. Thus, the powers of oppression and belittlement have taught American Christians to read the Bible

Americany rather than to read America biblically (William Stringfellow). The Homeland Church from the fundamentalist Southern Baptist to the Roman Catholic hierarchy continue the tradition of the Puritans: We are a city on a hill. We are the model for Iraq and if they don't want it, we will kill them. We have poverty and an unjust court system, but Homeland Christians believe God doesn't give a damn as they live in Humvee Mansions and buy second homes for investment purposes (25% of all home buys are second homes within a nation of 2 million homeless people and these people scream moral values and say God blesses them with all these Monster Mansions. A little sick, don't you think? A bit idolatrous, isn't it?).

Peter wanted to read the Bible, which almost no one could do in his time. The Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Catholic Church did not want the scriptures in the hands of the people. But Peter kept trying to get the Word in his

hands. He paid, with what little money he had left, two priests to translate the Gospels and a few Psalms from the Vulgate into the language of the streets of Lyons, France. A mighty act of defiance. This finally led to the death of many followers. A revolutionary fire was blazing in France.

The radical Word was read. The radical Word was heard. A human being was born again, transformed from rich loan shark to a faithful disciple of Jesus. He began to preach on the streets. Others heard and joined him. A community was born! The theme of their lives then and our lives today, based on the inspired holy Word and authority of Scripture, is that we are to follow Jesus. We are to practice the faith of Jesus as well as believe in Jesus (says Pete Gathje). We must practice what we preach. The crisis of Christianity today, a very sick religion indeed, is that they have substituted a faith in Jesus for the faith of Jesus. Preachers either don't practice what they preach; or they preach on the latest novel, poem or movie and there is no practice involved except counting the offering.

As Peter and his partners began to study the scriptures for themselves without the aids of the theologians and canon lawyers, they revitalized the Radical Remnant, the Discipleship Movement. Certain features came to the fore as gifts from the Holy Spirit, which are always there.

First, how would they get funding? George W. Barbarossa and the Christian Right had not yet come up with buying faith based communities for Empire Work. So, like Jesus, the radical leaders since Moses in Midian, St. Francis to come, and poor people all over the world, but most importantly in Atlanta and Barnacle Marcus' Vagrant Free Triangle, *they begged*. We beg. Do you beg? The Community, now named The Poor Men of Lyons, took vows of poverty as Jesus invited them so to do. Unlike the United States of America, the rich and the church hierarchy loved beggars, they got "merits" for giving them food and money, and it made them feel good. Until the Reformation and the rise of the middle class, Christians were not afraid of beggars. Now that money is the means to identity, comfort and security, we are afraid of beggars and our response is to criminalize the poor.

The Poor Men of Lyons were criminalized as well. Like John the Baptist, like Jesus Christ, like the early church, but not for begging and wearing worn out clothes and going barefooted most of the time. They were criminalized because of the content of the Goodnews of the Gospel. They embodied what we preach at 910 and on the streets of Atlanta: as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached on the streets in his day: “These are revolutionary times. Our only hope

today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism and militarism.” Not the message to please Popes, Bishops, Presbytery Investigating Committees, the Police or the rich who use their wealth to create more wealth instead of justice. And this little group of Poor Men were not only men; they included women who served the Lord’s Supper, but not the mass. They were ordained to the Works of Mercy and Street Preaching, but not the priesthood. As is consistent with Gospel living, they found nothing convincing or convicting in Augustine’s Just War theory, and so they practiced non-violence and peacemaking.

In addition, like Karl Marx, they felt private property created large landholdings and caused homelessness, so they renounced private ownership and held all possessions in common, as did the beggars Jesus and his apostles. They fasted, like the Pharisees, three times a week; and their sweets policy was almost as strict as Gladys' is at our door.

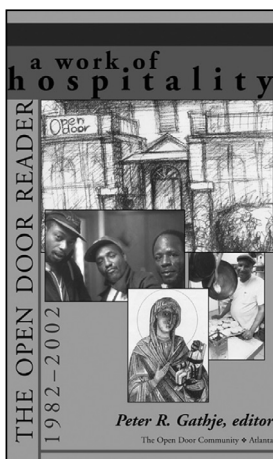
The Poor Men of Lyon believed they were loyal to the church. They did not question the doctrines, only the Way of Life of Discipleship, calling the Church to return to the Way of Jesus. What was needed was a reformation of life and conduct. (Waldo was a traitor to his class.) No wealth, no interest on loans, no war fare, women's rights, Bible in the hands of everyone, laity can touch the elements of the Eucharist. Begging street preachers calling for a revolution of values. So, what can the world do with such folk? What did we do with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Malcolm X? Elijah Lovejoy?

In 1179, they were forbidden to preach by the Archbishop of Lyons. So Peter Waldo went to Pope Alexander III, who approved of his voluntary poverty but forbade his preaching. (Street preaching. What happens when you get the Gospel outside the sanctuary?) Stop Preaching the Gospel? Sounds like what the Empire and Religious elite tried to do to our St. Paul. Under the Lordship of Jesus, they continued preaching and building the Beloved Community as the Radical Remnant.

Next, in 1184 at the Council of Verona, they were put under the ban, or excommunication and condemnation by church authorities. They refused to recant their beliefs or stop preaching in the streets. They were considered Agitators, Rebels, Time Warped, and a threat to the security of the Church and the status quo of the Holy Roman Empire. And most unfairly, they were considered heretics, which means death: fire at the stake, drowning, quartering, or said more simply: The Death Penalty.

According to my dictionary of church history: “Although they were in reality schematics, that is doctrine was not **Waldo**, *continued on page 11*

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**Beggars**, *continued from page 1*  
you do. I do. (I have a family.)

So our story picks up when this character is on the run, afraid for his life, afraid his own brother would kill him for being a lowdown thief, sleeping on the ground—alone, guilty, messed up, scared, homeless, a rock for a pillow, and desperate for a woman. You reckon this guy *peed* outside while he was on the road, on foot? We know he did a lot of *urban camping* because he was sleeping with his head on a big rock. Do you suppose he might have *panhandled* along the way? Well, of course he panhandled, because in the ancient Middle East, where this story happened, somewhere between 3500 and 4000 years ago, society had a very different understanding of panhandling. Back then, you were *supposed* to ask strangers for what you needed, and they were *supposed* to give you shelter and food and drink and whatever else you asked for—and they called it hospitality!

*Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he passed the night there. He took a rock and used it for a headrest and lay down to sleep there. During the night he had a dream: there was a ladder, standing on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; and messengers of God were going up and coming down the ladder. Our God was there, standing over him, saying “I am your God, the God of Sarah and Abraham, the God of Rebecca and Isaac. Your descendants will be like the specks of dust on the ground; you will spread to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south, and all the tribes of the earth will bless themselves by you and your descendants. Know that I am with you. I will keep you safe wherever you go, and bring you back to this land; I will not desert you before I have done all that I have promised you.” Then Jacob woke and said, “Truly, our God is in this place, and I never knew it!” He was filled with trembling and said, “How awe-inspiring this place is! This is nothing less than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!” Jacob rose early the next morning, and took the stone he had used as a pillow and set it up as a monument, and anointed it with oil. Jacob named the place Bethel—“House of God.”*  
(Genesis 28:10-19,

*The Inclusive Hebrew Scriptures)*

I told you you wasn’t gonna believe this. This liar, this thief, this schemer, was Jacob. The Jacob who withheld food from his hungry brother Esau in order to get Esau’s firstborn privileges. The Jacob who put on animal skins to trick his old blind daddy Isaac into giving him the blessing that rightfully belonged to his older brother.

Now Jacob apparently got his ethics by way of his mother, who was a liar, too, and was the brains behind this whole thing. See, his mother Rebecca had heard this prophecy while she was pregnant with the twins, and the prophecy said the older child would end up serving the younger child. But what it did *not* say was that Rebecca needed to lie and cheat to make it happen. Rebecca just took the deception piece on herself. Like lots of people, Rebecca and Jacob did something bad because they didn’t believe they could get what they wanted by doing something good.

Now, Jacob’s daddy hadn’t been above lyin’ himself, either, so Jacob really got it from both sides. Sometimes mama and daddy ain’t the best role models. But Jacob’s behavior didn’t just come from the lying gene he seems to have inherited. See, Jacob

had been the underdog brother ever since he was in the womb—the younger, smaller, weaker twin, while his bigger, stronger, macho older brother was daddy’s favorite. Jacob had been marginalized inside his own family, always had to compete, never felt like he got enough of anything, including not enough love, and it caused him to do things he might not have done otherwise. If he had been the biggest and strongest and most beloved favorite son he might not have behaved the way that he did; being marginalized can push you to do things differently than being privileged, sometimes.

So here’s Jacob, the fugitive on the run, his brother wants him dead, he’s sleepin’ on the ground, a liar, a cheat, pushed out of the family even before he left, scared, messed up, and lookin’ for a woman. Sounds like quite a catch, doesn’t he?

Well, maybe not everyone’s dream date, *until* God comes to visit to tell him who he really is. This fugitive, lowdown, thievin’, sleepin’ on concrete Jacob is loved by God, chosen by God, given a vision in a dream, given a promise, is important to God’s big and exciting plans, is included in the covenant. At Jacob’s lowest point, God shows up in a powerful way. It makes no sense—that’s the beauty and the joy and the mystery of it. You might think God would save God’s blessings for somebody more deserving, somebody who worked hard and earned it, somebody with better morals. But no. That ain’t the way it works with Yahweh.

Jacob just *thought* he was alone, there with his head on that rock-hard pillow. Turned out he was in God’s house. Psalm 139, which was our Call to Worship tonight, tells us God is with us wherever we are – getting up, lying down, coming, going. And God decided to show Jacob a vision, a path, a stairway (according to Led Zeppelin), a ladder to heaven, with angels cruising up and down on it, showing Jacob the connection between heaven and earth.

Last summer, after being away from Atlanta for several years, Amy and I moved back and we returned to worship and volunteering at the Open Door. My first job as a volunteer last summer was Wednesday morning showers. For any of you who don’t know, working showers means that Ira “Butch” Terrell is in charge of your morning. And at that time, Wednesday morning showers also meant that Dean Graham was the one taking the list – and makin’ everybody laugh and just generally havin’ a good time in the clothes closet, while we listen to classic soul on the radio and sing and (attempt to) dance.

I mention Dean Graham because he’s usually here for showers and he comes to volunteer at holiday meals like Memorial Day (which was also his wedding day), and July 4<sup>th</sup>, when he brought his lovely bride Adrian with him. Well, this past Monday morning, Dean came to breakfast, where he usually *isn’t*. And he shared that in his own reflections for the past couple of weeks, he had been seeing Jacob’s ladder, and he saw our homeless friends at the other end of the ladder, the top part that ends in heaven, feasting and having showers – like at the Open Door. This is *heaven* work. And our friends from the street are chosen by God for the heavenly banquet tables.

Now, while all this was happening at the Monday breakfast, which I knew nothing about at the time, I was upstairs in my sickbed (and calling downstairs to my friends Nelia and Calvin for Gatorade and bathroom tissue), and I was working on my sermon and the lectionary passage just *happened* to be the story of Jacob’s ladder. I tried to tell you you wasn’t gonna believe this.

The Holy Spirit of God can blow through any place, any person, anytime—and that makes some

people angry, because they’ve got this idea that God chooses worthy, deserving people (like them). But the God I know in scripture visits and chooses people who are broken, mixed up, messed up, hurting—like me, like you, like Jacob, like every person who is poor, hungry, sick, scared, addicted, homeless, panhandling, in prison, sleeping with her head on a rock or sleeping on death row waiting for the death warrant.

These are the ones God calls into love and new life; these are the ones God sets the table for; these are the ones Jesus spreads his arms wide for (forming a triangle that is the complete reversal of the proposed downtown Atlanta “tourist triangle” that excludes our homeless friends); these are the ones Jesus wraps a towel around his waist for so he can wash tired, dirty, aching, sore, traveling feet. These are the ones at the top of the ladder in heaven, enjoying all the good food and hot water and rest they could ever dream of.

And Jacob went from sleepin’ on the ground to being the father of the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel and his daughter Dinah (with some significant participation from Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah, who bore the children). Jacob’s descendants were God’s covenant people, the children of promise and blessings, the ones through whom all the nations would be blessed.

It’s right here in the Bible. I didn’t have to make it up. Believe it. Amen.

Now, you might be thinkin’ to yourself (like John Gilkey said to me one day), “Chrystal, I like you, but you could be wrong.” You might say to me, “I haven’t had any dreams or visions, God hasn’t visited me or talked to me lately, or ever – we can’t all be Jacob or Dean Graham – so I’m not feelin’ this ladder up to heaven thing. I’m not feelin’ the promises of God.” That, my friends, is part of the beauty of this Eucharist table: the covenant promise of Jesus, his body and blood, are right here for all of us messed up, broken, scared, addicted, hurting, sick, lying, cheating, poor, sinful, unbelieving people, *even and especially when we aren’t feelin’ it*.

There’s an incredible, mysterious, beautiful plan to it all. I’ve had a very difficult, sad year filled with death and grieving and illness and caregiving and hard changes and near-crippling anxiety. Last weekend I was at my lowest point. And Murphy Davis came up to me, at this low point, and said it’s my turn to preach and celebrate the Eucharist this week. My turn to remember and tell the good news, my turn to talk about promise and hope in Jesus, and *why we do not despair*. So I come to this Eucharist table as a beggar tonight, as a panhandler, asking for what I so desperately need, asking for what is right here for me. For us. The table set by Jesus. And we didn’t work for it or earn it or deserve it. All we can do is receive it and enjoy it and celebrate it and praise God for it. For a love so big and powerful that it changes us; for a love so big and powerful that we won’t fully understand it, or believe that God has come to us, until we are at the other end of the ladder. ♣

### Correction

On page 6 of the August 2005 *Hospitality*, we inadvertently omitted the name of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, GA, from the list of churches that faithfully provide vans and volunteer drivers for the Hardwick Prison Trip.

We apologize for this omission, and celebrate our partnership with Oakhurst Baptist.



# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Just got the most recent *Hospitality*, which I devoured cover to cover. It was fantastic. I was there that year with Zdenek ("Connections," by Zdenek Rossman, July 2005) and remember him so fondly. Lots of thoughts about the connection to Mother Earth from Lauren's ("A Proper Regard for the Soil," by Lauren Cogswell, June 2005) article. It puts me in mind of a movement that I've become interested in lately, founded in Italy, called Slow Food. There is a beautiful book which explains the movement, highlights a handful of spots around the world which have been recognized by the movement for producing traditional food in time-honored ways, and gives recipes. I would love to have a copy sent to the Open Door, if you think there is interest and if you don't already have one.

Betsy Cameron and Mark Gray  
County Donegal  
Ireland

Dear Murphy,

Your Pentecost sermon ("Pentecost: Experiencing Truth, Practicing Dangerous Memory," by Murphy Davis, July 2005) was excellent. It told the story accurately, and you applied it very appropriately. It was powerful in its impact. I congratulate you. Much love.

Uncle Murph  
R. Murphy Williams, Jr.  
Retired Presbyterian minister  
Dallas, TX

Thank you for your faith and witness. I appreciate *Hospitality* and include it as a part of my daily devotionals. The articles keep me focused on the important issues connected to poverty, homelessness, and prison. Your work influences my work in a positive way.

Sam McGregor Jr  
Rock Hill, SC

Dear Open Door,

I want to tell you how much you mean to me and I admire your work. If I were younger and in a bit better health I'd apply to be a resident for awhile. But as it is I'd probably be only a burden. Anyway, I'm with you in spirit.

Would you please send *Hospitality* to my two sons. If you could I'd like them to get the March issue. I thought it was especially good and I don't want to part with my issue.

My love,  
Joy Orth  
Tenino, WA

Thanks for staying in touch and sharing this journey with us. Our short stay at the Open Door (in 1994) continues to be a benchmark for us and *Hospitality* an amazing gift and encouragement and challenge. We've just returned to Millville, our home base.

In Jesus' all-embracing love,  
Pauline Redmond  
Jack Miller  
Millville, MN



*Hospitality:*

I wish to join Janice Buttrum in response to the criticism of Murphy Davis by Mr. Andrew McCaskill (see Letters, March 2005 and June 2005). To suggest that Murphy exploits causes for self-promotion is absurd. You cannot know her or the ministry. The ignorance is obvious.

I met Murphy and Ed in the seventies when Death Row was at the Georgia State Prison in Reidsville. They pastored Clifton Presbyterian Church. On a monthly basis the van would be filled with gasoline and prayers as they traveled across the state. They came to comfort, to encourage, to strengthen, to validate.

Six weeks after the birth of their lovely daughter Hannah, Murphy placed this wondrous gift in my arms. The trust and care demonstrated blesses me to this day. She shared herself and her family.

In '80 the electric chair was moved to Jackson. The visits continued. There was also the regular letters rich with hope and compassion. The correspondence continues faithfully.

Most have forgotten the annual Mothers March Against the Death Penalty. The actions did not cease because the media lost interest. Participation waned. Society developed a different posture.

Each Christmas Murphy insures that everyone here has a holiday package. Candy, cookies, nuts, and acknowledgement. She tries to honor the season and respect our humanity.

As she battled cancer time and again, we were not forgotten. A bald head and a full heart came into this prison to wait an hour for a sixty minute visit speaks to commitment.

There were no reporters, no cameras, as we sang "Amazing Grace," circled in fellowship. She and Ed pray for the staff here, our attorneys, our families, and us. You will not read about that in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Almost three decades of publicly displaying private beliefs entitles Murphy to admiration. She has integrity, even if not popularity.

The attack puzzles. Has Murphy irritated your conscience? Troubled your Spirit? Challenged your character?

When last did you offer kindness to a condemned person? Feed or clothe the homeless? Even ask what Jesus would have you do?

Maybe you are begging for attention?  
Smile! Click.

Jack Alderman (prisoner on death row)

P.S. I thank God for Murphy Davis.

**Waldo, continued from page 9**

the issue, the refusal not to preach was the original reason for persecution and the ban, the *theologians* were threatened by their use of the *Bible* in the language of the people. The Theologians finagled to have the Poor Men of Lyons, the Waldensians, condemned as heretics. This meant that the death penalty could be used" (emphasis added). The Church and Empire decided to kill the street preachers for their active love, reading and practicing of the Bible, most particularly the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. For like the Radical Remnant Movement today, the Church, the Government, the Banker, the Racist, the Far Right, we all know that the Scriptures are the most revolutionary writing in the entire universe. When people put them into practice, the powers howl, death chews its fat, bombs are dropped and a child is born in a manger, because there is not room in the End. (Watch for the Signs: we will be out of oil in 37 years.)

The Edict drove The Poor Men of Lyons out of Lyons and scattered them over Southern Europe, where they found many followers. They also found much persecution and execution. In 1229, at the Council of Toulouse, more than 60 Waldensians were burned at the stake. In 2005, Father Bob Cushing of Augusta, Georgia was run from his parish church by the Bishop of Savannah for going to Japan to apologize for the dropping of the A bomb, especially on civilians. The burning stake of the Inquisition (they could have least used a cross) is the equivalent of our bombs today. Bishops and Ministers bless both.

Peter Waldo, fugitive preacher and radical practitioner of the Way of Jesus, died 1209 in Bohemia. He is forgotten in the center of Christian life, but lives and moves and leads and encourages us on the margins. The Waldensians are the only Medieval Sect to still exist. They are strong in the Italian Alps. Dr. Paul T. Fuhrmann, a Waldensian from Italy, was a teacher of mine at Columbia Theological Seminary. When I joined to the faculty there in 1971, I moved into the house his wife had just vacated. He had a short time before committed suicide. He was in despair; he felt the rise of a far right and soft totalitarianism coming to America.

About the time of our forgotten brother's death, another man was coming to notice. Francis of Assisi. Like the Waldensians, the Franciscans practiced Jesus' Way by a literal application of the gospels. But Francis was centered on his Lady Poverty and a Spiritual power that went along with the Pope when orders were given. Today, Peter is forgotten, and St. Francis is most revered in Atlanta when the Cathedral invites all the rich people to bring their dogs, cats, exotic animals and reptiles for a Franciscan blessing. One must tip one's hat to the power of death in Atlanta. For St. Francis was a beggar and Central Atlanta Progress would have him run out of the Vagrant Free Triangle, the successor to Central Atlanta Progress' Negro Removal Act of the 1950s. But instead St. Francis is remembered as a cute little man preaching to birds and feeding wolves. I think Peter Waldo's dangerous memory tops St. Francis' domestication.

Peter Waldo and his Movement did not develop a theology beyond the gospels, which they read literally like the Christian Right, all the Fundamentalists, and the Southern Baptist all claim to do. But we now know there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction. Don't we? ☙

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



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Soup Kitchen:** Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. – noon.

**Weekday Breakfast:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m.

**Showers:** Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

**Use of Phone:** Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,  
Wednesday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon.

**Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and**

**Soul Foot Care Clinic:** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

**Clarification Meetings:** some Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

**Weekend Retreats:** Four times each year (for our household, volunteers and supporters).

**Prison Ministry:** Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, GA, in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville; The Jackson (Death Row) Trip; Pastoral visits in various jails and prisons

**We are open...**

**Monday through Saturday:** We answer telephones from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. The building is open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday for donations. (We do not answer phone and door during our noon prayers and lunch break from 12:30 until 2:00.) Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times.

**On Sunday we invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m. and join us, following worship, for a delicious supper.**

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

## Join Us for Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.

Our worship space is limited, so if you are considering bringing a group to worship, please contact us at 770-246-7621. Please check [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| September 4  | Short Eucharist at 9:10 followed by Songs of the Labor Movement  |
| September 11 | No Worship at 9:10<br>The community will join the Prison and Jail Project in Blakely, GA for the first leg of the annual Freedom Walk          |
| September 18 | Worship at 9:10<br>Nelia Kimbrough preaching   |
| September 25 | Worship at 9:10<br>Sen. Vincent Fort preaching<br>This service will begin our celebration of the Festival of Shelters (see page 7 for details) |



### Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We will meet for clarification on selected Tuesday evenings in September from 7:30-9 pm.

*Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!*



DANIEL NICHOLS

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 404-874-9652 or see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

### Medicine Needs List

(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care Clinic)

**We are also looking for volunteers to help staff our Soul Foot Care Clinic!**

ibuprofen  
lubriderm lotion  
**COUGH DROPS**  
non-drowsy allergy tablets  
**COUGH MEDICINE (alcohol free)**

**FOOT CLINIC NEEDS**  
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)

## Needs of the Community

JEANS	FOOD PROCESSOR	DOUBLE BED
men's work shirts	hams and turkeys for our Soup Pot	disposable razors
underwear for men	sandwiches	deodorant
women's underwear	quick grits	vaseline
men's belts	cheese	COMBS
socks	<b>COFFEE</b>	HAIR BRUSHES
EYEGLASSES, READING GLASSES	multi-vitamins	toothbrushes
WALKING SHOES for men and women	MARTA tokens	toothpaste (travel sized)
(especially 9 ½ and up)	postage stamps	LIP BALM
<b>T-SHIRTS: LARGE, XL, XXL, XXXL</b>	MINIVAN IN GOOD RUNNING CONDITION	SOAP (any size)
BASEBALL CAPS	alarm clocks	SHAMPOO (FULL SIZED)
VACUUM CLEANERS	DOUBLE BED SHEETS	shower powder
LAWN MOWER	FUTON SOFA	lotion (small bottles)
	50-CUP PERCOLATOR	BLANKETS

From 11am 'til 1:30pm, 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 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!