

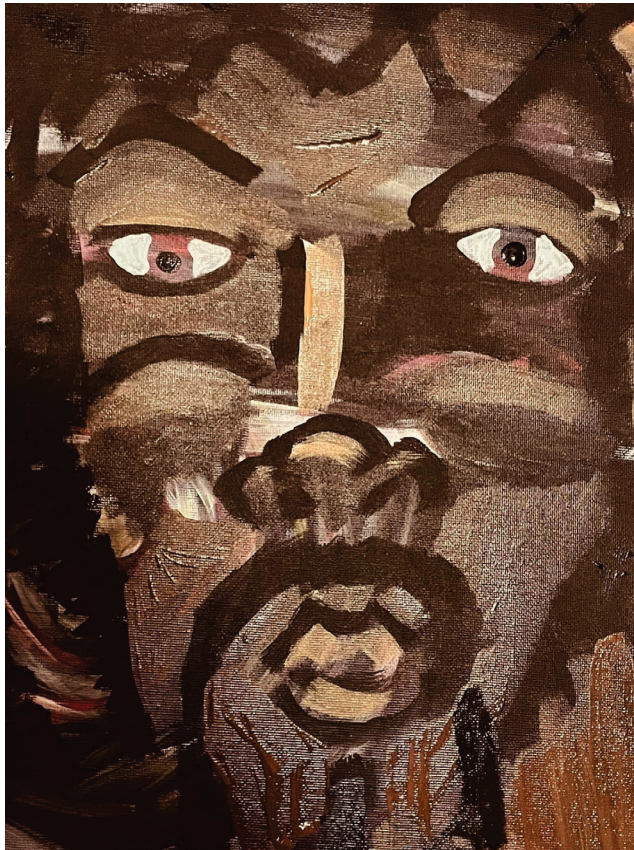
HOSPITALITY

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

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April / May 2026



King of the Jews - Enemy of the State | Bec Cranford

April / May 2026

Resurrection and Resistance

Nibs Stroupe

Incantation of the First Order

A poem by Rita Dove

Dear Brothers and Sisters on death row,

Joe Ingle

Giving Thanks for Jesse Jackson

John Cole Vodicka

ICE Agents Storm My Porch

A poem by Maria Melendez Kelson

Come and See: A Palestine Travel Report

Kevin Moran

The Arc of Racism is Long, and it Bends Toward Injustice

A review of Malcom Foley's *The Anti-Greed Gospel*

David Billings

Letters

A Prayer to Our Political God

Lee Carroll

Resurrection and Resistance

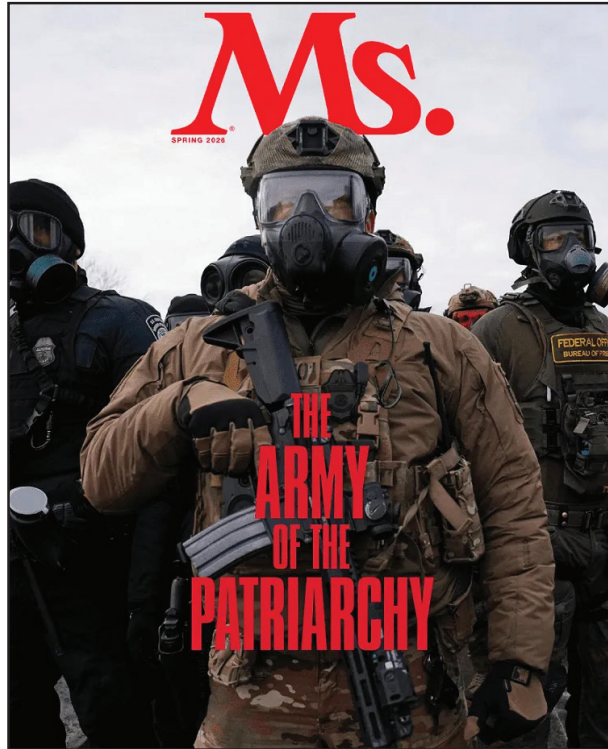
By Nibs Stroupe

Caroline and I received the Spring issue of *Ms.* magazine, and on the cover was a photo of Trump's paramilitary, largely unregulated police. They are often called "ICE Agents," but they are basically Trump's personal, nationally federalized police, to be used at his discretion, wherever he wants to send them. On its cover, *Ms.* had the best name for them that I have seen: "The Army of the Patriarchy." And, indeed, that is what they are. They are the army of the patriarchal vision as Trump wants it and sees it: a return to the complete dominance of white, male supremacy. The establishment of this Army of the Patriarchy is why Trump has so far refused to support an end to the TSA mess; he wants no regulation of his personal patriarchal army. It is the stuff of dictators and empires. This Army of the Patriarchy will be appearing in many places for the rest of the year, especially at the polling places in November.

In late March, Christianity observed Holy Week, the alternative to the stuff of Empire. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, hoping against hope that those who uphold the Roman Empire will catch a glimpse of a different view of the world, a different view of themselves and of other human beings, a view different from the Army of the Patriarchy. It begins with a time of high hopes. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and he knows that this is the time when his vision must take hold — this is the critical week. His followers are fired up, and why shouldn't they be — he has healed their bodies and their spirits, he has fed the hungry, he has cured the sick, and he has given them a new vision of life and how to live their lives. This is it — this year, Jerusalem!

Part of the fervor comes from the time of the Jewish calendar — it is the season of Passover, the commemoration of God's defeat of Pharaoh, a defeat that brought the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt and into the liberation of the wilderness. Part of the Seder meal for Passover has the phrase "Next year, Jerusalem!" And, as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a jackass to celebrate Passover, his followers are ecstatic — the hated Romans will be overthrown and the corrupt religious leaders of Judaism will be replaced with compassionate and righteous leaders. "Ride On, King Jesus!" But, Rome is watching, the Empire is watching. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, has brought a garrison of soldiers into Jerusalem to make certain that those who would oppose the Empire are quickly squashed.

Jesus enters Jerusalem with a sense of possibility, but the Army of the Patriarchy is waiting for him, just as it waits for us



Ms. Magazine | Spring 2026

now in Trumpworld. The powers of domination will not yield easily, and if necessary, they will kill a few "domestic terrorists" in order to keep the visions and the hearts tied down to Empire. Jesus rides on to the Cross, to his death. He is killed because he is offering an alternative vision to that of Empire, a vision that promises justice and equity and mercy. Holy Week is a sobering week, especially this year, because it retells our story as humanity in captivity to the powers of death and destruction and violence, as we see with the bombs raining down in Iran.

Holy Week shows us the drama of our lives — we long for love, but we believe in death. We want to believe in this Jesus of Nazareth, but the world seems so much with us, a world dominated by corrupt and egotistical leaders, by the Army of the Patriarchy in a world that believes in

the power of violence and death. Holy Week walks us squarely into the midst of this struggle — no fading away here, no sentimentalism allowed. Holy Week looks squarely at one of the most difficult truths of our lives: we long for love, but we believe in death. Holy Week asks us to sit with this uncomfortable truth — to think about our visions lost or visions diminished, about our hopes being

Jesus enters Jerusalem with a sense of possibility, but the Army of the Patriarchy is waiting for him, just as it waits for us now in Trumpworld.

dashed, to think about our compromises that make us gradually lose hold of our dreams and hopes. Holy Week asks us to stay with that process in our own lives and in the life of the world.

But, we are in the season of Resurrection, and whether or not you believe that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead after he was given the death penalty by Rome, the power of Resurrection still speaks to all of us. The power of the Resurrection is not so much what happens to us when we die. The power of the Resurrection is that we are offered the opportunity to experience new life now, to see life and ourselves and others in a new way.

In this sense, Resurrection is always contemporary, because we are always in captivity. Those of us seeking liberation can use the power of Resurrection as a metaphor for helping us to find new life and new vision. In this time when Trump would be king, it is sometimes hard to feel and to experience the power of Resurrection. There is a hopeless malaise hanging over us, like an early morning fog that robs us of our ability to see clearly. Indeed, that is what Trump wants — for us to give up and give in to his move for imperial power.

In this kind of time, let us recall those first followers of Jesus, who felt the power and vision of Resurrection. They lived under the oppressive power of imperial Rome, and they were so unimportant that no Roman historian recorded their names or their actions or their histories. They could have been crushed at any time by Rome; they had very little agency in regard to political power. When the word first began to spread about the Resurrection, Rome did not tremble or even notice — another little sect with some weird theory.

The Empire began to notice these People of the Way when they began to resist the claim of Empire to ultimate authority. The People of the Way began to deny that their hearts belonged to Rome. They belonged to the God they met in the Risen Jesus. This worried Rome, and the executions began. These executions only called forth more resistance.

The Resurrection is a form of resistance, resistance to the power of death. Jesus proclaimed that death is not the final word in life; rather, the final word is the power of love and justice and equity in the name of God. In these times when the Army of the Patriarchy is on the march in American culture, we are called to join in resistance against that movement. We are asked to hear God's call to resistance — a resistance rooted in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Such resistance takes many forms. John Brown heard about the resistance of Jesus and picked up a sword in Kansas and a rifle in New York. Ida B. Wells heard about the resistance and picked up a pen. Barbara Johns heard about the resistance and picked up her shoe and rapped it on the high school podium, as she led a student boycott until Black education was dramatically improved. MLK heard about the resistance and picked up the mantle of nonviolence.

Our resistance can take many forms, but whatever form we choose, it is time to resist. The Trumpster may yet implode, but we cannot count on that. We must be witnesses to a new and different order, a different way of living our lives as People of the Way. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, it is time now to pick up your implement of resistance. This season of the Resurrection demands it. Let us be finding our way on the path of Resurrection and Resistance. †

Nibs Stroupe is a longtime friend of the Open Door, retired pastor and author of Deeper Waters: Sermons for a New Vision and She Made a Way: Mother and Me in a Deep South World. He and Catherine Meeks are authors of Passionate for Justice, a book about the life and witness of Ida B. Wells for our time. He is managing editor of Hospitality. He writes a weekly blog at www.nibsnotes.blogspot.com. (nibs.stroupe@gmail.com)



Caroline Leach

Nibs Stroupe using his voice!

Incantation of the First Order

Listen, no one signed up for this lullaby.
No bleated sheep or rosebuds or twitching stars
will diminish the fear or save you from waking
into the same day you dreamed of leaving—
mockingbird on back order, morning bells
stuck on snooze—so you might as well
get up and at it, pestilence be damned.
Peril and risk having become relative,
I'll try to couch this in positive terms:
Never! is the word of last resorts,
Always! the fanatic's rallying cry.
To those inclined toward kindness, I say
Come out of your houses drumming. All others,
beware: I have discarded my smile but not my teeth.

— Rita Dove

Rita Dove was born in Akron, Ohio, on August 28, 1952. A poet and writer, she graduated with a BA in English from Miami University of Ohio in 1973. She then studied German poetry as a Fulbright Scholar at Universität Tübingen before earning an MFA in creative writing from the University of Iowa. The author of numerous collections of poetry, she served as the U.S. Poet Laureate from 1993 to 1995 and as a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2005 to 2011.

Dear Brothers and Sisters on death row,

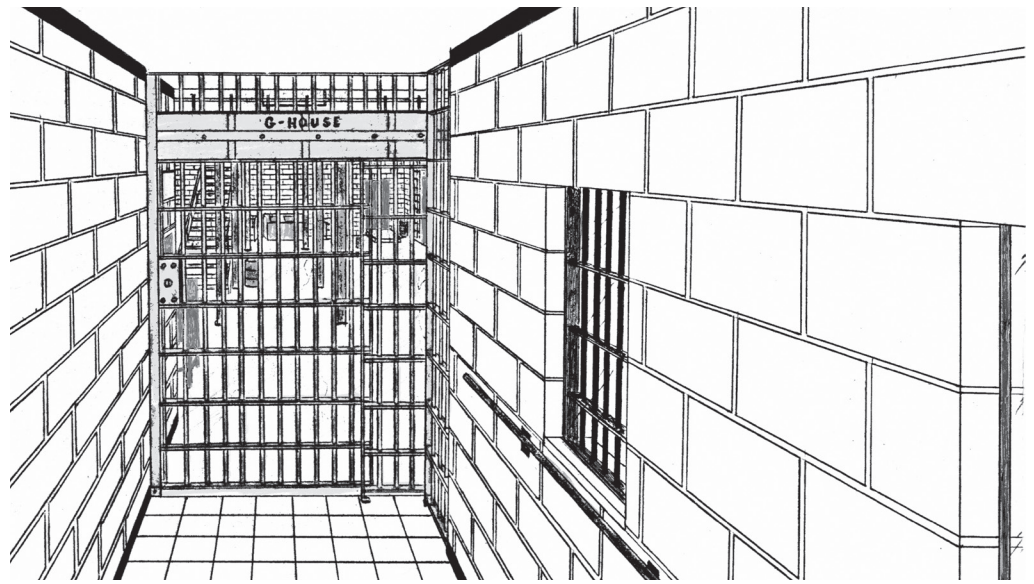
Some of you know me from my visits to southern death rows for the last forty-five years. Most of you do not. My book, *Too Close to the Flame: With the Condemned inside the Southern Killing Machine*, shares some of those experiences. I have lost too many people I care about to the executioner, which leads me to write this letter.

I am writing at the end of 2025. There were more executions in 2025 than any year since 2009. And the prospects are not good for the immediate future. In Tennessee, where I live, we had four state killings in 2025. We have four more scheduled for 2026. There have been 1,654 people executed in the United States since the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the death penalty in 1976. There are approximately 2,272 folks currently on death row. The U.S. is the only country in the Western world with state killing. As someone who has spent a lifetime fighting the death penalty, I am wondering, what is going on here?

We know about the race and class discrimination in the implementation of the death penalty. Since the Baldus study in my friend Warren McCleskey's case, racial discrimination has been uncontroversially established in the administration of the death penalty. And we all know that it is not the person who commits the worst crime, but the poor soul who has the worst lawyer who receives the sentence of death. This is a direct result of not having the money to pay for good legal representation.

So, the question arises: knowing the fundamental injustice of state killing, why are we still executing people? On annual retreat in December at the Sisters of Loretto in Kentucky, I meditated and prayed for an answer. I offer for your consideration the clarity that came to me.

The current political and religious situation in the United States brings to mind Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Many leaders are motivated by power, greed, hate and control. There is no vision beyond self-aggrandizement. From that selfishly oriented



Eddie Crawford | Executed by Georgia in 2004

attitude, others are disposable. Others can be utilized as objects to manipulate for furtherance of self-promotion. People are

repeating: We are all children of God.

What we are witnessing on a national and state level is apostasy. The dictionary defines "apostasy" as "the renunciation of religious faith." It is no surprise that the people who are authoring such misery are surrounded by those who proclaim how right and religious they are to carry out their mayhem. The Hebrew prophets rebuked this attitude in the kings of Israel, and Jesus lived a life devoted to others and advocated the coming of the reign of God, not the way of power. Your presence on death row reminds us of the writer of the Gospel of John who puts it: "In fact, the hour is coming, when the man who puts you to death will think that he is serving God." (John 16:2)

The vision of God regarding who we should be is expressed simply and eloquently by Dietrich Bonhoeffer: "a person for others." We are called to be people for others, not ourselves. This way of life led to the Nazi's executing Bonhoeffer, the Romans crucifying Jesus, and the prophets' relentless punishment and persecution by the powers that be. That is the way of the world. It is not the Way of God.

The way of the world is to clamor for a king. Samuel, in chapter 8:6-20, warns the Hebrew tribes not to seek a king. They did not heed Samuel's advice, and calamitous consequences ensued. Once again, despite this being the 250th anniversary of the demand to get rid of a king with

The current political and religious situation in the United States brings to mind Proverbs 29:18: 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.'

reduced to pawns in the political game. The death penalty is used as a mantra to enhance political careers without addressing the crime situation. Zbigniew Herbert, the Polish poet, expresses it well:

No one wanted to understand
That the goal of these operations
was sublime
I longed to make death
familiar to people
To dull its edge
Bring it down to the banal
everyday dimension
Of a slight depression or runny nose
(The Divine Claudius)

When we read the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, there is an awareness of this phenomenon. The prophets addressed it to the kings of Israel; the early Christians practiced The Way as a counter to the Roman Empire. These were the visions of the people of God that understood each person as a child of God. Given the predominance of the opposite vision today — that some people are disposable — this bears

the Declaration of Independence, we hear the cry for kingship raised. The Hebrew Scriptures make clear that this is the way of folly, as do the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth:

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. (Matt. 25:34-37)

Jesus in his inaugural message to his home town of Nazareth proclaimed who he was called to be by quoting Isaiah 61:1: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me;

he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release of the prisoners."

Jesus was the anti-king, the anti-Trumpster.

Once we recognize one another as brothers and sisters, children of God, we can embark on a path of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. It is expressed well by the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 5:16-19: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation ... entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."

Perhaps it is the farmer and poet

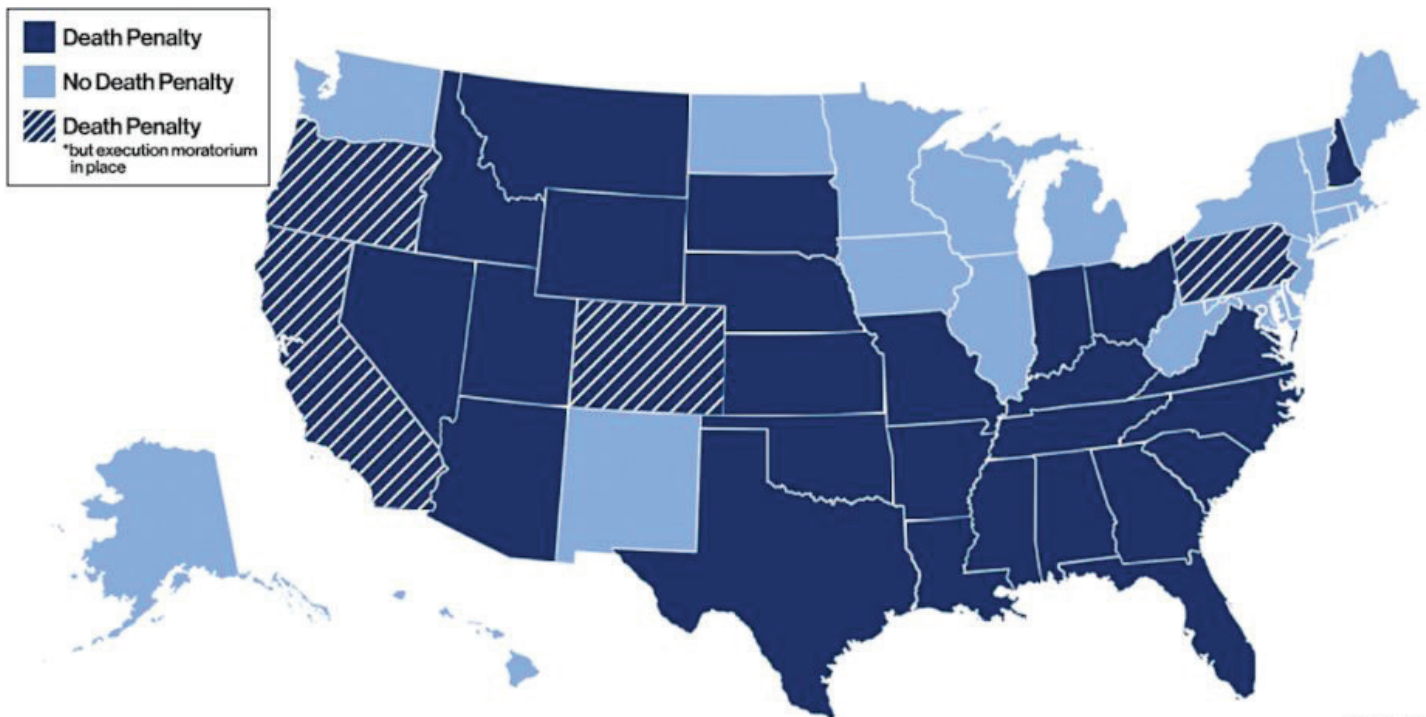
Wendell Berry who best expresses the Way of Jesus, which is not the way of the world, with the concluding line of his poem in *The Manifesto of the Mad Farmer*: "Practice resurrection."

I am Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Joe Ingle ✠

A North Carolina native, Joe Ingle left the South after college and moved to East Harlem to join the E. Harlem Urban Year program. He spent his senior year at Union Theological Seminary visiting prisoners in the Bronx House of Detention. Upon graduation and ordination in the United Church of Christ, he came to Nashville. Ingle and others founded the Southern Coalition on Jails and Prison to work against mass incarceration and the death penalty. Too Close to the Flame: With the Condemned inside the Southern Killing Machine is his memoir.

STATES WITH THE DEATH PENALTY



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, ABC News



Rita Corbin

Giving Thanks for Jesse Jackson

By John Cole Vodicka

We must not measure greatness from the mansion down, but from the manger up. Jesus said that we should not be judged by the bark we wear but by the fruit that we bear. Jesus said that we must measure greatness by how we treat the least of these. — Rev. Jesse Jackson

Ahmaud Arbery wasn't just an African American young man who was running through a community. Ahmaud was a young man having some mental challenges, and he was using running as a sense of therapy. ... Ahmaud was my baby boy. He has two older siblings. He is a grandson, he is an uncle, and Ahmaud Arbery had people who really, really loved him. To take his life away was, I mean, it was just brutal. Ahmaud was taken away from me and my family. But he brought change in the state of Georgia. He won't just be remembered as a young man who was killed while jogging, but as someone who made a difference. — Wanda Cooper Jones.

The 28 days of February's Black History Month have come and gone. I spent the latter half of February mourning and remembering the life and witness of Rev. Jesse Jackson, who died on February 17, 2026. He was 84. Then, on February 23, as I have done for the past five years, I spent the day mourning and remembering Ahmaud Arbery, lynched on that day on a Brunswick, Georgia, street in 2020.

Ahmaud Arbery was jogging through a white suburban neighborhood when three white vigilantes in pick-up trucks cornered him and blew him away with a shotgun blast. An attempt to sweep the murder under the rug was foiled when a cellphone video taken by one of the killers surfaced. All three men — Greg McMichaels, his son Travis McMichaels, and Roddie Bryan — were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Rev. Jesse Jackson, then 78 years old and in the beginning stages of the disease that would kill him six years later (progressive supranuclear palsy), attended the Brunswick trial, sitting in the courtroom with Ahmaud Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper Jones, and father, Marcus Arbery. At one point, a lawyer for one of the mur-



Rev. Jackson participating in the march and rally for Kenneth Walker on January 15, 2005 in Columbus, Georgia. Kenneth Walker's three year old daughter Kayla is in the stroller; Walker's mother Emily is at Rev. Jackson's side. Photograph by John Cole Vodicka

derers asked Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley to remove Rev. Jackson from the courtroom, saying, "We don't want any more Black pastors coming in here." Judge Walmsley denied the request. Later, Jackson commented that it was "my constitutional right to be there, and it is my moral

events at the Moscone Center. Dee was sitting with the Minnesota delegation when Jesse Jackson took the podium to give what is now known as his "Rainbow Coalition Speech." In that powerful speech, Jackson urged the Democratic Party to form political alliances with marginalized

*'Our flag is red, white and blue, but our nation is a rainbow!'
Jackson preached on, 'Red, yellow, brown, Black and white
— and we're all precious in God's sight!'*

obligation to be there." Reflecting on Rev. Jackson's February 17th death, Ms. Cooper Jones said, "I was so honored to walk with him in the fight for justice for my son. He was fearless."

Of course, Jesse Jackson's legacy speaks for itself. His lifetime as a civil rights organizer, his political career, his leadership with Rainbow/PUSH in Chicago and elsewhere — he is certainly remembered in these and so many, many other ways. I have a couple of memories of my own. In 1984, my wife Dee and I were living in Oakland, California. During that summer's Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, Jesse Jackson, who was running for president that year, spoke at the convention on the night of July 17. Dee's brother Tim Cole was a Minnesota delegate to the convention and somehow secured a pass for his sister to attend that night's

groups in the U.S. united to pursue justice and equality. "My constituency is the desperate, the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected and the despised," Jackson told the delegates that night. "They are restless and they seek relief." "Our flag is red, white and blue, but our nation is a rainbow!" Jackson preached on, "Red, yellow, brown, Black and white — and we're all precious in God's sight!"

Fast forward 20 years, to 2004, when Dee and I were living in Americus in rural southwest Georgia. I was the director and organizer for a small, non-profit civil rights organization, the Prison & Jail Project. We challenged inhumane jail conditions, abusive police officers, mean-spirited and racist judges, prosecutors and, yes, even inept defense attorneys throughout Georgia's Black Belt. On December 10, 2003, Kenneth Walker, a young Black man, was shot to

death by a Muscogee County sheriff's deputy during a traffic stop in Columbus, Georgia. After a grand jury refused to indict the deputy in November 2004, Jesse Jackson and Edward DuBose of the Georgia NAACP called for a march and protest on Martin Luther King's birthday, January 15, 2005. I was invited by local activists to speak at the rally. I had the honor of marching with Rev. Jackson through the streets of the city, then joining him on the Muscogee County courthouse steps alongside several dozen other tenacious local and national civil rights luminaries, including Rev. Joseph Lowery.

One of the things that impressed me most that day in Columbus was that Jesse Jackson chose not to march out front and

lead the protest but instead walked among the 8,000 participants. I took a poignant photograph that day of Jackson pushing Kenneth Walker's three-year-old daughter, Kayla, in a stroller while sharing words of encouragement with Walker's mother, Emily. At the courthouse rally, I stood with Rev. Jackson as he proclaimed: "They lock us up for profit and kill us for sport!"

Please take some time to reflect on the lives of Ahmaud Arbery and Rev. Jesse Jackson, together now with that glorious Cloud of Witnesses. And let's continue to hold close and give thanks to Wanda Cooper Jones and the many mamas who've lost sons and daughters to police, white supremacists, and ICE violence. These

women speak truth to power. Ms. Cooper Jones reminds us that even though faithfulness can and will be costly, we must persevere and know that our long journey for justice will not be traversed in vain.

Keep hope alive. ... It gets dark sometimes, but then the morning comes.
— Rev. Jesse Jackson ✠

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

ICE Agents Storm My Porch

The Indiscriminate Citizenry of Earth
are out to arrest my sense of being a misfit.
"Open up!" they bellow,
hands quiet before my door
that's only wind and juniper needles, anyway.

You can't do it, I squeak from inside.
You can't make me feel at home here
in this time of siege for me and mine, *mi raza*.
Legalized suspicion of my legitimacy
is now a permanent resident in my gut.

"Fruit of the prickly pear!" they swear,
striding up to my table
to juice me a glass of pink nectar.
They've brought welcome baskets
stuffed with proof I'm earthling.

From under a gingham cover,
I tug a dark feather
iridescent green — cohering
to "magpie" thought,
to memory's chatter,
to mind. Mine.

And here they have my mind translated
into a slate-surfaced pond, which
vibrates in the shape
of a cottonwood's autumn molt,

which trees me to dirt, which soils me
heat & freeze —

But you'll always be
one definitive document short! I complain.
Doubts can forever outstrip
your geo-logic.

For which they produce
a lock of my natal dust,
bronzed
to the fluttering fiber
of lacebark pine.

Where'd they get that stuff?

The baskets are bottomless,
and it's useless for me to insist
on being distinct.
Undergoing re-portionation,
I'm awakened to a Center,

where walls
between all beings
are dreamt to dissolve.

— Maria Melendez Kelson
Source: Poetry (March 2014)

Maria Kelson is a Chicana writer committed to exploring the relationships between people of color and their natural and social environments in literary works. Her two collections of poetry, written as Maria Melendez, are published by University of Arizona Press and were finalists for the Colorado Book Award, PEN Center USA Literary Award, and International Latino Book Award. Her debut novel won the Eleanor Taylor Bland Award for Crime Fiction Writers of Color and was published in September 2024 by Crooked Lane Books. She has given writing workshops for all ages at libraries, community centers, and schools across the country for over 25 years, and was selected as a U.S. State Department Arts Envoy to Bogotá, Colombia in 2019.

Come and See

A Palestine Travel Report

By Kevin Moran

The motto of our November 11-22, 2025, solidarity trip to Palestine was “Come and See.” It was made possible by the invitation of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Bethlehem. The trips are organized as a form of nonviolent resistance against Israel’s occupation of Palestine. I was primarily interested in the lived reality of the Palestinian people, who have been living under occupation for seven decades and have been unable to realize their right to self-determination, right of return, protection, security and equality.

We participated in the Kairos Palestine Conference, a Christian initiative, in Bethlehem. We were there for the announcement of the Kairos II declaration. It reads in part: “Genocide is a structural sin against God, against humanity, and against creation. It stands in direct opposition to the great commandment of love, the summary of the whole law. Those who deny the genocide committed against the Palestinian people in Gaza — despite the overwhelming evidence, testimonies, and even the statements of Zionists themselves — deny the very humanity of the Palestinian people. We have the right, therefore, to ask: How can one speak of Christian fellowship or communion while denying, supporting, justifying, or remaining silent before genocide?” (<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/index.php/about-kairos>)

Checkpoints, roadblocks, gates and earthen walls have rapidly increased in the West Bank. The occupying power has erected more than 1,250 such checkpoints in addition to the wall, which runs mostly on Palestinian West Bank land. Walls and barbed wire also secure Israeli settlements and are often accessed via “settlers only” roads. Palestinian land is confiscated for the construction of these roads. The largest Israeli-Jewish settlements have up to 40,000 inhabitants with a complete small-town infrastructure. In the West Bank, there are now around 500,000 Jewish settlers living among the approximately three million Palestinians.

In a survey conducted in August 2025, 64% of Israelis questioned agreed with the statement that there were no innocent

people in Gaza, while 72% denied that Palestinians had the right to their own state. Eighty-two percent of Jewish Israelis supported the “resettlement (forced expulsion) of Arab citizens of Israel to other countries.” (Haaretz, Dahlia Scheidlin, June 3, 2025, <https://www.haaretz.com>)

Art — dance, theater, music and painting, among other forms — is seen as a driver of resilience and hope. The institutions, especially those operating in refugee camps, offer alternatives to hopelessness, particularly for young people, and focus on aspirations and goals that extend beyond refugee status. Creative and communal



The Way to Bethlehem | Sliman Mansour

experiences promote activism and collective responsibility rather than just waiting for solutions from outside.

In addition to dance and music, literature also plays an important role in Palestinian culture — the Educational Bookstore in Jerusalem is the largest bookstore, offering English-language editions of Palestinian literature and a variety of historical and political nonfiction books in English, as well as hosting discussions and organizing events. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2025, the bookstore was invaded by five Israeli soldiers who confiscated over 300 titles as anti-Semitic or anti-Israel propaganda. The bookseller had to spend



Kevin Moran

three days in “administrative detention” in prison, his hands cuffed.

During the War of Independence from 1947 to 1949, large-scale expulsions and the flight of some 700,000 Palestinians took place, which is still remembered today as the “great catastrophe” (Nakba). The UN has repeatedly stated that there must be a right of return. Many displaced persons are now in their third generation living in refugee camps run by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) for Palestine refugees in the Near East, either in the West Bank or Gaza, and in far greater numbers in neighboring Arab states. Our guides on the trip described a renewed wave of aggressive displacement since October 2023 as a continuation of the Nakba.

Since the occupation and expulsion of the Palestinian population, UNRWA has maintained around 1,000 different facilities in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza (until October 2023). A total of almost six million Palestinians are registered as refugees with UNRWA. In the West Bank, there are 19 camps.

In 2023, Aida Camp had, on less than 40 acres, a population of 7,244, two-thirds of whom were under 24. The camp is surrounded by high walls and ominous guard towers with snipers prominently surveilling the refugees. There is only one entrance, which can be sealed off at any time for alleged security reasons. Nightly raids by the Israeli army in search of weapons or individuals are common. Also, we visited the Balata Camp in Nablus near The Orthodox Church of Jacob’s Well (where Jesus is said to have spoken to the Samaritan woman and asked her for water). Balata Camp is one of the most densely populated, with 20,000 displaced people.

The Tent of Nations, near Bethlehem, is on the estate of the Christian Nassar. Daoud Nassar’s family has lived here for

generations, and he and his family are resisting leaving. He repeatedly receives demolition orders, which he fights in Israeli courts. Regardless of the outcome, he must bear the costs himself. He is grateful for the solidarity and international support from the friends of the Tent of Nations. His philosophy is based in deep-rooted Christian faith and non-violent resistance. This is only possible through solidarity work and volunteer work on the farm, which also serves as a vital protective presence. Daoud Nassar told me, “Despair is not an option.” His steadfast hope jolted me into an appreciation of the possibility of a faith-driven hope even in such desperate circumstances.

The city of Hebron is predominantly under the civil administration of the Palestinian Authority, with a smaller part under Israeli military administration. The division took place in 1997. In the mixed-population part, approximately 800 Jewish people live among 30,000 Palestinians, protected by more than 1,000 soldiers of the occupying Israeli army. Palestinian volunteers must accompany schoolchildren to their walled, barbed wire-ringed school; the children are not allowed to go to school unaccompanied because of attacks by Jewish settlers who move freely in this part of the city.

Issa Amro accompanied us to the Ibrahimi Mosque, which is an important holy site for Jews, Muslims and Christians. Since the occupation in 1967, a synagogue has been established in 60 percent of the building. Barriers and iron gates separate the areas, and 22 checkpoints have been set up around the mosque, including six main barriers that make it difficult for Muslim worshippers to access the site. Baruch Goldstein, a U.S.-Israeli medical officer in the Israeli army, a religious extremist and settler, carried out a massacre in 1994, murdering 29 Muslims at prayer and injuring 150 others. His grave is revered as a place of pilgrimage by the Israelis: the inscription on his tomb praises him as a “martyr of God who sacrificed himself for his people, without fault and with a pure heart.”

Umm Al-Khair Hebron, a Bedouin

village, is in southern Palestine and is the base community for the Good Shepherd Collective, which is fighting against the colonization of local land by Israeli settlers. Two years ago, the Oscar-winning documentary film, “No Other Land” was filmed in this community. A local consultant to the film crew, Odeh Hathalin, was shot dead with his six-month-old child in his arms by a settler on July 28, 2025, and the murderer was not punished. Shockingly, an Israeli



Photographs by Kevin Moran

At the Tent of Nations with Rev. Omar Haramy.

judge returned the murder weapon to the settler three days later. It broke my heart to see the widow of 31-year-old Odeh with her small children. These people are poor; they have no rich relatives anywhere in the world, and they can only go to a refugee camp, often to experience violence and displacement there as well.

In Nablus, a city under the full administration of the Palestinian Authority, we visited the Anglican pastor of St. Philip’s, who told us about the congregation’s activities and the good relations with the al-Khadr Mosque adjacent to the churchyard. His wife Loma runs the Christian kindergarten, which, however, is attended only by children from Muslim families in the surrounding old town, except for her child. Due to frequent raids by the Israeli army in the adjacent streets of the old town, numerous tear gas canisters have been collected over time by the pastor from the idyllic kindergarten courtyard.

We learned that tax revenues of over four billion dollars are owed to the Palestinian Authority. These taxes are paid by Palestinian citizens but collected and administered by Israel, and are not paid out or paid out in full. State hospitals, clinics and schools are only sporadically able to pay their employees 60 percent of their

wages. Also, of lasting concern, schools for the 600,000 Palestinian children are open only three days per week.

The only exclusively Christian community is the village of Taybeh, with its three churches: Greek Orthodox, Aramaic Orthodox, and Catholic. In the summer of 2025, settlers drove their cattle into the oldest church, St. George’s, and set fire to the surrounding trees. Settler violence is ongoing and escalating.

The extent of the violence used against the population of Gaza and the West Bank is grossly disproportionate; it must be assumed that the intention is to deliberately and systematically exterminate the Palestinian population.

Building and restoring peace depends on respect, forgiveness, reconciliation and shared hope. The Kairos Conference in Bethlehem and the document it produced very openly addressed the extremely difficult political situation among the Palestinian

population and its leaders.

We must expose the complicity of our government and various organizations (including churches) with Israel’s violent oppression, and actively and courageously advocate for a peace policy in our country that is based on universal human rights. The U.S. is the largest supporter of violence against Palestinians through arms deliveries, financial support for arms purchases, privileged trade relations, and our unbroken support for the Zionist narrative of the Israeli government.

While we excuse ourselves by seeming to overlook the de facto annexation of the West Bank and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, this illegal, systematic Zionist colonization of their homeland continues. ✠

Kevin Moran is a member of Friends of Sabeel North America, Israel/Palestine Mission Network, and the session of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). He served in the hospitality ministry of the Open Door. He lives in Decatur, Georgia, with his wife, Mitzi. (moran.kevinmoran.kevin@gmail.com)



Expended Israeli tear gas and smoke grenade canisters.

The Arc of Racism is Long, and it Bends Toward Injustice

A review of Malcolm Foley's *The Anti-Greed Gospel*

By David Billings

The first thought I had before reading a word of Malcolm Foley's book is embedded in its subtitle: "Why the Love of Money is the Root of Racism and How the Church Can Create a New Way Forward." It begs the question: A new way forward for whom? Does Foley mean by "the Church," an entity needing a new way forward for itself? Or "the Church" as being that entity which will provide that new way forward? Both could be true.

The challenge for the church lies in contradictions intrinsic to it. Using the phrase "dominant church" in the U.S., culturally speaking, implies the white church. Not morally, but as a cultural building block first established to undergird white supremacy. The church was one of the cornerstones of the U.S. arrangement from the very beginning. It was meant to convey God's blessing on the noble "experiment" that was democracy. It would be a racialized democracy, no doubt, a new way of doing things that for all intents and pur-

Only those classified as "white" were seen as "fully human." All others were "partially human." Black people were 3/5 human, and "Indians," as they were called, were not counted at all.

poses changed nothing at all. When it came to race, it was pure subterfuge. It was land theft by force of arms, rooted in greed. Greed wrapped in the beautiful language of the founders.

Ask the collective voices of those left out of the arrangement, however, and we receive different messages. Listen to the words of Frederick Douglass responding to what the 4th of July means to him, or to W.E.B. Dubois in his poem, "What is America To Me?" Hear Sojourner Truth's angry shout in "Ain't I a Woman?"

There are also millions of white voices to add, who know what this ill-gotten wealth means to our collective selves, and how our progeny is tainted and made impure by the specter of white supremacy. We, as whites, might even try to give it back or give it away. We can't.

The Anti-Greed Gospel

Why the Love of Money Is the Root of Racism and How the Church Can Create a New Way Forward

by **Malcolm Foley**

Brazos Press
192 pages
February, 2025

But that, alas, is not the point. Many whites, like me, come from a strong background and acculturation in the church. It has formed us for better and sometimes for worse. Most of the white voices who cry out about the injustice of it all are names now lost to history. And this is just looking at those of us in the United States. It is a big world out there, and the world church is both perpetrator of and kidnapped by

these same world-wide historical forces. Whites live with the contradiction of what it means to be white while denying that our benefits come from our whiteness. We stress our individual sense of self: "I have worked hard for everything I have," we say. "No one ever gave me nothing." Really now, even Jesus had to be made white in this arrangement. His sacrifice on the cross would have received only local press coverage, maybe not covered at all, had he been depicted as the man of color he most certainly was.

Trump says, "Don't apologize." Christians say, "We all fall short." Blues Singer Big Joe Williams tries to comfort us with soothing words, even if said somewhat facetiously: "It ain't easy being white."

Worldwide history is handled differ-

ently. The timeline is not the same. The origin story precedes Christianity. Yet, the Great Commission is still for us Christians to go out into the world and bring the Gospel to everybody.

This was the fatal flaw: Only those classified as "white" were seen as "fully human." All others were "partially human." Black people were 3/5 human, and "Indians," as they were called, were not counted at all. They were intended not to survive. We all know this history, or claim to know it now. Today the challenge is to confront the complacency that arises despite knowing. I find that among many progressive types — again, like myself — racism is not the issue. "Been there. Done that. On to other things. May we move on to other oppressions, please. Some closer to my own realities." Still, the numbers don't lie. There are no systemic outcomes that cannot be predicted in advance when using an anti-racist lens. These results reflect the primacy of white supremacy. Whites fare better as a group: in prison, in the health care system, in real estate negotiations. Poor whites are less discriminated against when seen as part of the collective "white." Poor whites are definitely poor, but not because they are white. This cannot be said for all poor people.

Foley understands that this world view was based on conquest and a desire for material wealth: greed, in other words. Foley is anti-greed. I got it. In the final sections of the book, Foley asks: "Where

"A must-read book for the American church."—Kristin Kobes Du Mez,
New York Times bestselling author of *Jess and John Wayne*

Malcolm Foley

THE ANTI- GREED GOSPEL

Why the Love of Money
Is the Root of Racism and
How the Church Can Create
a New Way Forward

do we go from here?" Same question Dr. King asked before he was shot down. Foley offers some challenging new perspectives and restates some questions asked by others. But he also makes it clear that slavery and the racism that underpins slavery are rooted in economic exploitation. Foley's main point gets to the heart of the matter. Slavery and the neo-slavery that followed it and the racism that undergirds these horrible institutions are rooted in human greed, in the desire to get as much as possible

for as little as possible. Hence, the forced middle passages and the forced march of unpaid labor — all to benefit those classified as "white." I suggest that we read this book and ponder these questions. None of us have all the answers, but maybe we need to give our answers another try. And another try after that.

Read this book. And then write your own book. ♣

David Billings is a United Methodist minister

born in McComb, Mississippi, and raised in Helena, Arkansas. He has been a trainer and organizer with *The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond* since its inception in 1980. Today he facilitates "Undoing Racism/Community Organizing" sessions as part of that team. He is the author of *Deep Denial* and has written for many publications and journals. He is also a partner in the United Nations Committee on Human Rights and the Center for the Study of White American Culture. (revdavidbillings@gmail.com)

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Greetings Eduard!

As we are just in the craptastic beginning of this (hopefully only) 4-year term (or fewer, if he croaks), I wanted to gift you a hand-painted Amy-original resistance reminder to stay aware and engaged.

Please remember that fear, despair, and exhaustion are all tools of the autocrat. Take breaks when you need to, regroup, and then do what you can within your power; but never fully disengage. We have no other choice, so we do it together.

Amy Ruppel

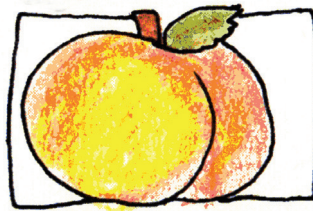
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To all my Open Door Community friends, Ed, Calvin, Nelia, Hannah, Lee Carroll and special thanks to Mary Catherine Johnson for her good work in continuing the prison ministry.

Blessings to all,

Sherry Wright

Southern Pines, North Carolina



Becca Conrad

Dear Lee [Carroll],

I am a relatively recent reader of *Hospitality*. I didn't start receiving the paper until 2021. I look forward to each issue and am always blessed with revealing and inspiring writing, but recently I became aware that one of the things I enjoy the most is your poem/prayer that comes in each issue. I find them profound and inspiring every time. I thank you for sharing them all.

Blessings,

Nancy Davis

Los Angeles, California

Baltimore, Maryland

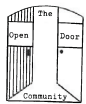
Swans Island, Maine

HOSPITALITY

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HOSPITALITY

Volume 1, No. 1 January, 1982

310 Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E. Atlanta, Ga. 30306 404-878-9652

What Is The "OPEN DOOR"?

This is the first edition of The Open Door's newsletter and needless to say, we are excited about it! Hospitality you will hear from us 5 or 6 times a year with news about our ministry, our common life and the needs of our sisters and brothers on the streets and in the prisons. We value such a newsletter as a very important way to keep in touch with you, our co-workers and supporters--the folks who make our work possible.

Although many of you know something about us and about our commitments and our work, we decided to include a word about ourselves as a way of introduction. The Open Door is a Christian covenant community of 9 partners, a children and a street friend who is a part of our covenant family. We covenant partners--Ed Loring, Murphy Davis, Rob Johnson and Carolyn Johnson--were, at one time, all members of Clifton Presbyterian Church. Ed and Murphy were there for 6 years, during which time Ed served as pastor. Carolyn and Rob joined the congregation in 1978 and Rob served as a ruling elder for two years. Out of a common sense for mission at Clifton, we four began to intensify our Bible study and prayer in the Fall of 1978. During these times we discovered that God was calling us to serve the poor and to live our lives based on the Scriptures.

From November '79 until Easter of '81 we provided the leadership to begin and sustain Clifton's Night Hospitality Ministry. This ministry used donations and volunteers to provide transportation, shelter, food, clothes, showers and hospitality to approximately 30 homeless ones every night for almost 2 years. (With our leaving, the Clifton congregation took over the leadership and continues the night hospitality work there.)

As the work with our homeless friends grew, so did our commitment and work with prisoners. We all began to share more deeply in Murphy's and Ed's ongoing work with Southern Prison Ministry. As we opened our doors to share hospitality with friends who are walled out we have found it important to share that same hospitality with women and men who are walled inside the prisons and jails of our state. God's good grace calls us to visit, a simple act of compassion where we meet again and again Jesus Christ and learn of his suffering in a world filled with unforgiveness.

HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY is published by the Open Door Community, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland. The Open Door is a Prophetic Discipleship Community honoring the Black Jesus, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

Issues of *Hospitality* are posted to the Open Door Community website under the "Archives" Tab. If you would like to be notified when we post *Hospitality* issues, updates, photographs and writings on our website, please go to www.opendoorcommunity.org and at the bottom of our main page enter your email address and subscribe. Subscriptions are free.

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