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vol. 22, no. 5

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

May 2003

Remembering A Visionary Life

By Jim Martin

(Editor's note: Jim Martin is the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Resources and a Presbyterian Elder. He has practiced law, worked as a lobbyist in the legislature for Legal Aid, and served for 18 years in the Georgia House of Representatives.)

With the inspiration of the clergy, the beautiful solo, the moving message of Rev. Murphy Davis, and the warm remarks of Buren Batson and the meditation by Bishop Childs, I can hear Frances Pauley saying to me, "We have the votes, keep it short and don't blow it."

We thank God for the life of Frances Pauley. I am certain that when God meets Frances in Heaven she will invite Frances, sitting next to Bill, to have a little taste of gin and to talk about all the things that happened during her amazing life. We thank God for Frances' family and friends who supported her in her work and life, who loved her so much, and who miss her. We ask for the peace that comes from knowing that her work goes on through us and that she is proud of each of you.

Frances was a great storyteller and now is a time for story-telling about Frances. In that process we experience anew the special things she did and we each claim a part of her wonderful life. But there will be some that will want a summary of her life in a word — the synthesis of all her being into a morsel. It cannot be done, but when we must, let us pick the words carefully.

The word "feisty" will come to mind, but that is not right. The right word is "courage." She simply would not be intimidated by power or position and she had unusual courage to stand up for justice.

The word "irreligious" might be used by some pious ones, but that is not right. The right word is "impatient." She was impatient with people and organizations that proclaimed concern about injustice, but refused to do anything about it.

The word "activist" might be used in the press, but that is not right. The right word is "visionary." She saw injustice in specific circumstances — poverty, segregation, discrimination based on gender, race, disease, sexual orientation, economic status — and had the vision to know what to do about it. When advocates give me hell as Commissioner of Human Resources for my mistakes, I am softened by the thought that they are just doing what Frances would have had them do.

Finally, the word "acquaintance" might be used, but that would be wrong. Frances had no acquaintances. She was a spouse, mother, grandmother, true friend, confidante, mentor. She was special to all of us and treated each of us in a special way that made us *believe* we were unique. We thank God for the life of Frances Pauley. ♦

Frances Freeborn Pauley 1905- 2003 *Love Forged In the Fire of Struggle*

By Murphy Davis

(Editor's note: Frances Freeborn Pauley died on February 16 at the age of 98 after a full life in the movement for justice, freedom, peace and human dignity. For all of our life as a community, Frances has been a member of our worshiping community, a constant friend, and a source of encouragement, wisdom, and joy. She spent the years of her life in the civil rights movement in Georgia, desegregating the public schools of Mississippi, fighting in the legislature for the needs of the poor and the sick, and advocating for the homeless poor, people locked out and locked up, people with AIDS, and courageously taking on anyone who would subvert democratic process. We will miss her greatly and we are honored to remember her in this issue of Hospitality with three reflections from her memorial service.)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

(Matthew 5:6, NRSV)

They who have an unsatisfied appetite for justice and solidarity are God's people, for they will be given plenty to chew on. (Matthew 5, Cotton Patch Gospel)



One of Frances' very good friends was Clarence Jordan, one of the founders in 1942 of Koinonia—an interracial farming community south of here in Americus, Georgia. Clarence was a scholar of the Greek scriptures and translated parts of the New Testament into the South Georgia idiom of the 1950's and 60's. Frances loved this Cotton Patch Gospel, as it was titled, and so it seems appropriate to take the text for remembering Frances from the Cotton Patch Gospel.

The Beatitudes of Matthew's gospel hold out for us the tension in the life of faith between our life today and our life as it will be—life in the present and our future life. Jordan's translation helps us to get at the subtle teaching trick Jesus was always up to: helping us to understand that in the nonviolent movement toward peace and justice, our means and ends need to be consistent. In other words, that if we want justice to come we need to live as if it has arrived. Or as the great pacifist leader, A.J. Muste said, "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." If we want to move toward the Beloved Community, the best way—the only way—is to start living there today.

That is what Jesus meant by saying "the kingdom of God is here." God's reign has already begun. If you have eyes to see and ears to hear, you will hear and see it. But (he always added) most of the people around you are going to miss it. They won't know

Love Forged, continued on page 9

Frances Pauley, Guide for the Journey

By Buren Batson

(Editor's note: Buren Batson is a long-time Atlanta activist for justice. He served for a number of years as Director of Aid Atlanta and continues in his work for human rights.)

Frances Pauley was my friend. I did not meet Frances until she was 75 years old and I was 30. I

first saw her at a meeting of the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia where she was a board member, and I was there to represent a group of homosexual men and women who were asking the ACLU to recognize us as an official affiliate. Frances made the motion to welcome us to the ACLU. That act of acceptance resulted in a number of important events. One was a case before the Supreme Court of

Frances Pauley, continued on page 2

Frances Pauley, continued from page 1
 the United States, *Hardwick v. Bowers*. But the most important was an abiding friendship between kindred spirits that only grew stronger for the next 23 years.

Over that nearly quarter of a century, Frances and I spent thousands of hours together, working on various causes that we both cared about, and reveling in a friendship of the mind that transcended the four and a half decades that separated our births. I am very grateful that I was able to work with Frances on some important issues, most notably the H.E.A.T. program, but I am even more grateful that she was my friend. She saved my life and sanity more than once, and I tried to support her when she was

battered by life's inevitable blows.

We shared travels and memories. We went many places. We sat together in the pews of a borrowed basement church on the grounds of a mental hospital in Milledgeville, Georgia, so that a small black congregation could honor Frances for her courage on their behalf. We sat together in the pews of the United States Supreme Court to hear the foremost constitutional expert of the day argue on behalf of the privacy of consenting adults. We sat together, each for the first time, before the Vietnam Memorial and let the horror and beauty of it wash over us. She sat in her wheelchair as I pushed her the 10 miles of the March on Forsyth County, Georgia, to oppose the Ku Klux Klan.

And as the years went on, we sat together through the night of the death of her beloved brother,



GLADYS RUSTAY

Frances celebrated many of her birthdays with the Open Door.

and we grieved. As the years went on, and her movements became more circumscribed, we sat together while our minds ranged over a vast landscape of ideas and memories. I read to her, and she talked to me. We listened to one another. And out of that listening I learned the secret of the power that Frances exercised in her many activities throughout the years, and the reason we bonded. She knew innately that deep within each of us, even those who are blind to it within themselves, there is an overwhelming individuality of spirit, a private self that is of necessity bound within us, but nevertheless longs for communion. Frances had the ability, when she chose, and people sensed it, to look directly into the eyes of that private self in another and say, I see you. I respect you. I value your dignity, and you must value mine. Such power made friends love her and adversaries fear her.

And as the years went on, Frances faced, as we all do, the inevitable decline of physical strength and endurance. She was not able to read as she loved to do, she was not able to travel as she loved to do, she was not able to keep up her extensive correspondence as she loved to do. Yet, as was said of John Adams, "But weak as was her material frame, her mind was still enthroned." It will always be one of the ornaments of my life that I was privileged to really know the great mind that was Frances Pauley, and should I live the 45 years from now that it will take to bring me to her age at death, I will miss her every day. ♦

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- People with good computer data-entry skills to work four hours or more per week
- People to accompany community members to doctors' appointments
- People to serve breakfast on Monday and Tuesday mornings, 5:50-9:30 a.m.
- Groups to make meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna, please) on whole-wheat bread for Soup Kitchen on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and for our friends on the streets
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays
- People to help at the Thursday night Soul Foot Care Clinic

For more information, contact Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906 or pleon2000@mindspring.com

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:

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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

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CLIVE BONNER

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Circulation: Tonnie King and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests

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.)

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Baghdad in Prayer As Bombs Rain on City

By Jim Douglass

(Editor's note: Jim Douglass is a member of Mary's House Community in Birmingham, AL. As a member of a Christian Peacemaker Team in Iraq, Jim wrote this reflection as bombs fell on Baghdad on March 27, 2003.)

Four of us from the Iraq Peace Team (IPT) are camping in two tents and a little house in the midst of Al Wathab Water Treatment Plant. Hanging nearby is a large banner that reads in English and in Arabic:

*To Bomb This Site is a War Crime
Geneva Convention, Article 54*

The tents sit beside a large pool of water. Across a little road is the house, beside a second pool. I am in the house lying in bed, writing before I retire for the night. I can hear the sound of water flowing gently outside the door.

A mullah is chanting prayers over the loudspeaker of a mosque. As dusk falls, I can hear across the city my government's bombs marching to the drum of a Pentagon computer. I saw some of the terrible consequences of yesterday's bombs. Who is under the bombs tonight? The prayers from the mosque continue, punctuated by explosions.

The prayers end. Air raid sirens sound. I wonder if the sirens are an "all-clear" signal and ask Cynthia Banas, an Iraq Peace Team volunteer lying in a bed across the room. She says she doesn't know and keeps on reading. The peace of Iraqis in the midst of war is contagious.

I remember the man I sat down beside in the hotel lobby this afternoon. He had responded thoughtfully in conversation, then excused himself to continue his reading from the Koran. One often sees Iraqis fingering prayer beads. This is a people that prays openly all the time—one reason, perhaps, why so many of them speak warmly and gently to citizens of a country bombing them night and day.

But I saw angry faces this morning as witnesses in the Al-Shaab district of Baghdad described the bombing they experienced yesterday. At 11:30 a.m., March 26th, two missiles struck the opposite sides of the main street through Al Shaab. Separated by an interval of five seconds, the missiles blasted the holes we saw in shops, a restaurant, and second-floor family flats, killing at least fifteen people and injuring over fifty. The missiles made an inferno of the cars whose twisted remnants we saw. The people said there were no military sites or government buildings in the area.

Their anger was expressed by an elderly man in a kaffiyeh who looked at me intently and shouted, "God is protecting the Iraqi people! We'll keep on fighting the Americans, the British, and the Australians! If necessary, we'll fight them with our shoes!"

A second bombed neighborhood we visited was less heavily damaged but in a more obviously criminal way. In the Altujjaar neighborhood in the northern part of Baghdad, we walked through a partially destroyed home. From its wrecked second floor patio, we looked down into the adjoining playground of the Balquis



Secondary School for Girls.

Residents on the ground floor of the duplex told us that at 11:30 p.m., March 25, the Haamid family had been bombed while watching television in their second floor apartment. Muneeb Abid Haamid, 25, his wife, Sahhar, 23, and their six-year-old son, Qaiser Muneeb, were seriously injured from the flying glass of the window.

However, we puzzled over why there wasn't more damage done to the house. Then Scott Kerr, an IPT member from Chicago, began digging into a few of the hundreds of little holes in the patio walls. He pulled out four tiny metal cubes. I looked at them in the palm of his hand and felt a shock of recognition.

The explosion had made relatively little impact on the house because the bomb was designed for another

purpose. The minuscule, carefully cut cubes we found embedded in the walls had been created to maim people in horrible ways—fragmentation bombs. In my mind's eye, I saw all over again the faces and bodies of Vietnamese children pock-marked by fragmentation bombs.

As I complete this journal entry at midnight, many more bombs have fallen across Baghdad, shaking the earth at Al Wathab Water Treatment Plant. Who was under the bombs tonight? Beneath even that question remains the certitude that the hours of prayer will continue, no matter what happens...

We awake at dawn to a series of thunderous blasts from nearby strikes on the city. Almost immediately we hear the mullah chanting prayers from the mosque. Through the open door I can see birds flying across a light blue Baghdad sky. ♦

FRITZ EICHENBERG

The Wednesday Report

By Ed Loring

I. Giving and Receiving

In all this I have given you an example that by such work [manual labor with no desire for riches or fashionable clothes] we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' (Acts 20:35 NRSV)

Roger is a loving addition to our Protestant Catholic Worker House of Hospitality. A few months ago he finished a sixteen-year sentence in the Georgia prison system. A passionate disciple of The Way, Roger mostly lived a life of resistance to the violence and brutality of the dungeon life. He did get in trouble for violence twice. One time one man was being raped by three. Roger flung his body wildly into the mix and melee to stop the ravenous rampage. He was found guilty along with the other four. Justice in America, after all, is blind.

No steel door or iron bar can hold the mystery of love and hope. Somehow, over sixteen hard and horrifying years, The Spirit of Abundant Life formed and reformed Roger into a gentle, caring friend of Jesus. He is one of our teachers. On a recent Wednesday, we spent the day walking the streets of downtown Atlanta near the State Capitol of Georgia, where deformed hearts and madcap minds flutter and fuel for the return of the Confederate flag like neo-Nazis who lust for the swastika.

Most Wednesdays I eat at Daniel and Esther's lunch stand in the curb market. Daniel and Esther are Presbyterians from Korea. They continue to display a picture of Murphy, which they placed on the ice cream cone box when she was at Grady Hospital. When people ask, "Who is that woman?" Esther and Daniel request prayers for Murphy's continued healing.

On these Wednesdays, when folks from our house and I sit down at Daniel and Esther's lunch stand, we also invite a couple of our street friends to join us. Lately, I have also invited one "clean and successful" person to let me buy their lunch, too. To find someone who will accept is difficult and time consuming. Fear and mistrust (*What does he really want? Sex? Or to sell me something?*) are usually

the first feelings as the simple space of a lunch counter line shifts from neutral space to contested space. But I am persistent. Five invitations may finally yield one yes.

In the fear and mistrust at the lunch counter, I see that Jesus' teaching – that it is more blessed to give than to receive – has been distorted in our fear-of-each-other nation. People use this teaching to avoid each other and say "no" to gifts and to run from the life-giving chinks in the walls that surround us. To live anywhere in the United States of America is to live in a gated community. Why should someone offer to buy lunch for someone who is not in need? Is not sharing money and meals love-based as well as need-based? Is not sharing, giving money to each other, and eating together what Dr. King called "the revolutionary means" as we struggle to build the revolutionary Beloved Community? Have we not lost the vision that although it is *more* blessed to give than to receive, it is, nonetheless, *very, very, very* blessed to receive?

So, there I was standing beside Roger and before Daniel and Esther, begging Preston to let me buy his lunch. "I got money, I told you," he refrained. I kept on saying my offer did not imply he was needy or broke. I just wanted to buy his lunch and testify to the anti-capitalist God I love. Roger told me later that he thought Preston believed that I was a homosexual. If I were, I would be proud (but not a Presbyterian minister...yet!). Finally Daniel, as he is wont to do, comforted the young man by assuring him that I am a pastor and do this sort of thing often. At once, a great smile unfurled like a peace banner and Preston said the word that unlocks the door and crosses the threshold to the Beloved Community: "Yes."

Three white men, like magi, sat at a small table and shared our meal. Preston lives in the Butler Street YMCA. He pays \$110.00 per week for rent. He has a job with Peachtree Movers. He is 22. As we shared, I realized he was not a "clean and successful" person, but a broken kid with a tender heart. He asked Roger, "Just what is The Open Door?" Roger told Preston we are a community that works to make women and men equals as sisters and brothers. Roger explained that long before Vashti (Esther 1), women were oppressed and taught they were created to do men's will. Roger continued to tell him stories of our life together. We invited Preston to worship next Sunday at 5:00 p.m. "I'll be there for sure," he promised, standing up to leave. "Thanks for lunch. Take care."

We have never seen Preston again. But his hesitant "yes" and his sharing a meal with us was a gift beyond measure. Something no sociologist can see, like love, like powers and principalities. Roger and I gave and Roger and I received. Preston re-



MEG CROCKER-BIRMINGHAM

ceived and Preston gave. "Some infinitely gentle, some infinitely suffering thing" (T. S. Eliot).

Yes, Jesus said it well: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But it is very, very, very blessed to receive. Thanks, Jesus. Thanks, Preston.

II. Watching Friends Die at 3 m.p.h.

Our friend Bill Quigley, leaving a public hospital in Iraq, said, "I felt like I did when I saw the State of Louisiana execute my client fifteen years ago in front of my face. Except this time it is children and it is in slow motion and it happens over and over again." ("Dispatches from Iraq," *Hospitality*, January 2003, vol. 22, no.1). Bill has eyes filled with love. He sees truth and death.

On Wednesday morning Chuck Harris and I walked to downtown Atlanta. We wandered through weeds along the railroad track and saw several huts where homeless people have built houses from the discards of devastation, the remnants of gentrification along the Ponce corridor. From one hut, smoke curled upward, took a soft leap, and snuggled amid the smut and smog that clogs the air above the Civil Rights capital of the world. Here Andy Young endorses Bush's dirty war, yet remains Atlanta's spokesman of choice for the non-violent resistance of Martin Luther King, Jr., who said in 1967, "All war is war against the poor." King confessed and promised he would "study war no more." What wondrous love is this?

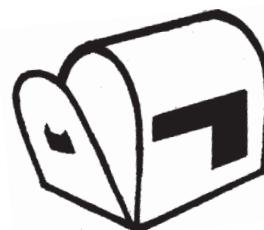
Later, with no beggar lice on our pants, we are standing at a small park three blocks from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth home, where twice young Martin attempted suicide to demonstrate his love for Mama Williams. Police Officer Ralph, Zone 5, Edgewood Beat; John, a homeless man with a dream to sober up and live with his 37 year old daughter; Ricky, a street friend who visits the Open Door Community regularly; Chuck Harris, resident volunteer; and me with shaggy white hair and a heart brimming over with escalating love, join hands as we circle-up. These homeless ones are dying from

continued on next page

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Thank you!

exposure, hunger, sleeping out for years; from white racism and Christian lies. ("The poor you will always have with you," so why not buy an SUV? Can't hurt!) But they die slowly, quietly, brokenly, desperately at 3 m.p.h. So there is no cry, no outrage, no peacemaking team, no Witness for Peace delegation. At the speed at which we live, who can see death at 3 m.p.h.? Bill Quigley can, and in Baghdad, too. Chuck Harris and I can, on Auburn Avenue, at Fort Street, beside and below I-75/I-85. Hard to see the slow-motion death of the poor without the lens of love, the practice of compassion, and the commitment of solidarity.

Circled, hands making a link and momentary bond, white and black together, police and jailed, I pray for peace and justice. At the "amen" someone thrusts two ten-dollar bills into my hands, "for lunch."

John, Chuck Harris and I go to the Municipal Market for a Chinese feast prepared and served by Esther and Daniel. As we finish our meal, Esther surprises us with three heaping bowls of banana pudding, gratis, smiling and singing as she, like Peter's mother-in-law, serves.

Time to go. John goes back to street death at 3 m.p.h. on the way to the MARTA station. Chuck

Harris and I see Denise who has walked out of her Lazarus-like tomb: strong, black, proud woman free. Jail behind her. Sobriety and family before her. She tells us she is returning home, up North where once Harriet Tubman scrubbed floors and emptied whites' slop jars to make money to raid the southern plantations again and again until three hundred Denises walked, ran, swam, crawled, rode, and flew to freedom. (Denise came to supper at 910 on Thursday night to tell us all good-bye). We gave her the two ten-dollar bills for snacks on the trip North toward home.

Chuck Harris and I returned to our fine home filled with love and comfort. I am dying at 63 m.p.h., Chuck Harris at 55 m.p.h. We are both still under the speed limit, but I won't be much longer. I bounded upstairs, where Phil was waiting to teach me how to use my new computer. ♦

(Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.)

God Bless America (And Nobody Else)

By Ed Loring

If God were to bless America
What would become of the
War-mongering Southern
Baptist Convention? A heresy
Born in 1845 to justify
In Jesus' name, white people
Twisting into monsters
Buying and selling girls and boys, women
And men as chattel things.
Or, would the spirit of love and
Mercy heal their horrid hearts,
And out the window would
Fly their hate-stained American
Flags as the Dove of Peace
Flies in and perches
On every heart? "Oh Peace, oh
Peace, we will not hurt or
Destroy on God's holy mountain,"
Would sing from every Southern
White Baptist lip in praise
And resistance to Bush's
Nasty battle.
If God were to bless America
Behind the gated gold-drenched
Concentration camps of high hog living
Would not the gates unfurl?
The locked doors spring wide open?
The golf courses transmogrify into
free land for American Indians?
Would not the rich put up
WELCOME signs
along the gates and walls?
"something there is that does not love a wall"
These captives released from their
Godless materialism would invite
Homeless brothers and sisters to
Join them at supper. And
Just after God's blessings
Blasted America, they would not be
Afraid of the poor who is Jesus

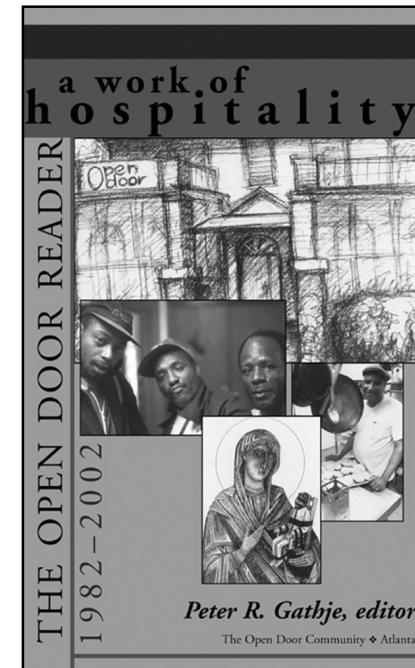
The Human One.

If God were to bless America
Would not Billy Graham practice
The way of discipleship and George W.
Bush teach the Beatitudes?
If God were to bless America
My SUV would turn, unlike
Cinderella's chariot, into a
MARTA bus for all to ride
For free at last.
If God were to bless America
Thirty-five thousand captives
Would be set free (only 5,000 remaining
For violent crimes) from our crazed
Catastrophic cages and filled
For one week with preachers, prosecutors,
Judges, wardens, police, and bankers who
Would cry and wail, "No more death
penalty forever and ever!
Amen."

If God were to bless America
There would be no hunger in the land
No homeless on the streets
No military aid to Israel
No child born into calamity
No old person would die alone
All houses in the whole wide world
would be built by Habitat for Humanity

Therefore: Hear ye, Hear ye
Beware, watch out, stay alert
Sing and pray with extreme caution.
Do we really want God to bless America?
"Yes" (according to the latest WFRG Poll)
Well, then:
Step # One
"Open your homes to the homeless
poor" (Is 58)
Step # Two
"Turn your swords into Plowshares,
Your spears into pruning forks
And study war no more." (Is 2:4) ♦

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The Open Door Reader is a gift to all of us who don't have the presence of the Open Door Community in our daily lives. Through the writings, I learn about prisons and prisoners, homelessness and slavery, labor pools, public toilets, and people who die anonymous deaths like Jeanette "Pony" Lewis. Sometimes what I read rattles me and causes unease, sometimes I disagree, sometimes I'm saddened, sometimes I'm thrilled, and sometimes I laugh. But I'm always challenged to think, to dwell, and to involve myself in the lives of others with whom I share the commonality of being human. Thank you for the living, breathing history and presence of this wonderful book.

-Suzanne Wakefield
Neighbor and regular volunteer
Atlanta, Georgia

We have enjoyed a month's visit with our friends Dietrich and Uta Gerstner and their children Joel (center, 3 years old) and Daniel and Elias (8 month-old twins). Dietrich was a Resident volunteer at the Open Door for two years, 1986-88.

Six years ago, they were among the founders of the Bread and Roses (Brot und Rosen) Catholic Worker Community in Hamburg, Germany, where they continue their ministry of hospitality and resistance.



MURPHY DAVIS

As part of our ongoing commitment to nonviolence, members of the community, along with the Gerstner family, took to the streets of downtown Atlanta on March 22 to demonstrate against the



DAVID BACH

war. We are busy praying for many of our Catholic Worker friends around the country who are in prison and jail for actions of war resistance.



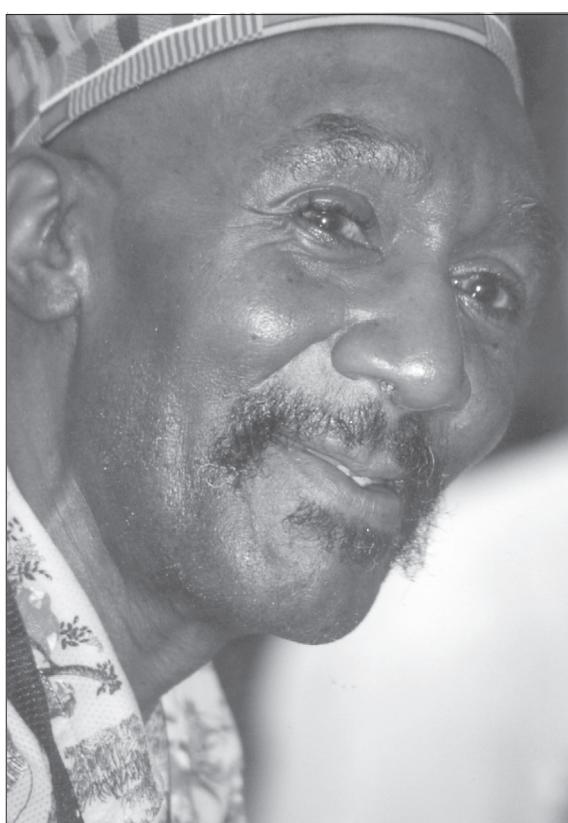
TONNIE KING

On March 9, the Open Door participated with *The Other Side* magazine, Concerned Black Clergy, and others in sponsoring a forum and worship service entitled "Prophet of the Nonviolent Revolution: Reclaiming the Radical Vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." The events were held at the Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church. The forum, moderated by Rev. Timothy McDonald (at the pulpit) included (left to right) Beth Lavoie, Cicely Gay, Dr. Noel Erskine, Don Edwards and (not pictured) the Hon. Cynthia McKinney.

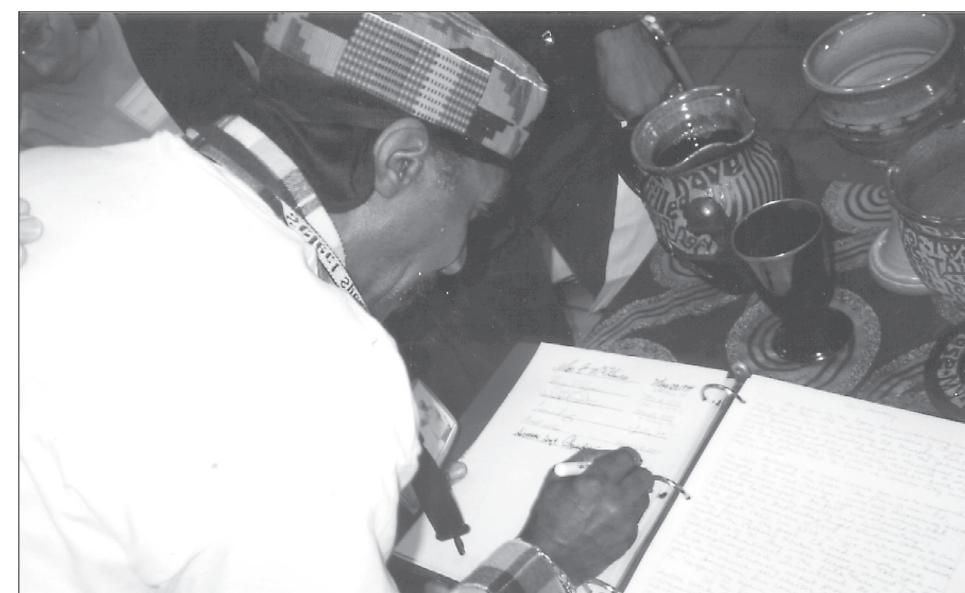


TONNIE KING

On March 24 (the 23rd anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero), Open Door Resident Volunteer Heather Bargeron and Melissa Fridlin of the Carolina Task Force on Central America (CITCA) marched with members of the Open Door and Colombian union leaders to protest Coca-Cola's anti-union violence in Colombian bottling plants. Seven Coke employees have been killed by paramilitary groups in Colombia in the past decade. Coke was recently dismissed from a lawsuit accusing the company of systematic intimidation and murder, but the case continues against Coke's Colombian bottlers.



ELLEN GRIFFITH SPEARS



TONNIE KING

On March 23, Sye Pressley took vows to become a Partner in the Open Door Community. In the photo above, he signs the community's covenant surrounded by the other community partners, our worshiping community, and friends from Jubilee Partners Community.

Grady Hospital Emergency Alert



DEB VAN DUINEN

Open Door folks joined in as members of the Grady Coalition for Affordable Health Care to gather at the State Capitol in March to call on the State Legislature to stop the cruel cuts of the Medicaid program which would further slash funds for Grady Hospital, Atlanta's only public hospital and the state's most important teaching hospital and trauma center. As we go to press, the legislature has failed to agree upon a source of new revenue that would prevent these and other disastrous cuts to programs for the elderly, children, the poor, schoolchildren and college students.

Facts About Grady Hospital

- 770,963 outpatient visits in 2001.
- 333,333 inpatient admissions in 2001.
- 424,941 residents of Fulton and Dekalb Counties who are without insurance or are indigent receive care from Grady.
- 1,347,580 Georgians went without health insurance for at least part of last year.
- Grady has experienced a 15% increase in uninsured patients over the last 12 months.
- Financial support from Fulton and Dekalb Counties has dropped by nearly 10% over the last decade.
- 25% of Georgia's physicians are trained at Grady.
- Grady is home to some of the most repected specialty care clinics in the country, including Perinatal Care, Poison Control, Burn, Trauma, Diabetes, and HIV/AIDS.

Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Save the Grady Health System! Act now!

Call: Representative Jay Shaw, Chair House Appropriations Community Health Subcommittee, (404) 656-5146

Call: Senator Tommie Williams, Chair Senate Appropriations Community Health Subcommittee, (404) 656-0089

Call for Moratorium on Executions

We call for an immediate moratorium on all executions.

The Open Door Community joins the surge of conscientious voices in Georgia and nationwide and calls for an immediate moratorium on all executions. As first-hand witnesses to Georgia's death penalty, we proclaim our opposition to a system shot through with incompetence, racism, and political maneuvering. We ask the governments of Georgia and the United States to suspend all executions of prisoners *now* so that we, the people and our elected leaders, can study this system more closely and more honestly.

We can examine and discuss the death penalty together.

The Open Door Community cannot stand idly by and ignore the fatal cracks in the death penalty system. Nor can we remain silent as the evidence of fallibility and injustice mounts:

- 103 prisoners have been exonerated from death row in the last three decades, which amounts to one exoneration for every eight death sentences carried out.
- 83% of death row prisoners were convicted of killing a white person, though people of color make up more than 50% of all murder victims.
- The United States is one of only six countries that executes children.

Is this justice? Is this the fairness, healing, and integrity we seek in our criminal justice system? We call for a soul-searching dialogue on the death penalty. We call for an open forum on the evidence and our values. We call for a moratorium, statewide and nationwide.

We must work to end death-dealing in all its manifestations.

The Open Door Community seeks an alternative to the cycle of violence and vengeance. We mourn the loss of beloved friends and family to murder, just as we mourn the execution of our friends on death row. As we join the nationwide campaign for a moratorium, we maintain our opposition to death-dealing in both forms – murder and the death penalty. The death penalty cannot be “fixed.” We hope and work for its abolition, just as we hope and work for its suspension, so that everyone may have the chance to join a candid and well-informed discussion. We can live without the death penalty. Let us make that vision real, starting today.

Join the moratorium movement! The Open Door Community invites you to sign, distribute, and send the following petition to The Moratorium Campaign.



THE MORATORIUM CAMPAIGN

P.O. Box 13727, New Orleans, LA 70185-3727 • Phone: (504) 864-1071

E-mail: info@MoratoriumCampaign.org • www.MoratoriumCampaign.org

Remember, you can also sign the petition and make contributions at www.MoratoriumCampaign.org



We the undersigned, living in the U.S., call for a moratorium on the death penalty.

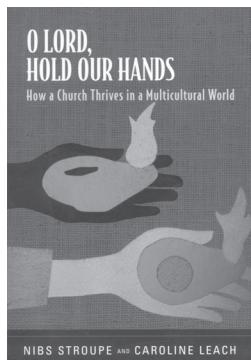
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*MAIL TO: The Moratorium Campaign, P.O. Box 13727, New Orleans, LA 70185-3727 • Phone: (504) 864-1071
Be sure to send in filled sheets right away! Signatures are collected and counted every day!

'I Can Almost Feel the Church Swaying'

Hope and Struggle in a Multicultural Church

Book Review



O Lord Hold Our Hands: How a Church Thrives in a Multicultural World. Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach. 156 pp. Louisville, 2003. Westminster John Knox.

By Don Beisswenger

(Editor's note: Don Beisswenger is Professor of Church and Community Emeritus at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, TN, and a friend of the Open Door Community. Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach, the authors of *O Lord, Hold Our Hands*, will preach at worship and sign copies of their book at the Open Door on May 11. Everyone is welcome to join the celebration!)

Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach tell us the story of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church located in Decatur, Georgia, a near suburb of Atlanta. The journey shared in the book made me sway. And it will make you sway too, just like it did the writer from *Time* magazine.

The father of Henri Nouwen was once asked if there was one characteristic which he remembers most about Henri as a baby. He thought for a moment and then said, "Yes, he always wanted to get out of his play pen." Exploring new territory. Crossing boundaries. Getting out of our familiar surroundings. Such was the life of Nouwen, and also the story of the Oakhurst Church. We are told how a suburban church got out of the play pen of mono-culturalism and began to claim diversity as a wonderful gift from God.

Three affirmations shaped the journey, say the authors: (1) God is the center of life and our lives; (2) God likes diversity and offers it as a gift to us; (3) We continue to have trouble believing and accepting principles one and two. Holding these principles together has led through deep waters, confronting fears and conflict. There was new territory explored, and seemingly impossible boundaries crossed. There has been struggle and wandering. But there has been great joy as well. So get this book and let it speak to you.

The opening sentence comes from an article in *Time* magazine regarding the church: "I hear music from the sidewalk, and it gets louder as we walk up the side of the old church building. People are clapping along with the upbeat gospel music, and I can almost feel the church swaying." I often come to Atlanta to share in the life of the Open Door Community, and usually go to worship at Oakhurst. And I can attest that the swaying is true. They are not drunk. They are filled with the spirit. Breath takes form in spirit, and spirit takes form in word, and as Henri Nouwen puts it, silence takes form in prayer.

Let me focus on two aspects of the journey.

The story begins with a brief review of racism and the southern Presbyterian Church. Facing the reality of segregation, the church had over the years developed a theology of the church which focused totally on the salvation of individual souls. This focus let white Christians transform the God of Jesus Christ into a God who approved of slavery and wanted to keep the races separate. The signs on every church which said "All are welcome" was a charade. They were not welcome and in fact black persons who came faced rejection, not welcome, and were sometimes jailed. Racism, the authors assert, is a system which aims to segregate white people from the rest of humanity, declaring they are special, more intelligent, more capable of being in charge. Thus "white" is seen as normative. The Church became captured by this death. The radical nature of the sinfulness, its depth and power, began to be uncovered, however. God did open the imagination of many in the church to the possibility of new life, an integrated community. After 1954, the Presbyterian church as a whole began to be aware of the contradiction. It has changed slowly, both in profession and practice. But racism still persists. The reality of white privilege continues in us all.

The Oakhurst Church confronted this same situation and while they "did not leap for joy at the prospect of becoming multicultural," some lay persons and ministers of the church came to believe that spirituality and justice cannot be divorced from each other. And in the midst of their fears, they struggled for light and God surprised them. Here, too, awareness came regarding how the fallen powers of the world had captured their hearts and imaginations. And they repented and believed that God called them to a new reality. They worked

over the years to embody the calling to be the body of Christ for the sake of the world. And spirit did become incarnate in word and life. However, while the new vision emerged, the power of the old remained in them and among them. This is a central feature of their story.

The second theme I focus upon is the chapter entitled "Life Together: How we Worship and Learn," which describes the worship life of the community. A central affirmation of the book is this: *We want to be together*. And because they want to be together, worship has to be life-giving and life-sustaining. Worship that was exclusive, repressive and irrelevant, aimed more at preserving social and economic status, would not do. Worship became juxtaposed with matters of justice and service. Each aspect of worship was shaped to provide opportunity for attentiveness to holy presence, to the sacred, but also to justice. Greeting time, sharing of concerns and joys, the sermon, music, the sacraments, art, and Christian Education have been shaped by the claim of justice, fellowship, and joy which emerge from the journey to be a multicultural community.

While 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour of the week in America, worship here is about 50% black and 50% white. This reality makes the liturgy dynamic and potent. One African American member said,

"Worship is the sanest part of my week."

Their life together is shaped by the liturgical season and sacraments, but also by Kwanzaa, Black History month, and issues in women's history. And there is humor and laughing, too. A gift of God.

The public ministry of the church combines mercy and justice. They are engaged where persons need help, compassion, a helping hand. One chapter describes some of the members and their particular issues. They are there for each other. But they are attentive to the community in which

they are located, which shifted from white to black some years back, and has now begun to shift from black to white, a gentrification process which results in a larger white community around the church.

At the end, they present some theological principles which guide their life together: *An Attitude of Gratitude, Dealing with The Power of Fear, Say Yes to Engagement, The Necessity of Community, and Spirituality and Justice Go Together*.

The journey has been a delight for this reader. Having been a part of a multicultural church here in Nashville, I can attest to the reality of the struggle. And while the journey has been long, it follows a vision which God gave them and gives us all. And they have been blessed.

Native American Wisdom says: "This we know: the earth does not belong to the people, people belong to the earth. All things are connected. We may be brothers and sisters after all. We shall see." What shall we see? I see a place where the commitment is to affirm that all things are connected. I have seen that connection in this story. The story concludes as follows:

"From Many threads, One Tapestry. From Many streams, One River. From Many branches, One tree. We are Oakhurst."

Thank you for your witness. ♦

O Lord, Hold Our Hands

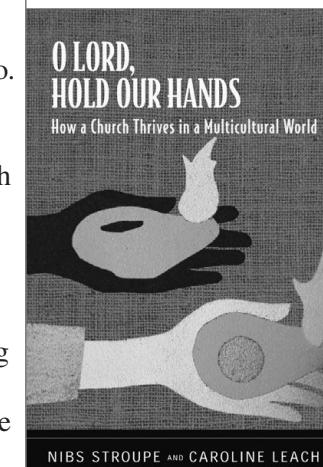
How a Church Thrives in a Multicultural World

Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach

ISBN: 0-664-22698-1 • Paper \$16.95 (Canada \$25.00)

"This book offers one concrete specific 'Yes' . . . Yes, the Gospel has power even in the face of racism."

—Walter Brueggemann, William Marcellus McPheeers Professor of Old Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary



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Westminster John Knox Press

WJK

Over the last decade, Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, has been nationally recognized as a model of a successful multicultural church. Pastors Nibs Stroupe and Caroline Leach share their story—with all of its peaks and valleys—and, in doing so, provide a guide to multicultural ministry that any church can use to build or enhance its own ministry

Love Forged, from page 1
what you are talking about.

Blessed are those who hunger—they shall be satisfied.

Those with unsatisfied appetites will have plenty to chew on.

These folks, like Frances, will have the reward of satisfaction. These folks, like Frances, will always have plenty to chew on. But while it sounds like a tension—one future, one present—this is part of what Jesus was trying to tell us, and Frances got it. The satisfaction is that the hunger for justice, solidarity, fairness—the hunger for the Right—means that we are never out of work. If you are in the movement, there won't be any pink slips for you. No layoffs, no downsizing. That's a sort of good-news, bad news thing.

The bad news is that we can't ever finish because we're not ever "done." Until the Rapture, we've got to keep our eyes on the prize and our hand on the plow. The good news is that we always have good and meaningful work to do, and we could never find better companions for the journey in any line of work.

This, it seems to me, was precisely the tension that worked within Frances in the final years of her life. She told me a thousand times that her progressive blindness (she had macular degeneration) was not such a burden to her because she had so many rich memories to live with. She lived a long life and all of her days were meaningful because she was on the journey for a better world. But then how many times did we also hear her say, "Oh I wish I could go with you—I wish I could get down there to the Capitol. I wish I could help plan what needs to be done"? She was satisfied because she spent so many years helping and agitating and breaking down barriers. And yet...her appetite was still unsatisfied because she knew we weren't done.

I have breathed many prayers of gratitude that Frances slipped into a

For our Memorial Day meal, the Open Door especially needs...

**ground beef for hamburgers
hamburger buns
ice cream**



**ketchup
mustard
mayonnaise
pickles**

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



By Tonnie King

Hello everyone! I am happy to introduce some very special friends of the Open Door Community. About three years ago, I noticed a church in Atlanta called the Moravian Church. I asked a few people if they knew any anything about this denomination, because I had never heard of it.

Richard Spaugh has been a regular soup kitchen volunteer on Wednesdays for about two years now. Talking to him one day, I learned, to my surprise, that he is the pastor of this Moravian church! This is a small world after all! Hold on, I am not finished with this story yet.

For about three years, Susie Grimley has also been a regular soup kitchen volunteer on Wednesdays. In sharing my newfound knowledge with her, I discovered that she was a member of that same congregation! I was just flabbergasted. And Richard has recently started bringing his daughter, Amanda, with him on Wednesdays as well.

While they are wonderful volunteers in our soup kitchen, these three are notorious for telling bad jokes. (But that seems to be the key to the endless amount of fun that they share with us every week.) It has been a true gift to get to know people that truly care for our community and our homeless friends. Thank you, Amanda, Susie, and Richard. ♦

Tonnie King is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

lack of awareness of world events in her final days. If she had really known what is going on—all the war-mongering and its necessary corollary of dismantling every good program and help to the poor—it would have made her miserable. No, the time for Frances' engagement was done. It was time for her to rest—to find peace. And her peace at the last is probably her final gift to us.

How in the world can we ever be adequate to the task of giving thanks for this wonderful, incomparable sister: Frances Emma Freeborn Pauley? And how will we account for the loss of her great warmth, her strong encouragement, her deep wisdom, her political acuity (honed over so many decades), her fearless engagement, her sweeping vision,

her constant reminder that the time to do what needs to be done is now—her determination to break down barriers and challenge hatred and exclusion in personal behavior and social policy? Most of all—what are we to do without her strong, faithful friendship and her deep joyful laughter that helped us to remember just how good life is and how valuable is the struggle to protect life and human dignity?

I must admit, it all feels pretty daunting to me. But it helps to remember that when she was tempted to sadness or feeling overwhelmed, Frances Pauley was not

about to sit around and cry in her gin and tonic. She'd drink the damn thing and of course she would cuss appropriately. And then she would get on with figuring out whatever needed to be done next.

Yesterday Bill Boling reminded us that the 20th annual Hunger Walk was scheduled for today. Frances, of course, helped to organize the first Hunger Walk. And, of course, today thousands of people of conscience are converging on Washington and filling the streets of cities around the world to demand an end to the deployment of this idiotic war on Iraq. Probably Frances would have told us to get out of here and to go spend the day at the Hunger Walk or to go demonstrate against the war. She did plenty of both.

But we are here together, because it *is* time for us to stop and honor this ending of an era. For a great soul has passed from our ranks to the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us and helps us on our way.

Frances was hungry and thirsty for justice and solidarity. She definitely had an unsatisfied appetite. Where did it come from? God's Grace is always such a mystery, but whatever the specific sources in her life for this hunger and thirst, what a gift it has been to the human family. Frances hated exclusion, snobbery, prejudice, mean social policy and lies—and secret meetings! She couldn't stand the thought of the bigots winning any political skirmish (especially if she were involved), and it was her greatest pride and delight to stand up to the likes of the old racist Governor Eugene Talmadge and his ilk. She was completely intolerant of excuses about why we couldn't do the right thing or

protect the vulnerable. She would not keep quiet when anybody claimed that there wasn't enough money to share with the poor. Not enough to house the homeless. Not enough to provide health care for the poor and sick. Not enough to have decent schools for poor black and white children. She knew that any of these excuses and claims of scarcity were bald-faced lies. But as understandable as it would have been when we think about how difficult so many of her battles were, it was not hate and exasperation at the root of her motivation.

It was love. Frances really believed that God is Love: that God was made flesh, and that the only way we can love God is to love each other, and protect the most vulnerable, and welcome the excluded and exploited. If we say we love God but we don't reach out to help the least, the last, and the lost, then our faith is as dead as a doornail.

It was love that led Frances to help set up a medical clinic in Decatur during the Depression when poor people couldn't get to a doctor. It was love that made her want to learn from Mrs. Hamilton and how she got federal money so that they could feed all the hungry school children in the 1930's. It was love that led her to care for wounded soldiers in the hospital and to teach some illiterate soldiers to read. It was love—along with a growing political understanding that led her to what she called "a, well, maybe not *entirely* straightforward process"—to strike the "whites only" clause in the League of Women Voters by-laws that led to the first interracial leagues.

It was love that brought her decision to resign from the Decatur **Love Forged, on page 10**

Welcome to the Spotlight

Richard Spaugh, Susie Grimley, Amanda Spaugh



TONNIE KING

Amanda Spaugh, Richard Spaugh, and Susie Grimley.

Love Forged, from page 9

Methodist Church and the Druid Hills Club because in 1954 she promised to never again belong to an all-white organization or institution. It was love that made her want to be a bridge between black and white, rich and poor, gay and straight. She wanted to be a bridge of understanding so that we might all move toward knowing and appreciating and caring for each other.

It was love that brought Frances to sign up for what Dr. King called the Beloved Community: to make her home there and to work for its fulfillment. Voting rights, school integration, open accommodations, an end to mob violence, police brutality, harsh imprisonment, and the death penalty; public assistance, welfare rights, help for people with AIDS, abolition of the sodomy law, rights and dignity for gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people, housing for the homeless, heat for the poor left in the cold... What *didn't* she take on? And in all of it she was as wise as a serpent, gentle as a dove, tough as nails, and her heart overflowed with love.

In 1990 some of us around the city established a group called People for Urban Justice, ("PUJ" for short) to advocate especially for the homeless poor. Frances and Dr. Clinton Marsh were the honorary chairs. In June 1990, eight of us broke into the abandoned Imperial Hotel and had a 16-day occupation along with some 300 homeless men, women and children. Every afternoon Frances would drive down to Peachtree Street, park her car, and sit in a lawn chair on the sweltering sidewalk in front of the Imperial. She told us stories; she made us laugh; she helped us craft strategy.

The homeless folk who had not known her before wondered at first about this old white lady and what she might be up to. But quickly they came to realize the authenticity, the rock solid commitment, and especially the deep love in their midst in the presence of Frances Pauley.

Within a few days she had been named by the homeless "MOTHER PUJ." Mother of the movement. Mother of the poor. Loving presence and strong friend. She was claimed by the homeless people on the sizzling summer streets of downtown Atlanta because she was so full of love. And isn't that what brings each of us to this gathering on a Saturday morning? She loved us; and nothing can take that away from us. She knew that love is nothing if it is not deeds, and she worked it out every day of her life.

Fyodor Dostoevsky said: "Love in dreams is beautiful and easy. Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing... active love is labor and fortitude..." Love in Action is the Cross of the great political clash between the power of death and life, between oppression and hope, between war and healing. It is a decisive clash, and the road is hard and often lonely, and the cost is high. The work is great and the laborers are few.

Frances joked so many times about whether or not she would live long enough to learn to love her enemies. Well, I don't whether she did or not, but I do know this: (1) Everybody here knows enough to know we're glad *we* weren't her enemies, and (2) Whether or not she refined her love of enemies, she sure as heck never let hatred take center stage in her life. She was too busy loving. She loved you and she loved me. She loved her family and she loved those she made family among the poor. And if you were a part of the movement for liberation and justice—she loved you.

You are with us now in another way, Mother PUJ. You lived with an unsatisfied appetite for justice and solidarity. You always had plenty to chew on. And you were satisfied with the love forged in the fire of struggle. Now you pass it on to us. Thanks be to God. ♦

(Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.)



MEINRAD CRAIGHEAD

Connections

Elizabeth Dede

In April of 2000 I moved from full-time residence at the Open Door Community to Americus, Georgia, to join the staff of the Prison & Jail Project. Americus is in rural southwest Georgia, a three-hour drive from Atlanta.

The Prison & Jail Project is a small civil rights organization. John Cole Vodicka, the director, and I comprise the staff. Neither one of us is an attorney, although our basic work is to safeguard the rights of those who are caught in the web of the criminal control system. We spend hours each week observing in local courts, where we are able to learn much about the way the poor are treated. In all but one of the city courts we observe, defendants have no access to an attorney, unless they can afford to hire their own.

From our observation in city court, we are able to learn about police behavior, so our work also leads us to monitor police behavior in the small towns in and around Americus.

Our work also brings us to the prisons and jails for visitation where we learn about the deplorable conditions under which human beings are forced to live. At some of the local jails, visitation takes place outside, so that it is dependent on good weather. The prisoners are brought out into a yard behind a fence with razor and barbed wire. Their family members and friends line up at a parallel fence and must shout back and forth to each other. There is no privacy, and if it rains, is too hot, or too cold (determined by the sheriff), then visitation is canceled. Recently we went down to Cuthbert, Georgia, for visitation at the Randolph County Jail. It was overcast, but not raining. Nevertheless, the sheriff decided to cancel visitation. We met a woman who had driven hours all the way from Atlanta to visit her son.

From visitation we hear about jails that were built to house 20, holding 40. People are forced to sleep on the floor. Food is terrible. One jail served bologna sandwiches three times a day. Often there is one toilet for 20 people and sewage backs up onto the floor. Roofs leak, lighting is inadequate, health care is practically nonexistent, and many of the prisoners haven't even been to court yet, so that

under our system they are still considered innocent.

At the Prison & Jail Project we receive a large volume of mail from state prisoners. Many write to us because they have no one else to help them. Often prisoners write to us requesting legal assistance. For the most part we are unable to help and cannot even refer them to an attorney. It is difficult to answer so many letters by saying, "I'm sorry but there is nothing I can do for you." We do make an individual response to each letter, so a good bit of our time is spent in correspondence.

Another one of our tasks is to be teachers. We know that the public needs to be educated about the criminal justice system. We speak to churches and organizations, give educational tours to school groups and to individuals, and write and publish a bi-monthly newsletter called *Freedomways*. It is our hope that many will be led by what they learn to become agents of change.

Since August of 2000, I have been closely involved with a wonderful program in Smithville, Georgia, called the Smithville Neighborhood Freedom Center. 75% of Smithville's 800 residents are African American, but until the elections of November 2002, the power was in the hands of the minority white people.

After a very successful voter registration drive led by the Smithville Neighborhood Freedom Center, the town now has an African American mayor and a city council that is entirely African American. We are glad to see this government that is more truly representative of the population, and we're pleased and gratified to see the growth of leadership.

In 2001, I became a non-resident partner at the Open Door Community. I see my work in southwest Georgia as an extension of the life and work of the Open Door. I spend my weekends at the Open Door and am strengthened by friendships and worship there. I am so thankful to God that I continue to have a close and enduring relationship with the Open Door Community because it centers my life in the struggle to overcome oppression, to undo racism, and to be about the work of liberation. ♦

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



TONNIE KING

Clive Bonner has once again come from Scotland to spend a month living and working with us. He and his wife Connie first came in 2000 for three months, when Connie was in a summer program at the Open Door with Westminster College at Cambridge. This year Connie is busy in her first year as pastor of a church in Annan. Clive has retired after 30 years as a police officer and is a gentle and welcoming presence among us.

Live in a residential Christian community.

Serve Jesus Christ and the 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 www.opendoorcommunity.org

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Friends,

The writing in *Hospitality* each month is outstanding, but the March issue is superior in its scope and inspiration. Thank you so much.

Alice McConaughy Hartbarger
Bridgeport, AL

Dear Editor,

Once again *Hospitality* has published a cogent book review focused on bigotry. John Ehlers's appraisal of Constantine's Sword: the Church and the Jews by James Carroll (*Hospitality*, February 2003, vol. 22, no.2) underscores the history of the Catholic Church's anti-Semitic policies and practices that set the tone for the Holocaust. He avers: "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."

Ehlers' compelling review and Carroll's powerful book help bring us closer to dealing with this type of religious desecration. But, alas, the world's awareness of the destruction of Jews qua Jews has done little to stem the toll of religious and racial atrocities that have marked the last fifty years.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Greenspan
Hackensack, NJ

Dear Phil,

Please remove my name from your newsletter mailing list. I cannot believe that an organization soliciting financial help from individual donors would put out such a negative-toned publication. There are many of us who are pro-Bush/Republican and have big hearts and give lots of money to help those less fortunate.

Thanks,
Dan Walden
Atlanta, GA

I read *Hospitality* from cover to cover; please keep it coming.

Linda Washburn
Brevard, NC



RITA CORBIN

Dear Folks,

What a scandal this war is. The constant referring to "the American people" – does not include me.

Yours,
Sister Francita
Sisters of St. Francis
Winsted, MN

Dear Ed and Murphy

I've just received and read the April *Hospitality* – it's wonderful! Except that for once there's nothing by Murphy, and I always enjoy reading her pieces! The variety, insight, commitment are rich and inspiring. We are praying that the war will be over soon with minimal suffering. Blair's position is neither credible nor understandable. There is massive opposition, especially within and among the churches - as we know there is in the US too. I think of you all so often.

Love and good wishes from us both,
Norman and Ruth Shanks
Glasgow, Scotland

Dear Friends,

I've been meaning to write you and thank you for the papers you send me. Please know that I enjoy them very much and share them with others here. It's like a breath of fresh air in an otherwise dank hole. One of the things I like most about it, it seems so real, and not the fake preaching by some rich guy that can't even begin to know what we suffer through inside here.

Thank you also for the 2003 calendar. It was the first 2003 calendar I was able to get. One of the most common acts in prison is watching the time go by, tracking the days that pass, leading us to freedom again. It was an excellent gift.

Unfortunately, those of us behind the razor wire topped fences don't have a lot of extra money. As we enter into 2003, the federal prisons will be raising phone rates 3 cents a minute, and will begin to charge \$2.00 for each visit to medical. Meanwhile, most of the men inside here are making less than \$20 a month, some as little as \$5.25 a month. Please know, however, you are in my thoughts and prayers, and once my money situation improves I'll remember you.

Again, it was great to hear from you this holiday season, and hope you all have a happy and successful new year. Thanks for all you do, for all you mean to me.

Smiles and appreciation!
A friend in prison

Dear friends at the Open Door,

I was so touched by your several moving articles in the January 2003 issue. Your Quigley article on Iraq experience – superb ("Dispatches from Iraq," vol. 22, no. 1)!

Gratefully and fraternally,
Ted Sizing
Syracuse, NY

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Now that the attack has started, I'm praying for the least casualties possible on all sides. I imagine you are as well. How are you thinking and feeling about all this? Are you seeing the stress in those with whom you work as am I?

I was a hospital corpsman in the Navy from 1968 to 1972, and the names of several of my friends are also on the Vietnam wall. I have been a physician specializing in psychiatry for the last 25 years and have treated numerous veterans from several wars who were scarred by their war experiences. Now I'm seeing average

citizens who are beside themselves with fear of unknown enemies. We all know the quote from Franklin Roosevelt, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." That seems to me to apply today as much as ever before. In my opinion it is as important as during Roosevelt's day for us to become quiet and still, as often as possible, and seek to hear the wise voice within each of us before we react to uncertain threats with unhelpful actions.

May we all listen to that still, small voice within and keep our hearts and minds open to one another.

Peace and Love,
Jim Wells
Hillborough, NC

Hi Open Door!

Brian and I are still enjoying your great newsletter. Your newsletter always acts as a "centering" vehicle. Am always glad to see Ed and Murphy still going strong.

Love,
Lita and Brian Doesken
Hibbing, MN

An Open Letter to President George Bush

Dear President Bush,

Since you seem unalterably determined to go to war despite majority opposition from the American public, our European allies, and the world community, let me make a practical suggestion.

If you insist on sending American troops into battle, then let me suggest that you serve as the commander-in-chief, and march at the head of the army into battle. All the great leaders of history stood not behind but in front of what they believed in. They led their troops into battle and showed not by word but by deed that they believed in the cause they were fighting for.

In this day and age it is particularly urgent that you take a leadership role if you want to fight. Our army today is not made up of people who want to be soldiers. Many people serving in the armed forces today are there because 1) they could not afford to go to college otherwise or 2) they have been laid off their jobs because of the current state of the economy that values products and bottom line more than it values human lives and equitable living conditions.

So if you want any credibility on your self-determined path of destruction, you must show not only the people of our nation, but the people of the world that you are willing to risk your own life and the lives of your cabinet and supporters for your ideals. Roll up your sleeves and lead the way into battle.

Sincerely,
Elise Witt
Atlanta, GA

Dear Ed,

I received mail from you not too long ago with a photo in it of last year's Christmas dinner. The food must have had a great taste because the people in the photo seem to be enjoying themselves eating it. I used to always sit at the last table to eat when I was out there. It seems like it was only yesterday, but it's now pretty close to sixteen years. By the way, please tell everyone hello for me and that each of them are always in my thoughts and prayers.

Things with me down this way is pretty much the same. I've been keeping a very low profile and praying my heart out about my parole situation. I haven't heard anything yet on the matter, but I heard some positive talk from one of the officers that works here. He told me my name has been ringing in terms of parole release and for me not to say anything about it.

I ask that you pray for me because it seems as though trouble tries to rise up against me almost every day now since I've been waiting on a decision from the department of Pardons and Paroles. I'm glad that I am a much better man and strong enough to endure what's coming at me constantly. I was told that when trouble is constantly coming at you, a blessing is on the way that the devil is trying his best to prevent you from receiving. So that's why I shall remain firm and have faith until I walk out of these gates, which is just a matter of time.

Take care and do pray for me.

Peace,
A friend in prison

The Nibs Stroupe article ("And Before Trent Lott There Was...," *Hospitality*, February 2003, vol. 22, no. 2) was wonderful.

Kenneth Collinson
Grosse Pointe Farms, MI

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!

You're Invited to a
Book Signing!

May 4 Worship at 910

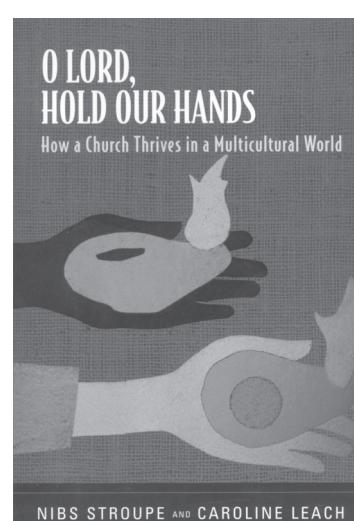
May 11 Worship at 910
Nibs Stroupe and Caroline
Leach, preaching, followed by a
signing of their book, **O Lord Hold
Our Hands** (see page 8 for review).

May 18 No Worship at 910
The Open Door Community will
travel to Jubilee Partners in Comer,
GA, to join their community in
worship.

May 25 Worship at 910

After Worship, on Sunday, May 11, Nibs
Stroupe and Caroline Leach of Oakhurst
Presbyterian
Church will sign
copies of their
new book, **O
Lord Hold
Our Hands:
How A
Church
Thrives in a
Multicultural
World.**

See page 8 for
a book review.



Medicine Needs List

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

antifungal cream (Tolfanate)
COLD MEDICINE (alcohol free)
COUGH DROPS
medicated foot powder
antibiotic cream or ointment
SUDAFED
Ibuprofen
non-drowsy allergy medication
latex gloves
toenail clippers (large)
nail files
lubriderm lotion

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

Needs of the Community

JEANS
men's work shirts
underwear for men
women's underwear
men's belts
socks
men's shoes (all sizes)
MOSQUITO REPELLENT

hams and turkeys for our Soup Kitchen
sandwiches
quick grits
cheese
coffee
multi-vitamins
twin mattress pads
MARTA tokens
postage stamps
used or new french horn for music at Worship

CHILD AND BABY SAFETY SEATS (for Hardwick Trip Vans)

disposable razors
deodorant
vaseline
combs
toothbrushes
SOAP (any size)
SHAMPOO (travel size)
alarm clocks
eye glasses

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We will meet for Clarification
of thought on selected
Tuesday evenings in May.

For dates and topics, please
call 404-874-9652 or see
www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Plan to join us for discussion
and reflection!