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vol. 22, no. 2

Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.

February 2003

And Before Trent Lott, There Was...

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God. (from Ephesians 2:11-22)

By Nibs Stroupe

(Editor's note: Nibs Stroupe is pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA, and a leader in the struggle to undo racism in our society. With Inez Fleming he co-authored the book *While We Run This Race: Confronting the Power of Racism in a Southern Church*, from Orbis Press. The following is adapted from a sermon Nibs preached at Oakhurst.

In light of recent events, Nibs has this to say: "The recent revelations by Senator Trent Lott – that he wished that Strom Thurmond had been elected President in 1948 on the racist Dixiecrat ticket – offer further proof that ugly white racism often wears a 'nice' mask. The Republicans have won the white South by appealing to this racism, racism that remains abiding and strong. Actually,

we should thank Sen. Lott for inadvertently revealing this political truth that so many white people want to deny. And though the Republicans currently exploit and benefit from this racism, the Democrats are by no means innocent. Thurmond, Lott, George Wallace, and many others were Democrats at one time. The most successful strategy, revealed by Trent Lott, has been to present a public face that is 'nice' and accepting of diversity, all the while carrying out racist policies. George W. Bush can bring Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell into the inner circle at the same time that he has filled the Texas and federal prisons with poor people, especially African-Americans and Latina/os, and at the same time that he strengthens the attack on poor people in this country through his public policy.")

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." Those hallmark words of the American Revolution were penned by one of the great intellects of American history, Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was a man of great accomplishments unmatched by any other person in American public life. He was a lawyer, a state legislator, a governor, an ambassador, a secretary of state, Vice-President, and a two-term President of the United States. He is best known, however, as the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, that singular document of American history that affirmed the power of the idea of equality. It is such a powerful idea that women heard that "men created equal" meant them, even though the original founders didn't intend for it to mean them. Black people heard it in this way also, and Latino people and many others who have heard this idea of the power of equality.

President John F. Kennedy paid homage to Thomas Jefferson when he gathered Nobel laureates at the White House and described the occasion as "the most extraordinary collection of human knowledge gathered together at the White House since Thomas Jefferson dined alone" (Shannon Lanier and Jane Feldman, *Jefferson's Children*, Random House, New York, 2000, p. 27). Jefferson was a great intellect. Yet for all his accomplishments, for all of his emphasis on equality, he was also a lifelong holder of slaves. His first memory was being carried on a pillow by a slave. A slave carpenter made the coffin in which his body was buried at Monticello. The labor of black slaves made possible Monticello and all of the wealth that Jefferson accumulated. At his death, Jefferson only freed five of the more than one hundred slaves that he had.

I've been thinking about Thomas Jefferson and his internal contradiction over slavery, and indeed the American contradiction over slavery. I've been thinking about it especially ever since a statue of Jefferson was dedicated in the city square of Decatur. You can see it if you go over today – Jefferson is seated in the square. The statue was put there in honor of Paul Coverdell, the Republican United States senator from Georgia who died suddenly in 2000. The statue of Thomas Jefferson was dedicated to Paul Coverdell because both were nice gentlemen. In this time of harsh partisan politics in which we are now engaged, Paul Coverdell was known as a bridge-

Jefferson, continued on page 8

Clinton Marsh, Friend and Leader

By Murphy Davis

Clinton Marsh has died. This devoted mentor and friend, leader of the church, gentle agitator for justice and right, has left his mantle and joined the angels.

I first met this giant of a man in 1976, when he, as a representative of the United Presbyterian Church, helped me raise some money for a national demonstration against the death penalty. He understood the hateful racist roots of the death penalty and there was no question for him but that public dissent and opposition must be organized and mobilized; and the church needed to lead the way with people and resources. Our friendship was sealed, and he blessed us with great affirmation, admonition, and support from that moment on.

Clinton Marsh represented the best of what Church leadership can be. He grew up in rural Alabama in the harsh days of the early 20th



century, so he knew the harsh heel of racism as a daily experience of terror. His grandparents helped to raise him, and he told often of how they were born into slavery; this made him, as he said, "a living link to slavery." To look at this man was to know that those cruel days were not so "long ago and far away." As Faulkner would say, "The past is never dead. It isn't even past."

Marsh described racism as America's original sin: a virus that has poisoned the

wellspring of life in the United States. He knew this virus well, in American society and the church as well. But he was a loyal Presbyterian, always grateful because this church, in spite of its Southern pro-slavery heritage, was the source of his education. Northern Presbyterians had established the Presbyterian high school in Wilcox, Alabama, as well as Knoxville College and Pittsburgh Seminary,

Clinton Marsh, continued on page 10

Punishing the Poor: A Prisoner's Story

By Elizabeth Dede

It is well known that the poor suffer much harsher treatment at the hands of our criminal justice system. First of all, they are the targets of police abuse and harassment. Then they cannot afford to hire an attorney, and so often go unrepresented, or have inexperienced, overworked, or uncaring indigent defense. At the sentencing level, their crimes are subject to stiffer penalties; the mandatory sentence for crack cocaine, affordable for the poor, is longer than the mandatory sentence for powder cocaine, the drug of choice for the rich. Recently, at the Prison & Jail Project, I experienced just one more example of the ways the poor are punished more severely.

In November, I received a letter from Mr. Jackson, a man in the Georgia prison system. He told me that he had been eligible for parole since February 2002, and the two addresses he gave to the Parole Board – his mother's and his sister's – had been accepted as suitable residences. One barrier remained in the way of his release from prison: in order to be paroled he had to wear a leg monitor designed to telegraph the whereabouts of a parolee through a dedicated phone line. He wrote to us to explain that his mother is on a fixed income and could not afford to have a telephone for calls, let alone a dedicated line for his leg monitor. His sister is in a similar situation. She has a phone, but goes to school and works as a substitute teacher. Her telephone has an answering machine to receive messages about teaching jobs. The machine is incompatible with the leg monitoring device. She cannot afford to have a second line dedicated to the monitor.

Mr. Jackson had explained this situation to his counselor, who had informed him that nothing could be done. He faced having to complete his entire sentence, with a release date in 2011. He asked for our help.

At the Prison & Jail Project we receive many requests for assistance with the Parole Board's decisions. Most often we are forced to write back and explain that there is nothing we can do to sway the power of the Parole Board.

However, this prisoner's letter was compelling, and I was interested to hear the Parole Board's response to such a situation.

I called and verified that indeed Mr. Jackson's parole month was February 2002. Then I asked to speak with a parole hearing examiner. Mr. Steven Boston came on the line, and I explained the situation. He said that he would have to put me on hold while he looked up the prisoner's record. After nearly fifteen minutes of holding, I had almost decided that I was being given the run-around. I was just about to hang up when Mr. Boston came back on the line.

He gave me the unbelievably good news that Mr. Jackson is now eligible for parole without a leg monitor. There had been a recent change in policy which allowed this, said Mr. Boston. If everything else checks out with his residence addresses, Mr.

Jackson will be released to live either with his mother or his sister. I asked Mr. Boston if I could write to Mr. Jackson to convey this news. Mr. Boston assured me that this change in policy will result in Mr. Jackson's release from prison on parole, as long as his proposed residences are approved.

I thank God that Mr. Jackson wrote to us and that I learned of this change in policy. But I wonder how many hundreds more prisoners are locked up, unable to make parole because their families are too poor to afford a dedicated phone line for a leg monitor. This parole requirement is just one more way that the poor are punished in our criminal justice system. ✦

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

What the American Flag Stands For

By Charlotte Aldebron

(Editor's note: Charlotte Aldebron, 12, of Presque Isle, Maine, wrote this essay for a competition in her sixth grade English class. This essay is reprinted from Common Dreams.)

The American flag stands for the fact that cloth can be very important. It is against the law to let the flag touch the ground or to leave the flag flying when the weather is bad. The flag has to be treated with respect.

You can tell just how important this cloth is because when you compare it to people, it gets much better treatment. Nobody cares if a homeless person touches the ground. A homeless person can lie all



DAN KROVIN

over the ground all night long without anyone picking him up, folding him neatly and sheltering him from the rain.

School children have to pledge loyalty to this piece of cloth every morning. No one has to pledge loyalty to justice and equality and human decency. No one has to promise that people will get a fair wage, or enough food to eat, or affordable medicine, or clean water, or air free of harmful chemicals. But we all have to promise to love a rectangle of red, white, and blue cloth.

Betsy Ross would be quite surprised to see how successful her creation has become. But Thomas Jefferson would be disappointed to see how little of the flag's real meaning remains. ✦

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with 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:

Phil Leonard: Volunteer Coordinator, Hardwick Prison Trip, Resident Volunteer Applications
Tonnie King: Guest Ministry, Food Coordinator, and Hardwick Prison Trip
Gladys Rustay: Treasurer, Jackson Prison Trip, and Food Coordinator
Ed Loring: Correspondence, Resident Volunteer Coordinator
Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator
Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator



MURPHY DAVIS

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The Final Evaluation

A Parable by Jesus in Jerusalem on Wednesday of Holy Week

By Ed Loring

(Editor's note: The following is an adaptation of Matthew 25:31-46 from the Good News Bible.)

V 31 When the Human One comes as Leader and all the followers with him, he will sit on his foot-washing stool

V 32 and the people of the global village will be gathered round. Then this Jew will divide them unto two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

V 33 The Human One will put those who have hungered and thirsted for justice on his right and those who didn't care or were too busy on his left.

V 34 Then The Leader will say to the people on his right, "Come You who are blessed by our mother who art in heaven! Come and possess the Beloved Community and Abundant Life which has been prepared for you ever since the creation of the world."

V 35 I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes

V 36 Naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.

V 37 The Justice Seekers will then answer him, "When servant-leader did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you a cup of Ira's or Russ's coffee? Do you mean on Monday morning at Breakfast or the Wednesday Soup Kitchen?"

V 38a When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes? Do you mean Dorothy? Herbert Santiago? Aw heck, Jesus—they make us

feel welcome in our *own* home!

V 38b When did we see you naked and clothe you? What? When Ed Fuller, Sye and Tonnie King offered showers to 58 folk? Awesome! Which one were you?

V 39 When did we ever see you sick? Yes, we know Heather accompanied Ralph to Grady for ear surgery. Yes, we heard from Dick about the dried blood on his head.

V 39b Prison? Visit you? Gladys and Exzavious Gibson? Tonnie King and Leon Tollette? Mike Casey and Emanuel Hammond? Chuck and William Todd? Murphy, Elizabeth and Ed with Thony Green 102340? Jesus, Human One, seems like you really get around! Is this what Martin Luther meant when he said you are ubiquitous?

V 40 The Leader will reply, "I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the oppressed or marginalized, or poor, these sisters and brothers of mine, you did it to me.

V 41 The Human One will say to those on his left. Away from me, you who don't care or are too busy! Return to your life inside the domination system, the Harlot and Babylonian beast called the United States of America. Spend your days wandering in the mall of America with zero credit and zero debit for your fist full of plastic cards.

V 42a I was hungry in Iraq because of your sanctions; and you eat at the Country Buffet.

V 42b I was thirsty after 9 am on Sunday in the yard of 910, but you kept the coffee behind locked doors.

V 43a I was a stranger in your neighborhood, and you would not even let me sleep in your SUV.

V 43b I was naked in a Palestinian Refugee Camp, clothe me?! No, you sent eight billion dollars of aid to Israel.

V 43c I was sick in the Emergency Room with no insurance and no ID and you just sent me away, bent over and hobbling, telling me to get a job or get back to Chiapas. Was there no room in the inn?

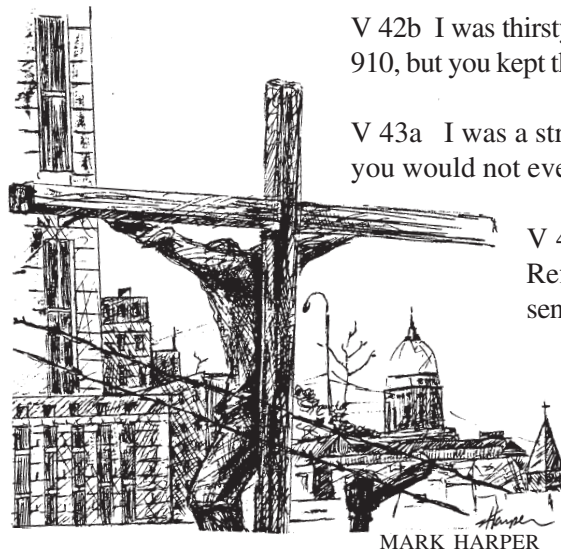
V 43d I was in prison and tortured with electrodes tied to my genitals by honor grads from the School of the Americas, and you bought Coca-Cola stock.

V 44 Then the dead-folk walking will say, "We never saw you, Human One, hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison. We would have helped you had you been there."

V 45 The Jew will reply, "I tell you, whenever you did not come or respond to one of these worthless and abandoned ones, my sisters and brothers, you refused to help me."

V 46 These dead folks will then be sent off to serve the domination system, but those who have Abundant Life will share the Eucharist in the Beloved Community, plus have a feast after the Benediction. ✠

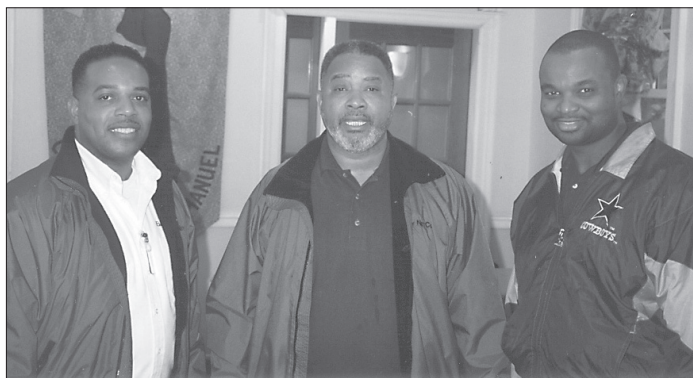
Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.



RITA CORBIN

Welcome to the Spotlight

Robert Francis, Winfred Sneed, Bernard Sanders, Mauice Ricard, and Emory Network Communications



TONNIE KING

By Tonnie King

Every week without fail, the people of the Network Communications Division of Emory University make and deliver a couple hundred sandwiches to the Open Door. These tasty sandwiches are a crucial part of our Thursday soup kitchen menu. Our good friend, Winfred Sneed, and several co-workers have guided this effort. Robert Francis, Winfred Sneed, Bernard Sanders (at left), and Mauice Ricard (no

photo available) deliver the sandwiches, but the entire Emory Network Communications Division works to make it all happen. And as if that weren't enough, these wonderful folks also brought us turkeys and hams for our holiday meals! Thank you, Winfred, Bernard, Robert, and Mauice, and the entire Network Communications Division, for being our friends, and for your love and support of our friends on the street.

Tonnie King is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

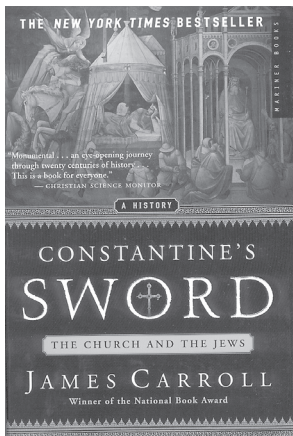
- People to accompany community members to doctor's appointments
- Help serving breakfast, Monday and Tuesday mornings, 5:50-9:30 a.m.
- Groups to make meat and cheese sandwiches on whole-wheat bread for Soup Kitchen on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and for our friends who sleep in our yard every night
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays

For more information,
call Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906
or e-mail him at
pleon2000@mindspring.com

When Christianity and Empire Joined Hands

Understanding Anti-Judaism in the Church

Book Review



Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews. James Carroll. 756 pp. New York, 2002. Mariner Books.

By John Ehlers

It is fitting that this book on the historical relationship between Christianity and Judaism since Constantine begins at

Auschwitz. The first chapter, "The Cross at Auschwitz," refers to the cross that drew so much criticism from Jews because it claimed Christian space and attention at a site where an estimated 2.5 million Jews were murdered. Estimates of those killed at Auschwitz range from 1 to 4 million, but Camp Commandant Rudolph Hess set the number at 2.5 million, or approximately forty percent of all the Jews killed during the Holocaust. (The term "holocaust" literally means "burnt offering.") Many Jews prefer the term "Shoah" to describe what happened to six million Jews in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Shoah means the absence of God's hovering presence, or "ruach" – the breath of God in creation. Shoah, then, is its undoing or un-creation.

In *Constantine's Sword*, James Carroll traces how Christianity interpreted the crucifixion of Jesus and documents the impact this interpretation had on European Jews over the course of seventeen centuries. The book's primary purpose, however, is not only to examine the Church's treatment of Jews, but to show how its obsession with the Jews eventually became its own brand of anti-Semitism. This issue had a ripple effect over the centuries that went beyond Europe, beyond religion, and beyond reason to contribute to events in the 20th century and eventually to the genocide at Auschwitz.

Constantine was one of two Roman emperors during the early years of the fourth century who shared power and controlled the Roman Empire: Licinius ruled the eastern sector and Constantine ruled the western sector. Constantine's palace was located in Trier, which is now in Germany. From Trier, Constantine moved east, conquering as he went until one day, just before a crucial battle, he had a vision of the cross and the words, "In This Sign, Conquer." He won the battle and converted to Christianity.

With Constantine's conversion, Christianity was transformed; from a religion opposing political power, it became a political power promoting religion. In short, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire. As the state religion, it was controlled and dictated by Constantine, who was more interested in power than in grace. Eventually, the Church itself became a political power ruled by popes as powerful as any kings.

Carroll documents the actions of the Church

over the next 1700 years, and particularly how the Jews of Europe were affected by those actions. These events include:

The crusades. Before the crusaders left Europe for the Holy Land to do battle with Muslims, they killed thousands of innocent and unarmed Jews whom they regarded as heretics.

The Inquisition. The purpose of the Inquisition was to root out heretics. Jews were continually subjected to forced conversion attempts. Those who refused conversion on pain of death were tortured and burned at the stake.

The establishment of ghettos. A walled Jewish ghetto was established in Rome in 1555 by Pope Paul IV and was maintained by a succession of popes well into the 19th century. The conditions in the ghetto were deplorable. Nevertheless, when the French army conquered Rome and broke down the walls of the ghetto, the pope rebuilt them as soon as the army had been driven out.

The collusion with and support for the Nazis and Hitler. Pope Pius XII, before he became pope, negotiated a concordat with Hitler that said the Vatican would not concern itself with "non-Aryans" unless they had been baptized or were descendants of people who had been baptized. As pope, Pius XII did nothing to protect or save some 1200 Jews, even though, at one point, they were being held almost across the street from the Vatican, prior to being shipped to Auschwitz. This same pope never excommunicated Hitler, a Catholic, or any of his Catholic top lieutenants.

The book concludes with Carroll calling for a Vatican III to address major issues confronting the Roman Catholic Church, including:

Anti-Judaism in the New Testament. The prevailing Christian view of Jews over the past 2000 years had been as "Christ-killers," a view that helped create an atmosphere in which millions of Jews could be murdered by Christians, either by or with the approval of both the Church and the State.

The power of the Church. Early Christians opposed the power of Rome, but later Christians became the power in Rome. That power has corrupted the Church, and the Church must come to grips with the contradiction it has not only lived with, but promoted.

A new Christology. Carroll invokes the words of Catholic theologian Karl Rahner, who called for the Church to recognize that Christianity is not "the absolute and hence the only religion for all." Carroll writes, "The coming of Jesus was for the purpose of revelation, not salvation – revelation, that is, that we are already saved."

The holiness of democracy. Carroll writes, "All believers were endowed with the Holy Spirit, which was seen to reside in the Church not through an ordained hierarchy but through all," and the Vatican's suppression of liberation theology was a suppression of a religious affirmation of the political ideal of rights for all.

Repentance. Previous attempts have been half-hearted and do not recognize Christianity's tendency toward supersessionism (the view that Christians have replaced Jews as God's chosen people). Carroll says the cross should be "returned to

Jesus, and returned to its place as the cause of his death, not the purpose of his life."

Finally, the author ends where he began – at Auschwitz – asking that the cross be removed, deliberately, reverently, and in the presence of living Jews, asking nothing of them in return.

This is a powerful book that should be read by every Christian because it tells the stories *behind* the story of Christianity through the centuries. The primary story, of course, is about the relationship between Christians and Jews. But there is also the story of power and how it corrupted the early Church. Then there is the story of state religion gone wild during the Inquisition. Finally, there is the story of the modern Church, which still cannot or will not come to grips with its anti-Semitic past and constantly practices supersessionism in the present. Only when these stories are known, when centuries of Christian misdeeds and their consequences are recognized, and when we become sensitive to the subtle forms of discrimination we still practice, can the chasm between Christians and Jews be properly addressed. Carroll has taken a giant step by bringing all of these stories into the light where they can be examined and discussed. ✠

John Ehlers is a breakfast volunteer at the Open Door Community and lives in Marietta, GA.

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MURPHY DAVIS

Liberty to the captives!

What a celebration it was: with the specially requested pizza, salad, and ice cream! On January 10, Fr. Jerry Zawada and Toni Flynn (left) were released after six months in the Crisp County Jail, serving time for crossing the line at the Ft. Benning (Georgia) School of the Americas (otherwise known as the School of Assassins). We were pleased to have them down here for a taste of "Georgia hospitality," and glad for the opportunity to visit while they were shut away in South Georgia for what Eric Debode called their "ordeal in Cordele." Jerry, a Franciscan priest, is hoping to go to Iraq next month as part of a peace delegation; and Toni returned to California to meet her brand new grandson and then on to the High Desert Catholic Worker House in Valyermo where she lives and works.



MURPHY DAVIS

To celebrate her freedom, Toni requested pizza, salad, and ice cream. Charlotta Norby found thirteen different flavors for the party. On the left, Toni shares a bowl of ice cream (one scoop of each flavor!) with Roger Corley, who was also recently released from prison and now makes his home in the community.



MURPHY DAVIS

First-Place Garlic

Open Door farmers Mike Casey and Dick Rustay eat their hearts out over the prize-winning garlic and the ribbon from the Ringold County, Iowa County Fair. Our friends Betsy Keenan and Brian Terrell of the Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm in Maloy, Iowa sent us the prize. There is an old Catholic Worker saying that "there is no such thing as too much garlic." We're believers.

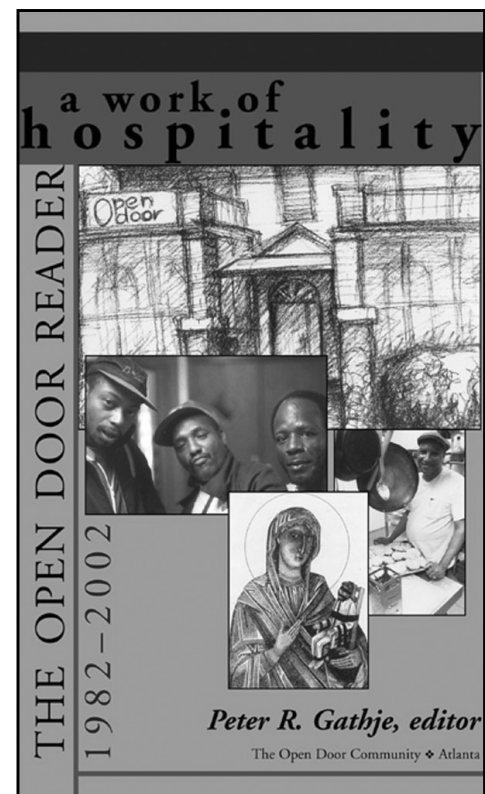
...and good friends

And speaking of Brian Terrell and Betsy Keenan, we enjoyed having them visit us (right) in early January to talk with us about their lives on a Catholic Worker farm, their years of living at the New York Worker house during Dorothy Day's life, and their wisdom about Benedictine spirituality. Pete Gathje also visited in January for a weekend of study of the writings of St. Paul.



MURPHY DAVIS

20TH-ANNIVERSARY ANTHOLOGY NOW AVAILABLE!



A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader, 1982-2002

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"It's a rainy day in Georgia, a dreary morning at Crisp County Jail where I sit in my cell reading through the pages of A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader. Though it's true I'm a prisoner of conscience, most of the time I pace and pray away the hours just like any other woman inmate. And just like them, I feel homesick for family and friends. Your Reader is just like returning 'home!' A visit with friends! A reminder of why I choose to live in solidarity with poor, oppressed, and imprisoned people. A nudge back to the neighborhood of justice, peace, and a God who counts on us to love one another. The words on the pages are like Balm in Gilead. I am soothed and inspired."

-Toni Flynn
High Desert Catholic Worker

Jonah and a Whale of a Lie Back in the Belly of the Beast

By Steve Clemens

(Editor's note: Steve Clemens traveled to Iraq as part of a Christian Peacemaker Team delegation in November 2002 [see "Why I Am Going To Iraq," Hospitality, November 2002, vol. 21, no. 11.] Steve and Christine Clemens have been friends of the Open Door Community since the 1970's, when they were partners at the Koinonia Partners in Americus, GA. They now live with their two sons and work in Minneapolis.)

I have returned from Baghdad. As I get re-acclimated to the US after my two-week sojourn, an uneasy feeling creeps back. With all the talk, all the bombast and threats of going to war to rid the world of Saddam Hussein, there is usually one thing missing. Iraq has 23 million other people living, some barely surviving, in what has been identified as "the cradle of civilization."

While Europe was in the midst of what has been re- as "the Dark Ages," intellectual treasured writings of the Greeks were kept alive and flourished in Baghdad. As our world struggles to define the minimum parameters of what it means to be human, we can trace some of the beginnings of social structure to the law codes of Hammurabi. Again, culture springing from the Fertile Crescent between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. We have

been told a lie – that we can go to war with Saddam and somehow, mystically, it will remain a war with one person, not killing thousands, if not millions, of innocent Iraqis. Somehow, we can target Saddam Hussein without jeopardizing Achmed, Abdul, Abeer, Ali, Amal, Amil, Amira, Amal, Dhuha, Fatima, Hebe, Karima, Mahmoud, Mohammed, Mustafa, Nassim, Omar, Sattar, Whalid, and Yassir, all real, flesh-and-blood Iraqis I was privileged to meet. They are not my enemy. I pray that I do not become theirs.

When I despair at the crushing violence of an empire bent on domination of a world, I re-visit the story of the prophet, Jonah, who finally, reluctantly, took his message of repentance to the heart of his contemporary empire, to the great city of Nineveh,

Assyria's capital. That city, now known as Mosul, is in the Kurdish section of northern Iraq, in the middle of what today's empire has unilaterally declared (with the help and acquiescence of Great Britain) to be a "no-fly zone." It isn't really a

no-fly zone. US and British warplanes regularly fly there, bombing, on average, every third or fourth day.

Nineveh, the scriptures tell us, listened to the message from God, delivered through Jonah, and repented. Jonah, however, had his heart set on the anticipated destruction of his enemy, and went into a funk over Nineveh's change of heart. Today, even though we want to identify ourselves as "God's chosen people," we are the empire; and even though what has been identified as "our enemy" has agreed to allow UN inspection of their proclaimed disarmament, our President continues to call for war. He would do well to re-learn the message of that feisty Minor Prophet of the Hebrew scriptures: God wants to have mercy on the great city because of the lives of the innocent people living there.

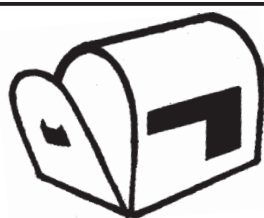
I have returned from Iraq, the land that now holds the burial site of the reluctant prophet, Jonah. Like Jonah, I find myself in the belly of a great beast, and I cry out to a God who desires mercy and compassion. Let us hear the call of God for our own repentance and not wreak the havoc and destruction we threaten on a people who have already experienced the terrors and costs of war and continue under a war of economic sanctions. The people of Nineveh (Mosul), Baghdad, Basrah, and Babylon are like you and me. We can see in their faces the same joys and sorrows. They, too, want their children to grow up in a world safe from threats. They, too, want to be able to drink clean water and not live in the fear of an earth contaminated by radioactive waste. It would cost a fraction of what we spend on armaments and munitions for this empire to insure clean water and adequate nutrition, and to allow Iraq to rebuild itself with its own revenues from the sale of oil.

Let us work together in this great land to repent of the evil we have planned under the guise of ridding the world of evil. Let us strive to be #1 in compassion, healing, and reconciliation. What better way once again to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Prince of Peace? ☩



Dear Friends,

In January, the Open Door spent \$50 on return postage for Hospitality. Please help us keep our costs down by informing us promptly of any changes in your address.



Thank you!

This Easter season, the Open Door especially needs...

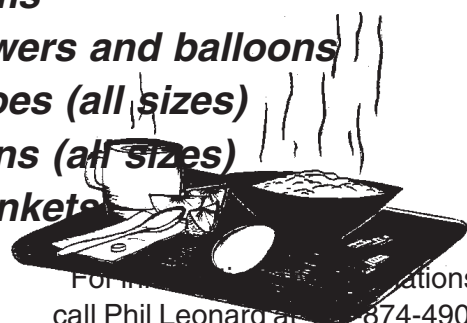
hams

flowers and balloons

shoes (all sizes)

jeans (all sizes)

blankets



For more information, call Phil Leonard at 874-4906 or e-mail him at pleon2000@mindspring.com

Phil Berrigan Remembered:

Agitator, Inspiration

By Lester Shepherd

Phil Berrigan gave me the strength to join the peace movement.

Put bluntly, my passion is waging non-violent, revolutionary war on changing the American culture and its out-of-control materialistic way of life. This urge was always manifested as a burning fire in my belly, but I have not had much success in the last 22 of my 61 years residing in Atlanta. My heart was first formed at a conference in Kanuga, N.C. where I met Megan McKenna, the first person to introduce me to liberation theology and to Matthew 25:40.

In searching since, I tried joining various and sundry organizations and churches, but the fire soon burned out and I returned to the valley of the dry bones to start my search over.

Many years passed until one day I obtained the autobiography of Philip Berrigan, *Fighting the Lamb's War*. I had known of the Berrigan brothers, but only from a distance. Philip Berrigan's discussion of issues was so clear that it strengthened my courage, and his book became my companion for many months. Eventually, I read a letter to *Hospitality* by Berrigan that included his mailing address at a prison. I was excited to know where I could correspond with him, and so I wrote a letter of encouragement, as well as to get advice on becoming involved in the peace movement to use my meager talents and desire to be a peacemaker.

I wrote the letter. Then I re-wrote it. It was magnificent enough, my pride told me, to mail to him. But I never did, because my heart informed me he would write a simple return letter with the message: *Go where the action is*. So I did, and now I worship and volunteer at the Open Door Community.

You see, I am completely fed up with the way this country is morphing. We are in the materialistic, empire-building, killing, and class warfare business up to our elbows. God has a way of dealing with the iniquities of nations, but I have to do my part. Truth be known, for many years I would not look at or pay attention to Lazarus. But I am ashamed of my sins and I am trying to work a plan to separate myself from the powers of domination that wreak havoc on our society and the world.

I love bluegrass, especially a cappella gospel tunes. These lyrics express my journey pretty well.

*Once I was lost. Wandering in sin.
My heart was heavy. And burdened within.
Jesus one day. He gave to me.
Now I'm His child. For He set me free.*

*To be His child is worth more than silver or gold.
To be His child is worth more than this world can hold.
And with Him keeping my soul no harm can befall.
I am His child and that's worth it all. ☩*

Lester Shepherd volunteers at the Open Door, answering our phone and door, and he regularly drives a van on the Hardwick Trip. He is a nurse practitioner at the Dekalb Grady Clinic.

Philip Francis Berrigan, 1923-2002

By Brendan Walsh

(Editor's note: Our friend, mentor, and beloved teacher Phil Berrigan died of cancer on December 6, 2002. He was surrounded in life and death by his wife Liz McAlister, their three children, and their community at Jonah House in Baltimore, MD. Brendan Walsh of the Viva House Catholic Worker Community delivered this eulogy for Phil at his funeral, at Baltimore's St. Peter Claver Church, on December 9, 2002.)

Philip Berrigan is our friend. And he is a friend to everyone gathered here today.

Philip Berrigan and his Jonah House community are friends of Dorothy Day, our Viva House community and all the Catholic Worker houses throughout the world.

Philip Berrigan is a friend to all the poor of Baltimore City. (You could see how we treat the poor of this city on the walk to this church.)

Philip Berrigan is a friend to all the people of the world who are bombed and scattered, who are starved, trampled upon, imprisoned, tortured, humiliated, scoffed at, dismissed as nobodies. Philip Berrigan is a friend to all those people, who are robbed and beaten and left for dead in ditches all over this planet.

Philip Berrigan knew, as Chief Sitting Bull knew, that our insatiable "love of possessions was indeed a disease."

Phil was street-savvy. He knew the streets around St. Peter Claver Church. And he understood the racism that still festers and still divides us as a nation. After the publication of his first book, *No More Strangers*, in 1965, Stokely Carmichael observed that Phil Berrigan was one of the few white people in the United States who actually knew what was really going on.

Philip Berrigan knew the truth. He was a witness to the truth. He was that rare combination where word and deed were one. Always. Everywhere. Steadfast. Rock solid. Hopeful. One in a million. He was that tree standing by the water that would not be moved.

The Gospel was Phil's truth. He understood the meaning of the Mystical Body better than anyone we know. All of us are sisters and brothers to one another. And when one of us suffers an injury, all of us suffer an injury. It was that simple for Phil Berrigan. So when the filthy rotten system that

Dorothy Day wrote about threatens to tear us apart from one another, that system has to be resisted. Always. Everywhere.

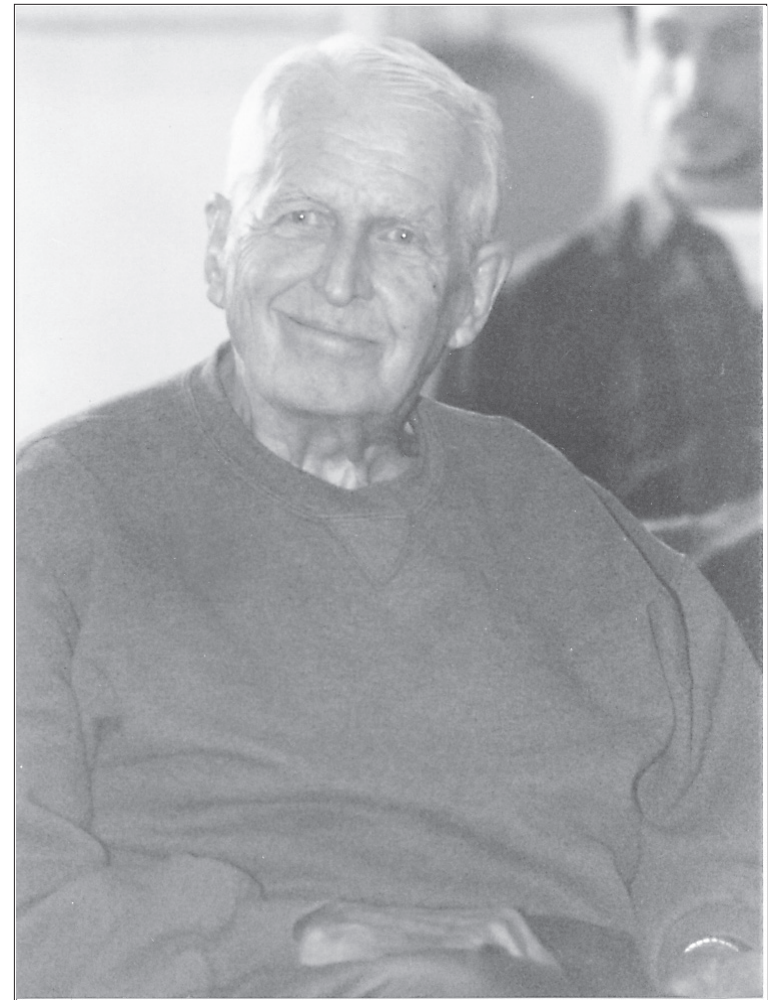
Throughout his entire life – whether he be locked tight in the maximum security of our stinking jails, or (as he would say with a wise old grin) living in the minimum security of Baltimore City – he fought nonviolently (as we Irish folks say) both the famine and the crown. And he paid for it.

We had the privilege of knowing Phil for 35 of his 79 years. And he was in prison for 11 of them. Think about it. That's almost one out of every three days. And he never complained, never whined. No self pity. If you received a letter from Phil in jail, you would never learn of the suffering he was enduring. During his last imprisonment, Phil must have struggled with intense pain in his hip. And surely, the terrible cancer was assaulting his body. But he never complained. He never complained! Indeed, Phil is a brother to the suffering servant described so magnificently by the prophet Isaiah.

And as soon as he completed one stint in jail, he was organizing yet another Plowshares action. He always asked us to join him. He asks all of us to join him. Phil Berrigan would repeat for us today the last words of Joe Hill. Don't mourn for me! Organize! Organize a general strike against the warmakers!

And why was Phil in jail all those years? Again, his simple answer. "We can't burn the planet down!" We can't (and we won't let them) burn the planet down. That's our Number 1 business. In 1967 and 1968, Phil told Johnson and Nixon that they can't burn our sisters and brothers in Vietnam with our napalm, our white phosphorous, our cluster bombs. With his last breath he told Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Ashcroft (you know the gang) that we won't let them bomb the people of Iraq and leave our depleted uranium, our nuclear garbage, scattered all over their land for decades to come. And we dare to call the Iraqis terrorists as we look down our guns, as we kill their children with our sanctions. And we dare to search for their weapons of mass destruction, while we, the mass murderers in Hiroshima, in Nagasaki, in Chile, in Salvador, in Nicaragua, in Afghanistan, and so on, continue to design and build and deploy even more hideous weapons of mass destruction. Phil said it correctly, "We are the terrorists!"

Philip Berrigan was one intense brother. On May 17, 1968, the day of the Catonsville Draft Board raid, three people were designated to drive the nine resisters to the site. We were at the home of Al and Pauline Lewis, Tom Lewis's parents. I was to drive one of the cars. It was a St. Peter Claver parish car. Phil and Dan Berrigan would be passengers. When it was time to proceed to Catonsville, Phil grabbed the keys from me. He would do the driving. He would make sure the car would get



MIKE WISNIEWSKI

Phil Berrigan in October 2002 at the annual retreat for the Catholic Workers of Southern California. Phil and Liz McAlister led the retreat, despite the fact that Phil was diagnosed with terminal cancer only a few days earlier. Phil was a provocative and fearless witness for peace every day of his life.

there. He would make sure those draft files, those killing licenses, would be burned. Yes, as Dan Berrigan would write later, "It is better to burn paper than to napalm children." I will never forget the intensity. I thought about Jesus overturning the tables in the temple. Intensity.

Philip Berrigan was one honest brother, but we all know that. Even our kangaroo courts knew that. He scared them to death. I remember one trial. It was in the late seventies, I think. (Phil was on trial so many times that sometimes it's hard to say when one began and one ended.) This trial involved the pouring of blood and ashes inside the Pentagon. I threw ashes. Phil threw blood. On the day of trial the cop that arrested me failed to appear, so I walked. The cop that arrested Phil did show up and testified that Phil threw ashes. When Phil was asked what he did at the Pentagon, he simply stated that he threw blood. The judge, a difficult man who sentenced people harshly, dismissed the charges against Phil because of the false testimony of the cop. He said, "In all the years that Mr. Berrigan has come before me, he never lied." I was elated, but Phil wasn't too happy about walking away.

On Dorothy Day's grave stone there are but two words: *Deo Gratias! Thanks be to God!*

Yes Phil, *Deo Gratias! Thanks be to God!* For your life. For your spirit that is still with us. Now, with you gone to another place, all of us will have to do more. Couragio, to you Phil! (Phil often said "Couragio!") Peace to you and us. ✠

**Beauty on
the Street:
A Photo Essay
by Clive Bonner**



exclusively at

www.opendoorcommunity.org

Jefferson, from page 1

builder. By all accounts, he was nice – a George W. Bush type of Republican, not a Newt Gingrich type of Republican.

Yet Paul Coverdell's voting record was not nice. It was reactionary, not progressive. It was harsh on the poor. It was terrible for black people, and it favored the rich. Given this voting record, I was initially offended by a statue of Thomas Jefferson being dedicated to Paul Coverdell. It seemed to contradict Jefferson's legacy. As I mulled this over, I began to think about Jefferson's legacy. I've decided that in connecting these two nice white men, there is a convergence of insight and truth that we need to discern.

In 1820, after Jefferson had retired to Monticello from public life, he wrote a letter that has become famous. It was a letter to John Holmes, a congressman from Massachusetts. It was about the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri Compromise was set in motion in the midst of the struggle over slavery in 1820. It set up the rule that in order to keep the balance between the slave states and free states, new states admitted to the Union would have to come in one slave, one free. No one wanted to give up the balance of power. Jefferson saw this as a terrible situation. He called slavery a "firebell in the night," an issue that might destroy the Union. In his letter to Congressman Holmes, he went on to describe the American dilemma over slavery in these words:

"We have the wolf by the ears. You can neither hold him nor safely let him go. Justice is on one scale and self-preservation on the other" (Wolf By the Ears, John Chester Miller).

Slavery bothered Thomas Jefferson all of his life, but all of his life he owned slaves. His note of concern of 1820 in his letter to John Holmes was not about the moral issue of slavery but was rather about the dissolution of the Union. Can the Union stand the issue of slavery? Actually, most of his life, Thomas Jefferson had sought to justify slavery by demonstrating that Africans were inferior to Europeans. It was as if Jefferson was predating George Orwell's famous reasoning in his book Animal Farm: that all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others. Jefferson tried to walk that line: all humans may be created equal, but some humans are more equal than others.

If Jefferson could show that Africans are inferior to Europeans, then his famous phrase in the Declaration of Independence would not apply to Africans, because they really wouldn't be human beings like Europeans were human beings. In that way, slavery

could be justified. In 1785, some nine years after the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson wrote an essay called Notes on Virginia. In it he concluded that Africans were inferior to Europeans: "I advance it, therefore, as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind" (Documents of American Prejudice, ed. S. T. Joshi, Basic Books, New York, 1999, p. 11).

Ironically, in that same essay Jefferson concludes that native Americans may be a little more kin to Europeans. Why? He tells us in a letter to John Adams that Cherokees and Creeks "are far advanced in civilization. They have good cabins, enclosed fields, large herds of cattle and hogs, spin and weave their own clothes of cotton, have smiths and other of the most necessary tradesmen, write and read, are on the increase in numbers, and a branch of the Cherokees is now instituting a regular representative government" (A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America, Frank Shuffleton, editor, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 267).

Why are the native Americans more human than Africans? Because they're much more like Thomas Jefferson. They've adopted European institutions – that makes them more human. In his lifetime, Jefferson noted only two black people who were perhaps worthy of being considered equal to whites – the poet Phyllis Wheatley and the scientist Benjamin Banneker. He dismissed Wheatley's poetry, however, as unworthy of serious discussion, despite praise for her poetry from such world intellectuals as Voltaire. Benjamin Banneker sent Jefferson an almanac that demonstrated Banneker's knowledge of calculus. Jefferson dismissed this, too, adding that Banneker was insolent. Jefferson added this latter comment because in the same letter to Jefferson, Banneker had questioned Jefferson's integrity and Jefferson's humanity. How could Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence and yet hold slaves? Jefferson suggested that some white abolitionist had actually written Banneker's letter. This

was his usual approach. Whenever he heard of a black person accomplishing something, his first question was: How mixed was this person? How much white blood did they have in them that allowed their intellect to rise?

Looking back with the cold eye of history, Jefferson's gymnastics to justify slavery seem incredible. With his limited knowledge and experience of African-Americans and native Americans, he could conclude that Africans were brutes, while natives were a bit noble and might someday gain some refinement like Europeans. At the same time, it was slave labor that gave him the time and the leisure to write these theories. When one considers the horrors of slavery, the middle passage, the auction blocks, the executions and the whippings and the hangings, the slavecatchers, the unpaid labor that built the white South, when one considers the annihilation of the Native Americans and the rampant breaking of treaties – those very Creeks and Cherokees praised by Thomas Jefferson were driven off their lands by the government troops of the refined Europeans – we must ask: who are the brutes? Who are the civilized? Who are the humans?

And, yes, there is a reason that Thomas Jefferson often wondered if there were mixed blood in black people who were praised by Europeans. That reason is Jefferson's long-rumored affair with a slave woman named Sally Hemings. Their affair was discussed early on, even before Jefferson became president in 1804. It was alleged to have begun in 1784, when Sally Hemings accompanied Jefferson to France after his wife died. The news broke to the public in 1802 when a man reported it in a Richmond, Virginia newspaper. Jefferson denied it, as have all of his white descendants ever since.

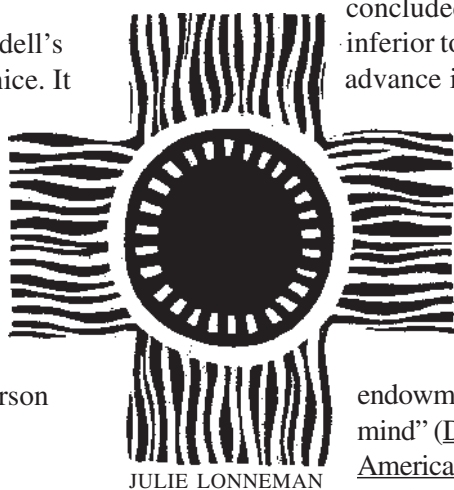
The discussion was revived again in American public life in 1873 when Madison Hemings, one of the sons of Sally Hemings, gave an

interview in an Ohio paper. He claimed that Thomas Jefferson was his father, and that his mother had engaged in a sexual affair because Jefferson had promised her that she and any children that she had from their union would be freed at Jefferson's death. Sally Hemings was not freed at his death, but two of her sons, including Madison Hemings, were freed by his will.

The controversy flared once again in the 1950's when the premier Jefferson historian of this century, Dumas Malone, inadvertently stirred it up. He denied that such a good and virtuous man, a man of integrity like Thomas Jefferson, would ever have an affair with a slave. And if he did and if he were confronted with the evidence, certainly he would have admitted it as a man of integrity. In his extensive research – he wrote six volumes on Jefferson – he made an interesting discovery that others noted also. He discovered that Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings were together nine to ten months before each of her children were born. That stirred things up a bit more.

Most mainline scholars have denied that Thomas Jefferson had an affair with Sally Hemings. In 1997, the National Book Award went to Joseph Ellis for his biography of Jefferson, American Sphinx, in which Ellis, too, denies the affair. There were some notable exceptions to this litany of denial, mostly women like Fawn Brodie and Annette Gordon-Reed. They wondered why the oral history tradition in the black community was being dismissed in this case. Gordon-Reed noted a great irony in this discussion. She noted that Jefferson's alleged affair with Sally Hemings seemed to be a greater crime in the eyes of many historians than was the actual crime of his owning her as a slave. It is to say that a good man like Thomas Jefferson can't have sex with a slave, but a good man can have slaves.

Things got much more
continued on next page



JULIE LONNEMAN

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



MIKE CASEY

Suzanne Wakefield (center), a regular volunteer at the Open Door, encouraged both of her daughters to get involved in the community. Won't you do the same? Heather Barger (left) is a current Resident Volunteer, while Kristen Barger-Grant (right) was a Resident Volunteer in 1999-2000.

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Jefferson, from page 8 interesting on November 4, 1998. In an article published in Nature Magazine, a white physician, Dr. Eugene Foster, reported the results of DNA testing on descendants of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson. Those tests indicated that at least one of the children born to Sally Hemings was fathered by Thomas Jefferson. The test was 95% accurate. The scientific accuracy of the test was so great that even The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, the most strenuous defender of Jefferson, had to reluctantly agree in 2000 that Thomas Jefferson had fathered one of Sally Hemings children.

This DNA study stunned the white scholarly world but not the black world. The black world has known for centuries that nice, respectable white people do things like this, that nice white people are not always virtuous and moral and just. The black world has seen and has experienced our racism. They have seen how racism diminishes the humanity of white people and makes us do terrible things. That issue of “niceness” brings us back to the statue of Thomas Jefferson in the Decatur square honoring Paul Coverdell.

That statue is there because they were nice, white gentlemen. Yet we must recall the history of that Decatur square. It’s built on a crossroads – it’s a boundary line, marking the lands of the Cherokees and the Creeks. The Cherokees to the north and the Creeks to the south. Where did they go? What happened to them? Why aren’t they here now? They were removed by “not-so-nice” white men in the name of nice white people like us.

I don’t know much about the private life of Paul Coverdell. I take it on face value that he was a nice man. His voting record is not nice – it speaks of the voice of the oppressor. Paul Coverdell is held up by the Republicans and other folk because the Republicans have learned their lessons well in the 1990’s in their campaign to complete the Reagan Revolution to support the rich and to exploit the poor. They used mean folk as leaders for awhile – Newt Gingrich, Bob Barr, Tom Delay, and Robert Livingston, all representatives from the old Confederacy. They made great headway that way, but they couldn’t win the presidency that way. The revolution begun by Ronald Reagan and his gang, which has transformed our society into a mean place, cannot be sustained in public by mean people. We prefer to have nice people in leadership, no matter what their public record is.

So the Republicans have turned to nice people like George W. Bush. Let us be clear here. President Bush is nice and civil in public, but behind the scenes, the same mean agenda remains.

Let us not be deceived by the

niceness of Thomas Jefferson and Paul Coverdell. Behind their niceness lies the legacy of slavery and segregation and racism that has benefited white people and continues to benefit white people. Let no one leave today believing that I am saying that all white people are bad. Throughout our nation’s history, there have been white people who have fought against the tide of slavery and racism and who continue to do so today. What I am saying is this: the power of racism is deeply imbedded in all of us. White people especially have developed the capacity to benefit from racism while denying our participation in it. The internal contradictions of nice people like Paul Coverdell and Thomas Jefferson remain with us and in us.

White people seem unable to admit how much slavery and segregation and racism have benefited us and continue to benefit us. Instead, we write books and develop doctoral dissertations trying to figure out how black people and Latino people and Native American people became so dysfunctional, just like Jefferson did in his Notes on Virginia in 1785. Why not turn it around? Why not do a study on white people and our dysfunctionality and internal contradictions? A couple of years ago, I was doing a workshop on racism, and I was talking about how good and decent people like my forebears had owned slaves, and how they had taught their children and had taught me racism. I was trying to say that monsters didn’t teach me racism – nice people did. In the midst of this, a black woman spoke up and said: “How can you call your ancestors good and nice if they held slaves?” It’s a fundamental question, and it has stayed with me. It’s a reminder of the gymnastics of racism, how we want our Thomas Jeffersons and our Paul Coverdells and our George W. Bushes to be nice, and to benefit from racism. Well, believe it or not, in the 1990s, we saw the beginnings of studies of whiteness and the internal contradictions of using a word like “white” that usually means “good” and “pure” and “holy” to describe a people whose history is not so good and pure and holy. It will be interesting to see what fruit is borne by these studies.

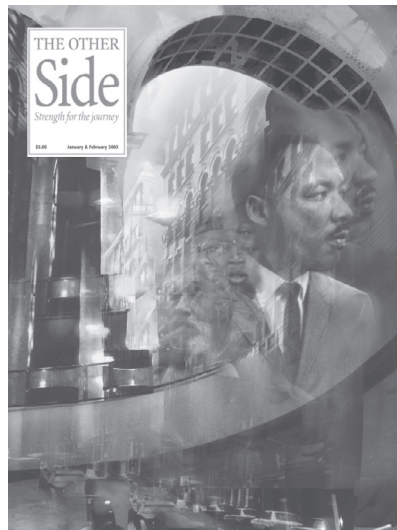
Thomas Jefferson, Sally Hemings, and Paul Coverdell. Every time I walk by that statue on the Decatur Square, I’m going to be thinking about these things. Of Sally Hemings – “we hold these truths to be self-evident.” No debate, no argument, because it is self-evident. And I’ll be thinking about the Creeks and the Cherokees who marked their boundaries there. And I’ll be thinking about myself and my participation in the madness. And I’ll think of my children and their children and their grandchildren. How will they look back on us and on our time? What will be revealed so clearly to

them over the passage of time that seems so murky and so complex to us now? Will they look back and see a vision like Paul discerned in Ephesians, where there is a new people, a place where there are no strangers and aliens, a place where we don’t go through gymnastics to say who is superior and who is inferior? Will they look back and see the household of God, full of sisters and brothers?

Or, will they see the power of race? Will they cringe, as we cringe at the gymnastics that were used to deny the existence of racism while benefiting so much from it? What will they see, as they look back in history, as we are doing today? What will our grandchildren and great-grandchildren see? The answer lies in our hands and in our hearts. Whatever we have done in the past, whatever has captured our hearts up to this moment – whatever calls us to divide ourselves up into

those who are superior and those who are inferior – whatever has captured our hearts, let this be the day when we say, “No more.” Let this be the day when we confess the power that racism has in our hearts. Let this be the day when we reject the mainstream racism of American culture. Let this be the day when we say “Yes” to that river of witnesses throughout our history who have told us about a new vision, a great cloud of black people and Native American people and white people and Asian people and Latino people and women and men and gay and lesbian people – all kinds of people who have said “Yes” to Paul’s vision in Ephesians. We’re no longer strangers and aliens. We are citizens and saints and members of the household of God. Let this be the day when we say “Yes” to life. Let this be the day when we say “Yes” to justice. Let this be the day. Let this be the day! Let this be the day! Amen. ✠

Rediscovering the Other Side of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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The Other Side

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MURPHY DAVIS

Above: And after all of our guests were finished with the feast, Byong Jai (on the left with the berimbau) and Hudson Soules treated us to a demonstration of capoeira—an Afro-Brazilian martial art. They amazed us with their grace and agility.

Days in The Life Together

Below: Holiday Meals sometimes just seem like too much fun in the kitchen! Part of the New Year's Day crew stopped long enough to have their picture taken. (left to right) Ed Stokes, Chuck Harris, Julie Martin, Elizabeth Dede, and Ronald Williams.



MURPHY DAVIS



MURPHY DAVIS

Above: The Long and Short of it! Joining us as cooks for our 400 New Year's guests were (Thursday soup kitchen regular) Teresa Hamilton and Todd Moyer. They served up mouth watering hoppin' john, collard greens, ham and cornbread. Yum!

Clinton Marsh, continued from page 1 and he understood these institutions as his primary resource for escaping life as an Alabama sharecropper.

He served the church as a local pastor, staffed denominational offices and the All-Africa Council of Churches, and he served as Moderator of the United Presbyterian Church. After his "retirement," he spent some years as president of Knoxville College, interim Dean of Johnson C. Smith Seminary, Co-Chair of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, and he founded Georgians Against Gun Violence. At the Open Door, he served on our Advisory Board and as Honorary Chair (with Frances Pauley) of People for Urban Justice. While he always encouraged our work, he was not shy about telling us when we did not measure up to our own aims and purposes and how we might consider doing things better or more faithfully. He was a true friend and companion of the journey.

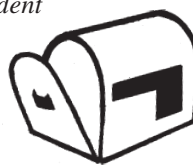
Marsh was also a good preacher and storyteller and used his rhetorical skill to teach about the nature of racism and inspire us to the ongoing work of justice and peace. *Hospitality* has, over the years, published a number of his sermons and collections of his stories (see especially January 1995, vol. 14, no. 1, and February 1995, vol. 14, no. 2).

It is far easier to honor and revere the memory of the saints than to appropriate their virtues and follow their examples. "Saint Marsh" will surely frown from heaven if we fail to pick up the discipleship work he has left to us. Thanks be to God! ✠

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

News from Colombia

(Editor's note: Keith Young, a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door in 2001, now works with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Colombia.)



Dear friends of the Open Door,

I am writing to wish you all the best for the New Year. I look forward to seeing you all again, though I'm not sure when that may be. Due to visa denials, our team size is shrinking. We now have only three members here with visas. We may have to close the project soon, though we may stick it out for a couple of months more to buy some time. The small team size makes the workload very difficult and makes us more vulnerable. We are very concerned for the people we accompany on the river. There are several people in the U.S. and Canada working on the visa situation full-time.

We are now in the "summer" dry season. There are fewer mosquitoes, which is a relief. During the holiday season there are a lot of parties, which can be fun, except a lot of people get really inebriated after a while. Also, violence tends to escalate during the holidays, which is a little worrisome. Thank you for your support.

Yours,
Keith Young
Barrancabermeja, Colombia

Dear friends,

Forgive me for not having written for awhile. The situation in the Opon River is not good. The

paramilitaries are still present on one side. The dry season has begun, which means more guerrilla presence. Just yesterday three guerrillas tried to kill the president of the Cienaga del Opon, one of the areas we accompany. They stopped the Cienaga's boat, ordered everyone out, said that they have to kill the president, and fired five shots into his body. They stole the boat and went up river. The president made it to the hospital and survived. We are hearing rumors of upcoming battles. I think it's going to be tough. This last week I've been sick with the flu, and now with strep throat. I have a nice rash too.

The visa problems continue like you wouldn't believe. We were just denied another visa this week. It seems the Colombian government is spending a lot of energy investigating us. The Mennonite Church of Colombia and Justapaz are helping us a lot with the visa issue, but we are going to need a lot of patience, and continue to grind away at trying to get the visas. The strategy is extremely complicated. I don't know what's going to happen really.

Thanks be to God we have three Colombian volunteers from the Mennonite Church of Colombia here helping us this month. Without them we'd be stuck. It is good to have a mixed team. My spanish is improving because we have to speak in spanish so everyone understands. So that you are aware, these next three weeks are likely to be very difficult for myself and the team. Please pray for us.

Keith Young
Barrancabermeja, Colombia

We are at a point in time where most Americans did not live through our history of racial segregation. For those who did (except the victims), it is fading from their memories. So Christopher Blinn’s review of David M. Oshinsky’s Worse Than Slavery (*Hospitality*, November 2002, vol. 21, no. 10) is a welcome but painful reminder of the injustice and cruelty of that era and one notorious personification of it. The prisoners of Parchman Farm not only suffered from the system that deprived African Americans of their civil rights, but also from the brutalities and neglect of being held captive with nowhere to turn.

While we have made some progress in eliminating human cruelty in society, racial discrimination still persists. Spotlighting America’s past record, as Mr. Blinn does in his fine book review, can only help us not to repeat our sordid history.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Greenspan

Greetings *Hospitality*,

I wish you all, and each of those who so unselfishly devote their time in help with whatever needs to be done. May you all be blessed; may you each be safe, well and in good spirits always.

Each *Hospitality* newsletter I receive I read with anticipation; with a joy knowing that you are an inspiration to my days, to my struggles among these wordly peoples, among the daily hate, indifference, and oh how it plagues those incarcerated each day. It is very difficult when the holidays approach. Reflected in your newsletter is love, togetherness, community, and Jesus! Thank you for sharing it with this death row inmate.

Because of Jesus,
A friend on death row

Dear Friends,

Over 20 years ago, I volunteered a few lunch shifts at the Open Door Community before moving with my family to Canada. Frankly, you folks kind of scared me, but I was safe in the knowledge that we were leaving soon and Ed Loring was the only preacher I’d ever heard whose words connected to my brand new, untapped faith. I suspect I was one of your worst volunteers as I have a vague memory of skipping out early after announcing that I had to go home and mow the lawn!

We moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia and it didn’t take long for my path to intersect with the line at the local soup kitchen. To be honest, my heart sank- I’d left the Open Door behind but the faces were the same and Ed and Murphy’s gospel message didn’t seem to be about my comfort level. Which path would I take?

Yeah, I volunteered and one thing led to another and to another and I just want to say thank you. Thank you for the life I have now, filled with many people, and much love. Thank you for challenging me and scaring me. Thanks also for keeping in touch with many years of *Hospitality*.

I feel sure that one day you will be amazed at the number of descendants who trace their lineage back to the Open Door. One can only imagine all the seeds that you have sown. Again, thank you. Please let God’s love encourage and strengthen you during these hard times.

In Christ, with love,
Mary Schlech
Halifax, Nova Scotia

To Ed and the Open Door,

PC alumnus writes you and thanks you for your dedication to the downtrodden. Thank you for the nice little calendar. I use it every year. All my best!

Marnie Williams
Stockbridge, GA

(Editor’s note: Wes King sent us a copy of this letter he wrote to The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.)

Dear Mr. Schneider, Ms. Newkirk, & Ms. Hill:

I read with interest your articles regarding Mayor Franklin’s initiative on homelessness in Atlanta and the “street experience” of one out of town visitor.

A few observations:

1. Mayor Franklin deserves credit for making an effort in this area. She is a fine mayor. Her heart is in the right place on this issue.

That said...

2. The makeup of the 16-member Commission on Homelessness is woefully inadequate. It is “stacked” with high profile “business” types and so-called “big fish.” As the president of the Atlanta Union Mission points out, no service providers are present on the board. As many of these capable business leaders should know and realize, it is very difficult to address any issue unless you have hands-on experts in the subject in positions of influence at the highest levels of decision making. The city’s new

Commission on Homelessness fails to meet even this basic criteria.

3. I hope the efforts of the members of this commission are sincere and really about helping the homeless. There is always a temptation among the “business” community to “solve” the homeless problem by “getting rid” of the homeless through less than savory means... Not that I am suggesting anything conspiratorial, but, after all, “panhandling” and “visible homeless persons” are “bad for business.”

Mr. Schneider’s article highlights this condition, whether intentionally or otherwise. The visitor’s fearful, condescending attitude toward the homeless persons she encounters typifies the response of many, very occasionally with justification, but more often with no justification, toward the homeless.

I am not confident that the significantly well-resourced residents of the city, or the city leadership “at large,” including business and government, are truly committed to the plight of the less fortunate. There are some notable exceptions, but not enough of them. I hope time will prove otherwise, but the historical evidence is not overtly encouraging.

Again, kudos to Mayor Franklin for a noble attempt. Hopefully the “on the ground” servants of the homeless will have a strong voice in the Mayor’s planned initiatives, but the membership makeup of her commission, might, unfortunately, work against that end. I hope my intuition on this proves to be entirely incorrect!

Thank you for receiving my remarks,
Wes King
AJC Reader
Decatur, GA

Dear Charlotta,

Please continue my subscription to the most worthwhile reading to appear in my mailbox.

Peace,
Marlys Graettinger
Milford, IA

Dear Murphy and Ed,

Thanks so much for sending us your newest publication, A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader. What a great idea to put your work in a single volume for your supporters and “would-be’s” to treasure.

What a turmoil this world of ours is in! When the Bush people use the term “the American people,” I get so irritated – they certainly aren’t counting us and there are a lot of “us’s” around. Stay well. Peace on Earth.

Ralph and Anita Johnson
New Castle, DE

Dear Ed and Murphy,

Thanks very much for sending copies of Ed’s two books. I have read both books and placed them in the library at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church, with a notice in the church’s newsletter.

At church, by the way, I belong to a group that meets every two weeks –informally titled “Peace for Israel, Justice for Palestinians” – with a stated purposed of educating people in our area about the facts on both side of the mid-east conflict. Last week several Jewish people met with us and next week we talk with Palestinians, including Fahed Abu-Akel, our church’s new moderator. The time to forge ahead to a solution to this conflict is now, it seems to me – it can’t be allowed to go on unresolved any longer, obviously – but the leadership just isn’t there – not Sharon, not Arafat, and alas, not Bush – our little group just hopes to educate a few Americans.

I would like to share with you a quirky insight of Annie Dillard’s from a book of hers that I read this summer titled For the Time Being (in which she weaves together insights from Teilhard de Chardin, the Ba’al Shem Tov, and others). In this passage she stands beside a nurse whose job is to bathe the newly born babies in a big urban hospital. She writes, “This hospital, like every other, is a hole in the universe through which holiness issues in blasts. It blows both ways, in and out of time. On wards above and below me, men and women are dying... Off they go, these many great and beloved people, as death subtracts them one by one from the living... Simultaneously, here they come, these many new people, for now absurdly alike – about 10,000 of them a day in this country – as apparently shabby replacements.” It gives me a new view of, say, Grady Hospital, to see it as a “hole in the universe” through which people are going in and out every day.

Annie Dillard is a searcher, and she still hasn’t found answers to the big questions – why do we feel pain, why do we have intelligence and consciousness, what is God like? Those are my questions too, but I find great comfort – if not answer – in the passage from Ecclesiastes which assures us of the goodness and wisdom of the great cycle, in which there is “a time to be born and a time to die” – and time for everything else in between. Blessings and peace to your family this year,

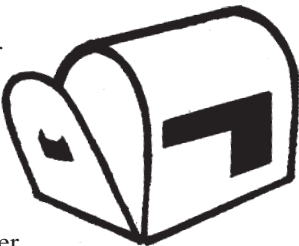
Jean Franklin
Black Mountain, NC

My house has central heat. It’s a big house with just me in it. I have a space heater in my bedroom and I kept waking up because it was so damn hot. How incredible. I have a good job, a successful restaurant, a girlfriend in top physical condition and a Doctorate, a car that runs when I turn the key and I can afford medications for blood pressure and other maladies. I called my friend Ruth and said “I’m alive because I can buy medicine and many others literally die because they can’t.”

I have a home, a warm bed, pillows to fluff while others sleep homeless on cold concrete behind dumpsters. How can this be? I have fame, hugs from my woman and the kids at the Rick McDevitt Youth Center while others are alone, frightened and faceless. For God’s sake I even have a building named after me! I can read yet over 90% of the planet is illiterate [China, India, continents of Africa and South America]. Hard to believe that people won’t give a buck to a beggar. Everyone should give to beggars whenever they encounter them. Mohammed and Jesus did.

My restaurant partner, Giovanni, and I had 30 poor kids and adults to our establishment for dinner. Business is good—eat your fill. One skinny kid ate four plates full. The “certified smart people” tell us to be cautious and careful. Be wary of the “experts.” Don’t listen to them. Listen to your heart. Our thankfulness should cause us to lighten up not tighten up! Thank God I am free!

Rick McDevitt
Atlanta, GA



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: 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

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. (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, anti-death penalty advocacy, advocacy for the homeless, daily worship and weekly Eucharist.

Join Us in 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 Phil Leonard at pleon2000@mindspring.com or 404-874-4906.

January 26	Worship at 910 Elise Witt leading a music night!	March 2	Worship at 910 Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough leading worship
February 1 and 2	Winter Retreat at Dayspring Farm No Worship at 910	March 5	Ash Wednesday Service – 6 a.m. Back Yard of 910
February 9	Worship at 910 Amy Harwell preaching	March 9	The Open Door Community will join <i>The Other Side</i> magazine in sponsoring an afternoon of learning and worship: “Rediscovering the Other Side of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” (see p. 9 for details) At Ebenezer Baptist Church, Auburn Avenue 3:00-5:30 pm, followed by reception and refreshments
February 16	Worship at 910 Ed Loring preaching	March 16	Worship at 910 Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough leading worship
February 23	Worship at 910 Murphy Davis preaching		



Needs of the Community

JEANS	Ham and Turkey for our Soup Kitchen	Disposable Razors
T-Shirts	Sandwiches	Deodorant
Men’s Work Shirts	Quick Grits	LOTION
Underwear for Men	Cheese	Vaseline
Women’s Underwear	Coffee	Towels
Alarm Clocks	Multi-Vitamins	Combs
Eye Glasses	BLANKETS	Sanitary Napkins and Tampons
Men’s Belts	Queen-Size Foam Mattress	Toothbrushes
Washcloths	RUGS OR CARPETING	
Socks	MARTA Tokens	SOAP (any size)
Men’s Shoes (all sizes)	Postage Stamps	SHAMPOO (travel size)
	Used or new French Horn for Music at Worship	
	CHILD AND BABY SAFETY SEATS (for Hardwick Trip Vans)	

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!

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door
We will meet for Clarification of thought on selected Tuesday evenings in February.
For dates and topics, please call 404-874-9652 or check our website at www.opendoorcommunity.org. Plan to join us for learning, discussion, and reflection!

- Can you bring medicine?**
(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic)
- antifungal cream (**Tolfanate**)
 - cold medicine (alcohol free)
 - COUGH DROPS**
 - medicated foot powder
 - antibiotic cream or ointment
 - SUDAFED**
 - Ibuprofen
 - non-drowsy allergy medication