

HOSPITALITY

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

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April 2006

Am I An Abolitionist? Musings on a Southern Life

By **Eduard-the-Agitator Loring**
CW #91030306

Dedicated to Elizabeth Omilami, my friend and a leader in The Movement to Redeem the Soul of Atlanta and Hosea Feed the Hungry.

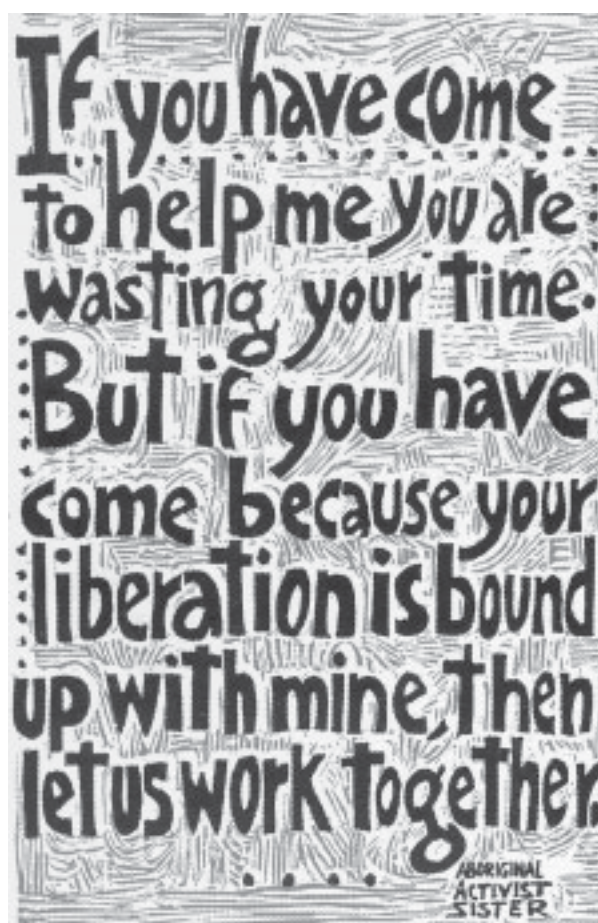
I am from a slaveholding family. We owned Black African human beings in Orangeburg County, SC. My ancestors fought in the Civil War to maintain their property, white supremacy, and their privileged way of life. Some of my family are still fighting the Civil War, are racists and Republicans. My most beloved Great Aunt May, who taught at the University of Georgia for 28 years, was a leader in her local chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy. She was the chapter's chaplain and wrote the "Dixie" prayer the ladies said in unison at each of their meetings.

What do I know about slavery? What do I know about slaveholding? I am a white male southerner. If we had to have slavery at all (which we did not), I wish there had been a large number of white, Euro-American slaves. Had we had white slaves as well as black slaves we would have a greater depth of shared history. Slavery and race would not have been coupled (whites are superior/ African Americans are inferior) in a way that might yet destroy the United States of America. So, what do I know about slavery? Or, even about slaveholding since I am the great grandson of slaveholders? The greatest tragedy of American history, after slavery, is that no whites were slaves. How can I be an Abolitionist?

A few Blacks owned slaves. But they too owned only Black slaves. Many times Black slaveholders owned members of their family. For instance, a free wife would purchase her bound husband, and, if money allowed, her children. There were also slaveholding Blacks who used slave labor for farming and skilled trade. So our shared stories include African Americans as slaveholders. But the number and influence of the shared experience of African American slaveholders are miniscule.

A recently acclaimed novel by Edward P. Jones, "The Known World" (2003), tells a story of slaveholding of Blacks by Blacks. New stories, imaginative and historical, are coming to the fore these days as is the truth of racist segregationists like Strom Thurmond, who raped and fathered a child by one of his family's Black domestic servants. We are learning more about the lust of white men for powerless black women even as we discover more evidence of the innocence of Emmett Till.

But the issue for me in my whiteness, maleness and upperclassness is the same. My ancestors were never owned as slaves on American soil. How do I claim a



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radical history for freedom and equality? How can I be "one with" the children of slaves as a child of slaveholders? What can liberation and solidarity mean for me when visioned as "black and white together" for me? For you?

Native Americans owned slaves. But they too owned African slaves. In fact, in my home state of racist Republican Georgia, Cherokees owned Black slaves. The Cherokees did not own white slaves. What a terrible fact! Would white folk have killed the Cherokees in their homes and forced them onto the largest death march in American history — the Trail of Tears — had the Red folk owned White folk as well as Black folk? What makes white flesh so valuable? Truth or lies? The greatest tragedy in American History, after slavery, is that no whites were slaves.

The Children of Slaves

The children of slaves often claim innocence regarding slavery and the Black Liberation Struggle, a consequence in large measure of the fact that whites were never legal slaves in the United States. "My ancestors were brought here against their will. I am different from those who came on their own and by their

Am I, continued on page 8

There is Still No Room in the Inn: Mental Illness and the Way of Jesus

By **Kyle Thompson**

At the Open Door, we live under the great weight of our society's failure to care for the mentally ill. This failure manifests itself in many ways in our common life. Sometimes we are brought to painful despair as we call the police to remove someone from our yard; sometimes we are brought to angry frustration as police come into our yard without our invitation to make an arrest. But sometimes we see a crack in the wall, a mitigation of suffering, and an opportunity for friendship where none was thought possible.

As we bear this weight, we often find ourselves in the role of innkeeper, denying entrance to the Christ that comes in the guise of the mentally ill. Jesus' parents were denied a room in the homes of their family and friends, perhaps because of the shame of a "virgin" birth. The structures of social acceptability denied Mary a place to rest. The intellectual leaders (the scribes) and religious elite (the Pharisees) would have looked with disdain upon a young woman such as Mary, a woman who, by any outside perspective, committed adultery and then spun a blasphemous story in her defense. It was too much for Joseph's family in Bethlehem to take in this indecent couple. They were denied entrance by the powers of social acceptability; their presence was too disruptive and they had to find another place to be.

In our house of hospitality, we also must confess that we too bow to the same idols of social acceptability. We bend our knees to the sterile medical elites who tell us what is normal and what is insane. We think too often of efficiency and normalcy and not often enough of making room. So we confess, we pray for God to heal us, and we continue to work, partnering with God to create new spaces of hope and hospitality.

Anthony

Anthony is a homeless African American man who suffers from mental illness. He believes the Open Door is his home (and why shouldn't he?). He lived for a few months on our back porch. We had to ask him to find another place to be when he was consistently found shouting swear words and performing indecent acts on the porch, right below the rooms of the Garbison children. There wasn't room in our inn for Anthony. We were unable to absorb his illness, we reasoned; it was simply too disruptive, so he was asked to "be away" and was placed

There is Still, continued on page 10

Gentrification Blues

By Houston Wheeler

(Editor's note: Houston Wheeler is a community organizer and researcher and friend of the Open Door Community. This is the second in a series of articles for Hospitality on the issues of displacement and affordable housing.)

American capitalism is founded on "buying cheap and selling high." This works well in the stock market and especially in real estate. This is the formula for success — for profit.

Over the last three years I have been buying vacant houses, rehabbing them, and then selling them to first-time homebuyers. I've been able to buy vacant houses cheap, fix them up and sell them affordably and still make a small profit. However, this art is disappearing fast. The cost of the vacant houses has increased considerably, as well as the cost of building materials and labor, making it more difficult to sell the homes affordably. For instance, three years ago I could buy a vacant house for \$30,000 to \$50,000. Now that same house would cost \$65,000 to \$90,000. Three years ago a first-time homebuyer could buy one of my homes for \$100,000 to \$110,000. Today, they would have to pay \$140,000 to \$175,000.

Because Atlanta's leaders procrastinated for decades before replacing its sewer system, the cost has escalated from a few hundred million dollars to over \$5 billion. It took lawsuits and court orders to push our current mayor into action. Procrastination has also occurred in the area of affordable housing. From the late 1980s through the early 2000s, over thirty non-profit community development corporations began to develop affordable housing in Atlanta's poorer neighborhoods. However, Atlanta's political, banking, and philanthropic leaders didn't fund those non-profits sufficiently to produce the needed affordable housing. Now, all of those neighborhoods are undergoing *gentrification* by real estate companies and for-profit developers constructing and rehabbing homes costing well over \$200,000 each.

From the perspective of capitalism, gentrification is the formula for success — for profit. However, from the perspective of affordable housing, gentrification is a failure — creating forced displacement and much

hardship. As market forces drive land, materials, and labor costs up, what can Atlanta do to address this dilemma? The first step is to acknowledge the dilemma by singing the blues!

I woke up this morning, I walked out my door,
I noticed my neighbors weren't there any more.
I've got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
When I asked where they gone to,
That's when I heard the bad news.

Well, I looked in the windows, I looked in the doors —
They were hanging up chandeliers and sanding the floors.
I got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
The rent sign said "one thousand fifty dollars,
One floor through."

When the town homes came, they said they liked integration,
To live with other races and have neighborly relations.
I got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
Now it's to hell with good relations
If it doesn't raise the property values.

They say that a town home is the people's housing,
But what about the folks who can't afford two hundred thousand?
I got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
They're living somewhere else now,
They're the many who've been kicked out by the few.

I woke up this morning, I looked next door —
There was one family living where there once were four.
I got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
I wonder where my neighbors went 'cause I
Know I'll soon be moving there too.

Somebody said, "Where will we go?"
There ain't no places left around here no more.
I got the gentrifi-, gentrification blues.
Guess we gotta fight back
'Cause we ain't got nothin' to lose. ♣

Gentrification Blues

© Judith Levine and Laura Liben

Written for the Anti-Displacement Committee
of Boerum Hill/Gowanus, Brooklyn, N.Y.

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HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with, and advocacy for, the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

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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An Abundant and Radical Hospitality

By Ann Karp

(Editor's note: Ann Karp is a full-time volunteer with Koinonia Partners in Americus, Georgia.)

When I arrived at the Open Door, I was glad that my boyfriend J. came up to the door with me, for a tiny part of me was scared that I'd walk in and people would make me feel heartless and inadequate. What if I were exposed as a flaky fake? *You're not doing enough, you're not being enough, and you're full of prejudice and ignorance!*

But — while that may be true — my hosts did not point it out. Maybe they knew that the experience of being at the Open Door would cause me to ask hard questions of myself, questions about right action, prejudice, and awareness, without extra prompting. And I know they were also welcoming me as they welcome any stranger, whether from the street or from a house: with smiles and hospitality.

"You're coming to the foot clinic tonight, right?" a few people asked me at my first Open Door supper, sounding excited. "It's a special Christmas party this time." "Of course," I replied, and showed up at seven to help.

I must have imagined a simple, first-century basin-and-towel routine, because the 21st century technology that awaited us surprised me. We lined up colored gift bags containing lotion, powder, foot-warming packs, and state-of-the-art wicking hiker's socks from REI. We prepared sterilized nail files, clippers, pumice stones, apricot and walnut-scented exfoliating scrubs, wooden sticks for nudging cuticles, lotion, baby powder, and electric, vibrating foot-basins with hot, antibacterial, Epsom-salted water. Hannah, the coordinator, even brought a Dremel tool for the hardest jobs!

The clinic began and guests filed into the waiting chairs. A man with a massage chair offered his hands to those not yet ready for the washing, and others waited in the lounge. Murphy circulated, welcoming friends and passing out mugs of steaming, mulled cider. The hallways were fragrant with cinnamon and apple, and to be polite I accepted a mug, but I couldn't bring myself to drink. Instead, I worked on keeping my lip from curling, my brows from scrunching, as I watched Peter, a regular volunteer, touch the feet of a quiet, hefty man named Alan. Peter lifted Alan's soaking, gummy, damaged left foot from the hot water onto a terry towel draped on Peter's knees. He examined with nonchalant (though latex-gloved) fingers each thickened corn and blister, overgrown toenail, patch of loose skin, each toe smashed against the others, and the man's legs



The Soul Foot Care Clinic provides much needed foot care on Thursday evenings at the Open Door Community.



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

constricted from many layered socks and too much time upright.

But after massaging with exfoliating cream, rinsing and drying, it was amazing how much better Alan's foot looked. I watched Peter (and Hannah, for the more involved parts of the treatment) finish Alan's feet, then Dennis', and I even drank some cider. Maybe I was beginning to see not only the pain but also the potential in each foot.

Later, Baird sat down opposite me and removed his shoes and socks; I set his feet to soaking in a fresh basin of water, and then gently scraped away dead skin, blotted dry waterlogged patches, and cleaned around the nails. The challenge was transformed from masking disgust to seeing how much healthier weary

feet could feel, even if only for a short time. A small room in my heart filled with mourning, for feet should not be tormented thus, in wrong-sized shoes and cold and rain. I learned that this had actually been a *good* week for feet: dry and not too cold.

But in the temporary spa in this big house, people chatted like people! While the Christmas music played, we ate cookies and Hershey kisses, and we touched and were touched.

Later that night, I tended to my own feet after showering. I blinked and saw them anew; they looked like the feet of a baby: untouched, unworn, pink and soft and whole. The feet of a housed person, the feet of a comfortably shod person, the feet of an untested and indoor person.

And the next morning, when I woke up to the sound of rain, a gentle and persistent rain which I recall accompanying my sleep all night, I also for the first time thought how this beautiful-sounding rain had affected the people I met last night, and all those who lived in it without refuge. I thought of their night, the rain gradually shrinking their patch of dry concrete in an onslaught of moisture that soaks the sleeping bag from toes to knees to torso until sleep is defeated and retreats.

The morning of the New Year's Day meal, I looked out onto the yard. The men were wet. The shoulders of their coats gleamed with rain. (There were only one or two women, and they were invited into the lounge because it is hard to be the only female around so many men. Lauren said that homeless women will be raped and beaten, often by homeless men — that it is not a matter of if it will happen, but when.) When the people came through the door, I could see them shake off the world.

They walked up the stairs and into a warm and warmly-lit room. A table for six with holiday cloths, a lighted candle, red beads, placemats, salt and pepper, vinegar, and hot sauce... vitamins, a plate with two thick slices of ham, and a choice of desserts... family-style dishes with steaming collards, black-eyed peas, rice, cornbread, and onions... and water, hot coffee, sugar and cream. Dishes were replenished before they emptied, the tables wiped with soapy hot water between guests. And afterwards, for any who wanted, a ride downtown to the area with most of the shelters.

Behind the scenes were forty volunteers and community members. Under Melvin's tutelage, we had been making cornbread all weekend. A basement crew arranged desserts on trays and dumbwaitered them upstairs. A cadre of servers, refillers, washers, dryers, bakers, cooks, spill-mopper-uppers, wranglers, and general-hands-on-deck served in every other capacity. After the guests ate, we fed ourselves: 305 guests, plus forty workers, but there was plenty left over.

Afterwards we sat around the table and exchanged stories. The community members were relaxed, clowning like family, compared babies and made jokes both dirty and clean. And I thought: It feels good, what has been done here today. It feels good to have served so many people, if only one hot meal, with dignity and beauty and appeal to the senses. But the presence of that dignity only makes me long for more — for permanent dignity, permanent respect, and permanent love for each one who lifted his or her feet across the threshold.

When I left the Open Door, I was headed for another warm house and a fresh pair of socks. I knew well the difference between my exit and that of so many others. ✦

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Nicole Lambelet is a recent graduate of Azusa Pacific University. She began her term as a Resident Volunteer in January.

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Contact: Phil Leonard
For information
and application forms, visit
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volunteer needs

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

For more information, contact Jodi Garbison
at odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net
or 404-875-1472.

The Georgia Aquarium (And Why I Can't Go)

By Alan Jenkins

(Editor's note: Alan Jenkins is a former Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community and continues to work and worship with us. He graduated in 2004 from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. This letter is in response to an open e-mail to Rick Ufford-Chase, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.)

Dear Peggy,

My friend Anne Sayre sent your email to me regarding the Georgia Aquarium. I'm from Atlanta, am developing an eco-justice ministry here in the Greater Atlanta Presbytery, and I volunteer at the Open Door Community. I participated in the public witness, along with the Community and other homeless advocates.

First, let me share that it is my prayer that the Aquarium will indeed become a place of great consciousness-raising about the awesome wonder of God's creation, its sacredness, and its (the oceans') health, which is our health. We have killed the oceans, and we need to do everything we can to (a) Stop the plunder, and (b) Restore / Protect. It is my prayer that the Aquarium will help in this vital effort.

It has already been built, so I'm not advocating tearing it down. At the same time, its operation cost of feeding the fish alone is projected to be over \$1 million a year.

Second, if indeed the overall goal of the \$280 million project is "education" leading to "transformation" (as opposed to entertainment for families who can afford it, like the predominantly white and middle/upper class parents and children I witnessed standing in line that day of public witness), I wonder if a fraction of that money could have been used in even more effective ways. What if just 10% of the \$280 million had been used for ocean-related educational programs in classrooms in public schools of Atlanta? Gosh, a simple education program about the U.S. military's dumping of weapons off the Atlantic Coast might stimulate enough passion for the youth to pursue these concerns in college and vocation!

And I'm afraid to say it, but with all the corporate signs by the different fish tanks at the Georgia Aquarium, such essential education about what we've done to our oceans is going to be utterly absent. The Aquarium will not, most likely, address U.S. policy (especially military operations) and multinational corporate irresponsibility as it pertains to the health and well-being of our oceans. I hope I'm wrong on this!

The prophet Hosea talks about the health and well-being of God's sacred aquatic life when he says this:

Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore, the land mourns, and all who live in it languish; together with the wild animals and the birds of the air, even the fish of the sea are perishing. (Hosea 4:2-3).

I wonder if our children, youth and adults will be able to make these prophetic connections at the Home Depot/Georgia Power/Coca-Cola Georgia Aquarium — even though these companies *are* making baby step efforts towards reducing carbon emissions that increase ocean temperatures.

Third, regarding the reality of homelessness, as brothers and sisters in Jesus the Beggar, the one who had no place to rest his head (unlike foxes and birds!), you and I certainly decry the reality of homelessness in such a wealthy, New South town. That ten or one hundred or one thousand of God's people have to sleep under our noisy interstate bridges and in cat holes is an outrage for us Christians.

That 15,000 have to do that in this town is enough to drive one crazy, if indeed he or she understands that each person is a brother or sister and a child of God.

Now, back to the Aquarium. Given the sinful absence of affordable housing, living-wage jobs with insurance, affordable transportation, and a grossly under-funded Grady Health Care System, it is hard to justify that this Aquarium will glorify God. It is hard to envision Isaiah standing before the Aquarium proclaiming, "For you shall go out in peace, the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Is.55:12).

In good conscience, I cannot go to the aquarium until all God's children are housed (and fed with healthy, non-mercury-laced, sustainably harvested baked fish and organic, locally grown produce). I will certainly miss seeing the Beluga whales, because I will probably never have the opportunity again. And while I don't like to be an overly anthropocentric eco-theologian, Jesus calls me to yearn and labor for housing for God's people in ever-more-committed, sacrificial and hopeful ways.

So, in conclusion, Peggy, I thank you for your email to Rick Ufford-Chase, as it has occasioned some tough reflection on my part. Please write, and perhaps we can help one another as we seek the incarnate hope ensconced in all creation. Indeed, "...The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the daughters and sons of God" (Romans 8:19). ✠



CALVINKIMBROUGH

Alan Jenkins joined the demonstration in November 2005 when the Georgia Aquarium opened.

A Catholic Worker's Response to Government Surveillance

By Steve Jacobs

(Editor's note: Steve Jacobs is a member of the St. Francis Catholic Worker Community in Columbia, Missouri. We are grateful to offer Steve's response to the news that those of us who are Catholic Workers are under intensified surveillance by the U.S. government.)

I belong to a group under government surveillance despite the fact that most of us in the Catholic Worker movement feed and shelter homeless folks throughout the United States.

Since 1933, we've been caring for the victims of an economic empire that abandons the mentally ill and disabled, and leaves the working poor and unemployed to fend for themselves in neighborhoods run down with drugs, alcoholism or simple neglect.

Catholic Workers often take homeless war vets off the streets, so spare me any pro-government excuses for how wealthy government officials have our best interests at heart. The poor know where they stand in this empire, when our leaders legislate automatic raises for themselves but ignore requests to raise the minimum wage. To put it crudely, Catholic Workers have "embedded" themselves with the poor in inner-city neighborhoods and we invite them to share our homes, food, and lives until they can move on to something more stable than a city sidewalk. We call it "walking in solidarity with the poor."

Though about 80% of us are Catholics, we are Catholics with a small "c," meaning "universal." Some, including FBI agents, believe we're leftists; but the Sermon on the Mount is our manifesto, a truly radical social program where each receives according to his or her need and the rich share equitably and break bread with the poor. These ideas are too rarely practiced by mainstream North American Christian churches, as are Jesus' teachings to love one's enemies and return good for evil. His warning that we reap what we sow is almost universally ignored. Like Him, we are dismissed as idealists, but Catholic Workers take those teachings very seriously.

And since we espouse non-violent resistance to evil, you'd think the government wouldn't waste its time monitoring us. But President Bush, when asked to explain his illegal authorization for surveillance of Americans, said, "If al-Qaeda is calling you, we'd like to know why." But Catholic Workers would rather the money used to spy on us be given as reparations to innocent civilian

war victims so agents won't have to mine data from our emails and phone calls and patiently wait for Osama bin Laden to call and tell us when to don ninja outfits and sabotage the nearest military-industrial complex. Osama wants our weapons turned into rubble. We'd rather turn them into ploughshares.

In May 2001, after filing a surveillance report on Catholic Workers who were protesting the multi-billion dollar National Missile Defense at Vandenberg Air Force base as a theft from the poor and homeless, an FBI agent wrote that Catholic Workers "... advocate(s) a communist distribution of resources." The report, obtained under the Freedom of

standing on some higher moral ground, especially when we've lowered ourselves to engage in the vilest forms of torture and murder in secret government-run prisons because somebody higher up ordered it. "I was only obeying orders" is the excuse of war criminals. This is how killing those made in the image and likeness of God gives us cancer of the soul, slowly eating away at our principles until we find ourselves doing unto others pre-emptively before they can do it unto us — without anticipating the moral corollary, "Those who have evil done to them, do evil in return." Christian non-violence is the threat of a good idea, because it's crazy enough that it just might work.

a Catholic Worker? According to Russell Tice, if terrorists simply dial a wrong number, an innocent American citizen could be "spirited away to some back alley country to get the rubber hose treatment."

Think that could never happen? Innocent folks have already been pulled off planes and sent to torture in places like Syria (whose government seems anxious to appease us by torturing our detainees) or Uzbekistan, where a British diplomat resigned to protest his government's acceptance of intelligence that was obtained by Uzbeki torturers. Do you think Bush and Cheney would have moral courage to resign in a similar situation?

Dissidents like Catholic Workers are the canaries in the coal mine of democracy. When secret government agents come after us, you'd better set aside that patriotic fantasy about America being the champion of human rights and realize that the police state is operational.

The framers of the Constitution would be appalled that their later countrymen and women allowed the government to assume the right of omniscience by policing the entire world's conversations. Ben Franklin warned, "Those that would sacrifice their liberty for more security deserve neither." Choosing between criminal politicians and terrorists no longer seems like much of a choice. Their behavior is too much alike. †

**Dissidents
like Catholic Workers
are the canaries
in the coal mine
of democracy.**



Information Act, was posted on the ACLU web site. This was months before Sept. 11 — so Bush's explanation that Sept. 11 made it necessary for the government to spy on Americans is only a sloppy alibi.

The National Security Agency (NSA) and various military intelligence groups have recently been exposed for spying and infiltrating peace groups that are dedicated to non-violence, like the Quakers. As the petulant and pampered son of a millionaire, Bush's response is to begin investigating who told the truth. He only seems to care about leaks if others do it, not his buddies Scooter Libby and Karl Rove.

As pacifist Christians, the only threat we pose to the government is a moral one. But the government *should* be concerned, because Jesus' subversive non-violent ideas can cause more damage to war efforts than any terrorist's bomb. If His teachings gain traction again — that it's hypocritical for Christians to say we love our neighbors/enemies and then kill them — then Christians in uniform will start refusing to fight. Hundreds have already done so.

It's the ultimate subversion that cuts the legs out from under any pretense

of standing on some higher moral ground, especially when we've lowered ourselves to engage in the vilest forms of torture and murder in secret government-run prisons because somebody higher up ordered it. "I was only obeying orders" is the excuse of war criminals. This is how killing those made in the image and likeness of God gives us cancer of the soul, slowly eating away at our principles until we find ourselves doing unto others pre-emptively before they can do it unto us — without anticipating the moral corollary, "Those who have evil done to them, do evil in return." Christian non-violence is the threat of a good idea, because it's crazy enough that it just might work.

But as dark as the times are, there are still those whose conscience compels them to shed some light on our leaders' criminal actions. Recently, Russell Tice, who worked as an intelligence analyst with the NSA and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) wrote to Congress and publicly stated his desire to testify about illegal "black ops" programs at NSA. He said, "The freedom of the American people cannot be protected when our constitutional liberties are ignored and our nation has decayed into a police state."

Furthermore, a federal judge resigned from the federal court that approves surveillance under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to protest the President's illegal authorizations to invade Americans' privacy. Even John Ashcroft's chief deputy, James Comey at the Justice Department, refused to authorize the NSA program — so Alberto Gonzalez, who believes that international restrictions on torture are "quaint," went over Comey's head. These non-cooperators are hardly radicals of the Catholic Workers' ilk. If there is equal justice under the law, and we know that there is not, then Bush and Cheney should be impeached.

So, why should you care if you're not

BEARINGS

By Mark Bashor

No sextant, compass, map,
are needed to explore
the geography of faith...

Just these, when you pause:

Where do you stand?
And for what?
And with whom?

And do you pray,
or do you prey,
without ceasing?

Mark Bashor is editor of Poetry
Corner in Hospitality

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In, Out

A major part of our life and vision at the Open Door Community is the Abolition of the Death Penalty. Most long-term members, and many volunteers as well, visit and correspond with friends on Georgia's death row. We are often privileged to welcome friends and families of death row inmates to our table and our circle of love and care. And we work closely with the cadre of brave attorneys assist our condemned sisters and brothers for little pay and scant public appreciation.

Several times each year, Ed and Mary Ruth Weir of New Hope House gather the volunteers and new community members from the Open Door Community and Jubilee Partners Community in Comer, Georgia, for an afternoon and evening Forum on the Death Penalty. In each Forum, we hear stories and testimony from Steve Caldwell whose mentally ill brother Daniel was condemned to death and later committed suicide. Steve is eloquent in speaking of the pain, grief, and frustration of dealing with a failing mental health system and what it is like to stand helplessly with family members who are then killed by the state for their illness and inner torment.

We hear from Steve Pruitt, a Federal Employee who survived the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. Steve was severely injured and lost an eye in the explosion, but his soul-searching in the long months of recovery led him into a deepened faith and seeking an end to the use of the death penalty as a crucial part of ending a cycle of violence and retribution.

And for the first time, in our February Forum, our communities listened with rapt attention to the testimony of Shareef Cousin (pictured on the left). Shareef was released several months ago from the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana, where he was imprisoned for 11 years, 3 of them on death row, for a crime he did not commit. We rejoice that Shareef is free, full of life, and has already become a powerful witness against the error-prone use of the death-sentence. [John Robert Ballard was recently exonerated in Florida and became the 123rd death sentenced prisoner to be exonerated since 1973. Florida leads the pack in wrongful convictions and death sentences. Ballard is the 26th to be exonerated in Florida.]



On February 28, community members joined advocates from around Georgia at the State Capitol to call for a Moratorium on Executions. A recent study commission of the American Bar Association has recommended a moratorium on seeking and carrying out the death penalty in Georgia because of sloppy and discriminatory patterns in the way that the state seeks and administers death sentences. Mrs. Rosalyn Carter has publicly stated her support for a moratorium even as she affirmed that the ultimate goal should be complete abolition of capital punishment. The advocates lobbied legislators and delivered over 3000 cards signed by citizens calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. Speakers at a noon press conference included former Georgia Supreme Court Justice Harold Clarke, local religious leaders, and a number of legislators. In the upper photograph, Lauren Cogswell and Chad Hyatt talk with our own Representative Pat Gardner, a supporter of moratorium and abolition legislation. In the lower photograph, advocates and supporting legislators gather behind Imam Plemon El-Amin, leader of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam as he speaks to the press.



For part of our Lenten studies and disciplines, we welcomed Don and Jane Saliers for supper and an evening of study. Don teaches Worship and Liturgy at Candler School of Theology, and he led us in a clarification meeting about fasting as a helpful and clarifying discipline in a culture in which many are overfed and many are involuntarily and unjustly hungry.



& Around 910

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough and Murphy Davis

Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough



Novice Tony "Soup Dog" Sinkfield has been teaching Resident Volunteers Nicole Lambelet and Kyle Thompson (the "Soup Pups") how to make huge pots of delicious hearty soup for 200 hungry guests.

Open Studio at the Open Door Community includes drawing classes with Chad Hyatt. Here Winston Robarts shares his drawing with Chad, Carlton Carmichael, and Leonard Gayles. While the drawing classes go on upstairs, the potters work on the wheel in the basement St. Benedict's Studio under the tutelage of Nelia Kimbrough.



poetry corner



JULIE LONNEMAN

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

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

Waiting for Spring

By Lauren Cogswell

The sun rises and sets.
You ask me to pray for your freedom;
I do, knowing that steel bars will always gird your life.
How do we hope for life beyond death?
How do we die for life beyond hope?

One day you took a life with your hands;
I too have murdered by what I have not done.
You are caged, hands locked behind your back;
I am free to tend the earth, which feeds us both.

You kneel and pray for life in the face of death;
I kneel and press seeds into the freshly turned earth.

We are waiting for spring.

Lauren Cogswell is a Novice at the Open Door Community



BECCA CONRAD

Coming Soon !

for our 25th Anniversary
a new history of the Open Door Community
written by Peter Gathje



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Sharing the Bread of Life

Hospitality and Resistance
at the Open Door Community

Am I, continued from page 1
free choice. I am innocent." Of course,
there is a token of truth in that defense for
the present role of white supremacy and
Black oppression in America.

Yet innocence does not exist in
human history. It is an illusion that deepens
our addictions to self and immaturity.
"Innocence" is much like the fanciful word
"perfect." There is no such state or
achievement as perfection except, perhaps,
in the pineal gland of Platonic philosophers.
Innocence and Perfection are states of
being and goals in history which have
wrought great damage to the understanding
of praxis, liberation and the struggle to be
fully human. Innocence and his brother
Perfection bring low self-esteem, self-
deprecation, and distrust toward parents,
friends, lovers and leaders, because both are
lies and twist the human psyche. Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr. committed adultery? Proves
he and his message are worthless, say the
Christo-crats.

Innocence belongs outside the
realm of history, like a pie in the sky, not in
the hardball park of liberation, undoing
racism, and solidarity. Together we are
finding ways for the children of slaves to
be free, and for the children of slaveholders
to join the Abolitionist Movement. Great
Black leaders, in my white evaluation, are
those who have moved into understanding
the tragic dimension of history, a web in
which we are all caught. We watch
together as the spider moves toward us.
The voices of the oppressed offer, to those
with ears to hear, the anguished cry of the
abandoned ones for justice and equality.
The ragged broken bodies of the
panhandling Black poor proclaim, to those
with eyes to see, the suffering world and
the passion and hunger for the bread of
life. Truth comes from the margins where
Moses, Miriam, and Jesus sleep.

To those of us born dead and
blind, solidarity with the Black Liberation
Movement of defiance against the
American Way of Life and consumer
capitalism is one of the most fruitful and
truthful ways to live in the world, and to be
grasped by the cross and resurrection of
our dark-skinned Jewish messiah. We,
white Radical Remnant Disciples, can be
transformed by the "dangerous memory
and imagination" rooted in the historical
experience of white racist slavery that boils
in the fiery bones of prophets and human
rights activists.

The Children of Slaveholders

The children of slaveholders, on
the other hand, remain the oppressor, the
privileged, the entitled. Every law has a
seed of affirmative action for whites
embedded in it (Stringfellow). White folk,
all slaveholders as regards the benefits of
racism, come to our heritage as owners of
human beings either in guilt that wants to
change the system little by little by reforms,
or by disdain and denial. The deniers of the
consequences of slavery and white
supremacy want to take away all the gains
made by African Americans since

Reconstruction and the Civil Rights
Movement.

The white person, however,
transformed into an Abolitionist and living in
solidarity with people on the margins, has
power and access to bring to the
Movement. The key for the white
Abolitionist is to share power and follow
leadership. We must preach, using words
only when necessary, that we seek
liberation for ourselves, freedom from our
white non-legal slavery in the American
Empire and its ugly tool of death: consumer
capitalism. We are not here to "help
Darkies," but to form the basis for a
revolution of values and institutions for
ourselves and others (MLK). Many are
the unintended consequences for Blacks
when liberals get out of their armchairs.
The only white option is a radicalism that
sees the change of systems and structures.
Our shared goal must be an end to white
privilege, which is the cross of suffering
and death for all people of color. We need
each other. We must be faithful to the
radical tradition and take this filthy rotten
system apart as we build the Beloved
Community in the shell of the old. Black
and White, radical Abolitionists, together.

What do I Know?

Many books have been and are
being written about slavery. We have way
more books describing the peculiar
institution than we have people going to the
streets in direct actions to undo the terrible
legacy of white supremacy and
exploitation. Much of the writing is from
the computers of the slaveholders and their
children. For a white historian to write
about slavery, he/she would be helped
significantly by doing some time in jail or
prison; both hermeneutics and
historiography would be deepened, if not
radicalized. I have studied slavery in the
university and out. I have read books and
known African Americans as well as
whites who taught about slavery. I have
slept on the streets and under bridges with
abandoned children of slaves. I have sat
and screamed as a predominantly Black
City Council, following a predominantly
Black Mayor, instituted the predominantly
white-wanted Tourist Triangle to segregate
the poor children of slaves from the rich
children of slaveholders.

Whether they come to Atlanta to
see the history and shapes of Coke bottles,
fish ripped from their natural environments,
or to touch the fender of a NASCAR hot
rod driven by a cold white man, whites
today are as afraid of Blacks as they were
during the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot. Then,
whites killed, maimed, raped, and brutalized
Blacks to get them out of the Five Points
area. Now, Mayor Franklin, Aaron Joshua
Robinson of Central Atlanta Progress, and
Bernie Marcus of Home Depot are driving
poor Blacks away by the "softer" methods
of police brutality and jail terms. Woe. Woe
I say unto you who consort with such as
these and these plans to white wash and
sanitize the Atlanta landscape. There are

I Am, continued on page 9

I Am, continued from page 8
some terrible consequences of slavery and racism in the policies of the Republican and Democratic Parties in Georgia today. Some children of slaveholders want to remain slaveholders, which is expressed through racism and greed against the poor. Some children of slaveholders want to end slavery and its legacy and become Abolitionists and work within Black freedom institutions and the Progressive Movement. Some Blacks do the same and stand in the mighty river (Vincent Harding) of the Black Abolitionist Movement: Joe Beasley, Gloria Lee, Tim McDonald, Vincent Fort, Tony Sinkfield, Able Mabel Thomas, Ezekiel Holley, Sandra Robertson, Sarah Fitten, and Derrick Boazman to name a few.

Some Blacks want to be slaves even today; they just follow orders and don't complain when the Republicans vote down an increase in the minimum wage as they did a few months ago, go to Iraq and kill, become prison guards and play like they are the Overseers on a cotton plantation. Some African Americans, sadly enough, want to be slaveholders. They actually and demonstratively want to be like white racist Republicans and Democrats. They believe they can claim a new white identity flowing in the bloody stream of the domination of others. Bishop Eddie Long, Bernice King, Lisa Borders, H. Lamar Willis, and Condoleezza Rice and Justice Clarence Thomas are among them.

A few weeks ago, while attending the Atlanta City Council, I saw with my eyes and heard with my ears the City Council celebrating the Atlanta legacy of white supremacy and slaveholding. The Council held a day to honor the legacy and monies from the Margaret Mitchell Foundation. "Gone with the Wind," one of the most beloved and influential novels in Western literature, was praised by obsequious African American members of the council. Ironically, this novel, which has shaped the understanding of southern plantation slavery the world over, portrays African Americans as submissive and stupid. The novel suggests that African Americans need whites like Aaron Joshua Robinson of Central Atlanta Progress to guide them. Was Council President Lisa Borders playing Scarlet O'Hara? Do these Prosperity Gospel Blacks really want to be like Governor Sunny Perdue? No one mentioned the novel, "The Wind Done Gone" (2001), by Alice Randall, that spoke the truth to power in response to Margaret Mitchell's "Black Sambo" novel. How is it that mainline Americans, even with college degrees, are so taken with racist propaganda like "Gone with the Wind?"

As an Abolitionist I don't want to white wash history or white wash my hope for our shared future. White washing is a form of building white racist supremacy and giving folk like me

benefits and privilege in this sick system. Don't white wash me or my history! I am on a road to freedom land and I do not want the Atlanta City Council furthering lies about the nature of slavery and slaveholding. No wonder they do whatever Mayor Franklin says do to the poor Black and white beggars and the homeless.

The Tourist Triangle is another step in excluding poor people, mostly Blacks. Passed by the City Council on August 15, 2005, it is a leap backward into a state of separate and unequal. The new Jim & Jane Crow laws are sweeping the streets of urban America. The front-line folk proposing and legalizing this class and color law for Central Atlanta Progress, and the slaveholding community were African Americans: the children of slaves.

The greatest tragedy of American history, after slavery, is that no whites were slaves. Neither white nor black Americans owned European American slaves. 'Tis a pity! That's how we got to be so racist. And even though I am a child of slaveholders, racists, and Republicans, I am an Abolitionist by the call of Moses' God, who set abolitionism in motion in Egyptland and made freedom of slaves and captives the central theme of the Judeo-Christian heritage. I have been called and affirmed by Harriet Tubman, who loves me like I am her child running in the woods toward Canada. I have been called by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Vincent Fort: I am an Abolitionist! I am called and sent by the homeless who lie in our yard and eat at our table. I am commissioned by my murdering brothers and sister on death row and my faithful friends in prison. I am an Abolitionist! I follow Jesus, the Human One, who wears the mantle of Moses and cries from the agony of the cross for all who are oppressed. I am an Abolitionist!

To this end I live at the Open Door Community with the children of slaves and children of slaveholders. We are, together, trying to undo the evil of slavery, the dehumanization and terrible lies and privileges of white racism, and to find a political party that will pursue justice and equality for all, house the homeless, feed the hungry, stop the death penalty, and love one another.

The greatest tragedy of American History, after slavery, is that no whites were slaves. In our teeny weenie little enclave of Radical Remnant Disciples of Jesus the Jewish Liberator, we are building a common life that reduces the distance between and among ourselves. We want to move into the solidarity of human life that Jesus, Dorothy Day, Clarence Jordan, and Dr. King gave their lives to build. We often use a confession of faith and struggle said by an Aboriginal activist woman: "If you are coming here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you are coming here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." I am an Abolitionist. ♣

Eduard-the-Agitator Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Holy Week and Easter with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship with our friends on the street during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday, April 9
Open Door Community, 5pm
Derrick Boazman preaching

Monday, April 10
Grady Hospital, Jessie Hill, Jr. Dr., 5pm

Tuesday, April 11
City Jail, Peachtree St. SW, 5pm

Wednesday, April 12
Woodruff Park, Five Points, 5pm

Maundy Thursday, April 13
City Hall, Trinity Avenue, 5pm
(with celebration of the Eucharist)

Good Friday, April 14
State Capitol, Washington Street, 5pm

Holy Saturday, April 15
Pine Street Shelter, 5pm
Peachtree and Pine Streets

Easter Morning, April 16
Open Door Community, 8am
Breakfast with our homeless friends, followed by worship and Celebration of Life over Death and Oppression



FRITZ EICHENBERG



CHAD HYATT

**This spring
the
Open Door
urgently needs
Coffee**

For many years, a local coffee distributor has donated dated coffee for our ministry. We are grateful for this generosity, but the company has decided to stop giving coffee away. This has made a major difference in our daily budget. We use 55 pounds of coffee each week. Can you help us find another source for coffee? And in the meantime, can you help us buy enough to serve our homeless friends?

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

There is Still, *continued from page 1*

on the “reconciliation list,” which meant needing to negotiate welcoming Anthony again to our yard.

Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, Anthony could not find another place to be. He would wander in a tight circle around the Open Door: from Blockbuster, to our front steps, to the lawyer’s yard, down the alley and around again. We struggled for weeks to keep Anthony away. He often hustled residents of our house for cigarettes and began threatening our friend George. We tried all that we knew to encourage him to be away: from being consistent in our requests to cutting off any dependency he had upon us. These actions only escalated the problem. Anthony became more verbally threatening, and we became concerned he would become violent.

Finally, one Thursday morning while Eric Garbison was on house duty, I heard a loud exchange in the front yard. I went outside to stand by Eric’s side as Anthony became verbally abusive, spitting and pointing his finger in Eric’s face. Eric asked for Nelia Kimbrough to call the police. Anthony continued to engage Eric, shouting and gesturing violently toward him. In frustration Eric threw up his hands and shouted, “I am a man of peace!” He then led many of our friends into singing “Jesus Loves Me.” Anthony pushed and punched Eric as he slowly backed out of the yard. Eric wasn’t injured, but we were all shaken up. The police came and took Anthony to jail. We all knew that we had failed.

We had struggled for many months to create space in our inn for Anthony. But we were left asking, *why?* Why was there not space for this child of yours, God? There was not enough room in the inn of our home, nor in the inn of our hearts.

Bruce

Bruce is another homeless African American man who suffers from mental illness. Recently on a Wednesday morning around 5:00 a.m., Bruce was walking along Ponce de Leon Ave. en route to the Open Door to take his weekly shower. He made the trip as he has often done: from downtown, up Peachtree and along Ponce. A trip that dozens of men and a few women make every Wednesday and Thursday for showers at 910.

Bruce is tormented with mental illness. One of the expressions of his illness is that he talks to himself, sometimes quite loudly. Another manifestation is paranoia; he is constantly in fear that there are people out to get him.

Unfortunately, this particular morning some *were* out to get him: the Atlanta PD. Two “officers of the peace” confronted Bruce and proceeded to arrest him for disorderly conduct [read: being mentally ill]. Bruce vehemently protested that he hadn’t done anything wrong and resisted his illegal arrest. The engagement quickly escalated, and just after one officer had pulled out his nightstick, Lauren Cogswell walked out into the front yard. Bruce pled his case with conviction, but the officers were blinded by their pride and by the coercive spirit of the criminal so-called justice system. In Bruce’s passionate defense, some spit flew from his mouth into the face of one of the officers, as happens to many of us when we are angry or excited. In that moment, Bruce’s charge intensified as he was thought to be resisting arrest. Bruce was taken to jail despite his pleas of innocence and Lauren’s pleas to take him to Grady for a mental health examination.

After spending a week in jail, Bruce’s case was heard before a municipal court judge. Thanks to a courageous public defender, the false charges were dropped and the judge even commended Bruce, saying

that he had every right to resist an illegal arrest! On our way out of the courtroom, we encountered Officer Apoian, who had arrested Bruce. The officer inquired, “So what kind of meds did they give you down at Grady?” Bruce responded, “They didn’t give me any.” The officer continued, “Then what were you high on that day when I arrested you?”

I could not believe what was happening before my eyes. I interjected, “This is inappropriate!” While the officer tried to defend himself, Bruce and I began to move toward the door. I interrupted him to say, “You’re harassing Bruce again just like that day when you arrested him! You’re participating in a sick system, and I’m sorry for you and I’m sorry for all of us!”

Bruce was in one way set free — he was no longer in jail — but he was set free to the streets where police prey on the poor. Pushed out of the halls of respectability, Bruce continues to walk the streets, fearful that the police might again find him. There is no room in the inn for the mentally ill, it seems — only room in jail.



Christ of the Homeless

FRITZ EICHENBERG

Nick

Nick is yet another homeless African American man who suffers from mental illness. I first encountered him one Sunday afternoon before worship. While I was on house duty, one of the residents reported, “Someone is in the yard talking a bunch of bull.” I went outside to find Nick chattering up a storm with a warm smile. The chaos of his mind was spilling forth from his mouth. “Nick,” I said. “The yard is closed this afternoon, but you’re welcome to come back for worship tonight.” I said this knowing full well that I would no longer be on house duty and inviting him in wouldn’t be my responsibility.

Sure enough, at 5:00 p.m. I noticed Nick putting on his name tag in the hall. Lauren was on house duty, so I made sure she knew that Nick was a pretty talkative guy. After Lauren and I deliberated about what to do, we decided that instead of asking him to leave, I would host him that evening.

Nick was relatively calm during the service. He was content to write on the back of one of the books we offer to visitors who come by our house. I began to have a change of heart regarding Nick. We would occasionally share a friendly smile and, when he was interested, a songbook. He stuck around through the Eucharist and I was honored to serve him the elements. After the

Eucharist, Murphy Davis led us in song:

*Love, love, love, love,
the Gospel in a word is love
love your neighbor as your self
for God is love.*

After we sang the refrain a few times Nick turned to me and stuck out his hand. I grabbed it and we held hands for what seemed like a long time. Then he announced he was ready to leave. I helped him to the door, gave him two bus tokens, and with a hug of peace he was on his way.

I was so thankful to have encountered Nick, to have shared the Eucharist with him, to have held his hand as we sang the song of love. Could we — could I — make room for Nick? Maybe we could.

Jesus With and For the Mentally Ill

Who is Jesus Christ for Anthony, for Bruce, for Nick, for the police, for Lauren, for Eric, for Nelia, for me? Where is God in the chaos of mental illness, in the mire of systemic injustice, of abusive control, of God-forsaken despair? What is justice? Is justice possible in the criminal “justice” system? And can we make room for the mentally ill in the inns of our hearts?

Christ is already there with those put out of the inn of decency. Christ is there with Anthony, rejected by his friends and family as a crazy streetwalker. Christ is there with Bruce, wrongfully accused but rightfully understood as a threat to the status quo of the religious and political elite. Christ is there with Nick in the chaos of his mind and the clarity of the call to love.

Christ is there in the movement of solidarity, and he is there working toward the forgiveness of those who would put him in the streets. In this movement, God forgives the officer as a participant and executor of the will of the oppressive criminal so-called justice system. In this movement, God also forgives you and me as we are complacent and compliant in this system as well.

This forgiveness, of course, demands a response on our part; it demands a similar movement, a movement away from

the center and toward the margins. It’s difficult to prescribe any “solutions” for those who are tormented by mental illness. We need health care! We need to stop police harassment! But in spite of all of our hope to do good, there are no good “solutions” for the mentally ill. Rather I hope to work to understand our mentally ill friends (and all of life) as a parable for God’s coming — and in order to do so I must go and be with Anthony, Bruce, and Nick outside the inn of decency.

The destination toward which God moves us through Christ’s gift of solidarity and forgiveness is the Beloved Community; and in the giving and reception of these gifts, we have already arrived! Thus, we hope, we yearn, we pray with our bodies for the moment when the Beloved Community breaks into the inn of decency and blows the doors off, when room is made for all, when the lion lies down with the lamb, and the mentally ill become friends with the police.

Will we be ready? Will there be room? Or will we see another year go by where there is still no room in the inn? And if so, will we be given the courage to move to the margins with our brothers and sisters who suffer? ♠

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

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Friends,

Thank you for sending me *Hospitality*. About 20 years ago I represented Northwest Georgia Presbyterians on the Christian Council Board and learned about your community services at that time. My "paying" job was teaching math at night at Kennesaw College. Most of my students were women who were "starting over." After retiring in 1988, I returned to my [foreparents'] home in Southern Illinois with 40 acres. We have a large garden and my house is 100 years old.

I first used the ground floor for abused women and children and have since constructed a HUD Transition Center for women with 24 apartments. At the same time, I began a center for abused children which now serves 7 counties in Southern Illinois. Our county food bank is in the women's office building and has good support — ecumenical as well as private groups. Next will be a "women's" house and a "men's" house for "homeless" and impoverished people, who will be involved with job training. See how you inspired me!! Southern Illinois is a former agri/orchard area, but no longer has industry of any kind. You folks in Atlanta have provided me and like minded friends with ongoing inspiration. I work from my computer for legislative action with women all over Illinois — both state and federal.

Millicent Hankla, age 78
Anna, Illinois

Hello Eduard,

My biggest concern upon release will be my age factor related to suitable employment. In the past, I have had no problem with finding rewarding employment and moving up the ladder. Now, I question whether companies will be willing to hire a 60+ ex-convict. In practical application, I probably possess more organizational skill than most who would apply for certain jobs, and my educational background will more than likely be superior, but who will open their heart to me? I will pray about that very important concern.

In a few days, stamps will increase in cost by 2 cents. Thirty-nine cents isn't a bad deal to mail a letter, but I am concerned about future price hikes. No one expected fifteen years ago that gasoline prices would skyrocket as they have.

I depended on my estranged daughter to send me a Christmas goody package — to no avail. Will Smith once recorded a song titled "Parents Just Don't Understand." In my case, children just don't understand.

Thanks for your understanding, kindred spirit.
A friend in prison

This morning the weather is rather cool. On the way to breakfast I was wondering how the less fortunate are doing. Being homeless and without proper clothing really is a heavy burden during inclement weather. It is sad that so many have to suffer so much, when we live in such a prosperous country.

I see from the news that Governor Purdue is planning to expand the prison system by 4,000 beds. There is almost a sick irony to this. Shelter for the homeless and the government has no money — prison beds and the government has plenty.

Warmly,
A friend
Phillips State Prison

Dear beloved comrades!

I always marvel at how moving, inspiring and just beautifully written the articles in *Hospitality* are. I just finished Lauren Cogswell's article ("Blessed Are the Poor," *Hospitality*, January 2006) with tears in my eyes. I may be way too emotional but am glad to be that way. And Ed your article featuring our brother Jesus hits the mark ("Jesus: Aims & Purposes, Part II: The Faith of Jesus," *Hospitality*, January 2006). We just gotta let others know how radical, revolutionary and 100% non-violent "our leader" is. How many Americans realize this? Not many who are well off and secure like, sad to say, I am. Hell, compared to our outcast friends, I'm rich. But anyway, lots of thanks to all of you.

Solidarity forever and tons of love,
Jerry "The Ancient Geezer" Robinett
Tucson, Arizona

Let me also share with you a story from Jenny's work yesterday. She was representing an African American man who lives in a dumpster. The police had been hassling him, so he set up a barbed wire perimeter. They came through the barbed wire and arrested him for possession of a dangerous weapon — the barbed wire. Jenny checked the law and barbed wire cannot be a dangerous weapon because it has a "common use." So, at the trial, the police officer testified about the barbed wire. When Jenny was asked if she had questions, she said "no" and said the defense rests. This so started the judge that the judge looked at the statute, saw what Jenny had seen, and so dismissed the case. The man walked free!

Liberation for the captive!
Peace,
Pete Gathje
Emmanuel House
Memphis, TN

(Editors note: Dr. Jenny Case is a Public Defender in Shelby County, Tennessee. She and Pete are Founding Members of Emmanuel House Catholic Worker.)

Dear Murphy,

Greetings to you in the Blessed name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I sincerely pray this letter finds you doing well and secure in the Lord's peace and love. May the gentle presence of the holy spirit surround you. Just so you know, I was so glad to see you before I left Jackson. You have no idea what those moments meant to me. I must ask, since I am no longer on death row, can I still receive the Open Door *Hospitality* news letters? They mean so much to me Ms. Murphy Davis. And please keep me in your prayers. And pray for my family. My new address is above. And please write soon.

Sincerely yours
Gulley (William Gulley)
Reidsville, GA

I never cease to think and talk about you as the living examples of what our Christian faith is all about. You are an inspiration to me because the Open Door Community works! One day it is my aim to come and see you but I'll give you fair warning.

God Bless,
Love from
Laurie Oliver
Nottingham, UK

coming soon

European Catholic Worker Gathering
May 17 - 21, 2006

Germany
contact

Thera van der Ven
011-31-206-969-899

US Catholic Worker Gathering
October 19 - 22, 2006

Panora, Iowa
contact

Frank Cordaro

< frank.cordaro@gmail.com >

Phil Berrigan Catholic Worker House
713 Indiana Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50314
(515) 282-4781

www.DesMoinesCatholicWorker.org

Mary Alice Nuessner Loring



*Eduard Loring,
Murphy Davis
and
Mary Loring,
Christmas 1997*

Mary Loring died Saturday February 25, 2006 from old age at Southminster Retirement Community, Charlotte, North Carolina. She was 93 years old, and in her final days, she was surrounded by her family singing Freedom songs and hymns of thanksgiving.

Fifty-seven years ago she and her beloved husband, Harold A. Loring (d. 1985), traveled uphill from the black water, low country of South Carolina to begin a new life in Charlotte, North Carolina. Already the fruits of their love and passion where on the move: Carol Zeigler Loring, who is giving her life to the care of the elderly, and Eduard N. Loring, Christian Human Rights Activist. The two primary places of Mary and Harold's lives were their love-drenched home at 3021 Hanson Drive and the great and liberal Myers Park Baptist Church where Mary was on the staff for years.

Born in Greenville, South Carolina, educated at Winthrop College, a leader in the YWCA movement with a particular concern for Black-White relationships, she once hosted George Washington Carver on the Winthrop campus in the 1930s. A supporter of the anti-war candidacy of Eugene McCarty in 1968, she earlier drove 120 miles in the rain to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak in the mid 1960s, calling for a revolution of values.

In addition to her wild son and tender daughter she awaits the homecoming of her grandchildren: Neely Loring, Scott Loring Bianchi, Mary Susan Loring, Shannon Bianchi, Mary Margaret (Meg) Bianchi Larson, and Hannah Loring-Davis and very great grandson: John Thomas Loring.

Mary Loring's funeral was at her beloved Myers Park Baptist Church at 1:00 p.m., Saturday, March 4. All people of good will were asked to come. Instead of flowers, please give a gift to the next 3 beggars who ask you for change. ♣

Open Door Community Ministries

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

Showers: Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

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

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

**Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and
Soul Foot Care Clinic:** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

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

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

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

We are open...

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

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

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

Join Us for Worship!

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

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

April 2 Fifth Sunday of Lent Worship at 910
Calvin Kimbrough leading

April 9 Palm Sunday Worship at 910
Derrick Boazman preaching

April 10 - 15 Holy Week on the Streets
see schedule on page 9

April 16 Easter Breakfast and Worship at 910
8 a.m. - no evening worship

April 23 Worship at 910
Celebration of the Partnership of
Nelia & Calvin Kimbrough

April 28-30 Spring Retreat at Dayspring Farm
no worship at 910



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

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

Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!



DANIEL NICHOLS

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 404-874-9652 or see www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medicine Needs List

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic

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

Soul Foot Care Clinic

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

We are also looking for volunteers to help staff our Soul Foot Care Clinic on Thursday evenings!

Needs of the Community



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Living Needs

- jeans
- men's work shirts
- men's belts
- men's underwear
- women's underwear
- socks
- reading glasses
- walking shoes for men & women (especially 9 1/2 and up)
- T-shirts (L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
- baseball caps
- MARTA tokens
- postage stamps
- alarm clocks

Personal Needs

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

Food Needs

- coffee
- turkeys
- hams
- sandwiches
- quick grits
- cheese

Special Needs

- double bed

From 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11:00 a.m. or after 2:00 p.m. it would be helpful. THANK YOU!