

HOSPITALITY

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

vol. 24, no. 8

910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212, 404-874-9652, www.opendoorcommunity.org

August 2005

Atlanta, Georgia: Is it Really a Crime to be Poor?

By Murphy Davis

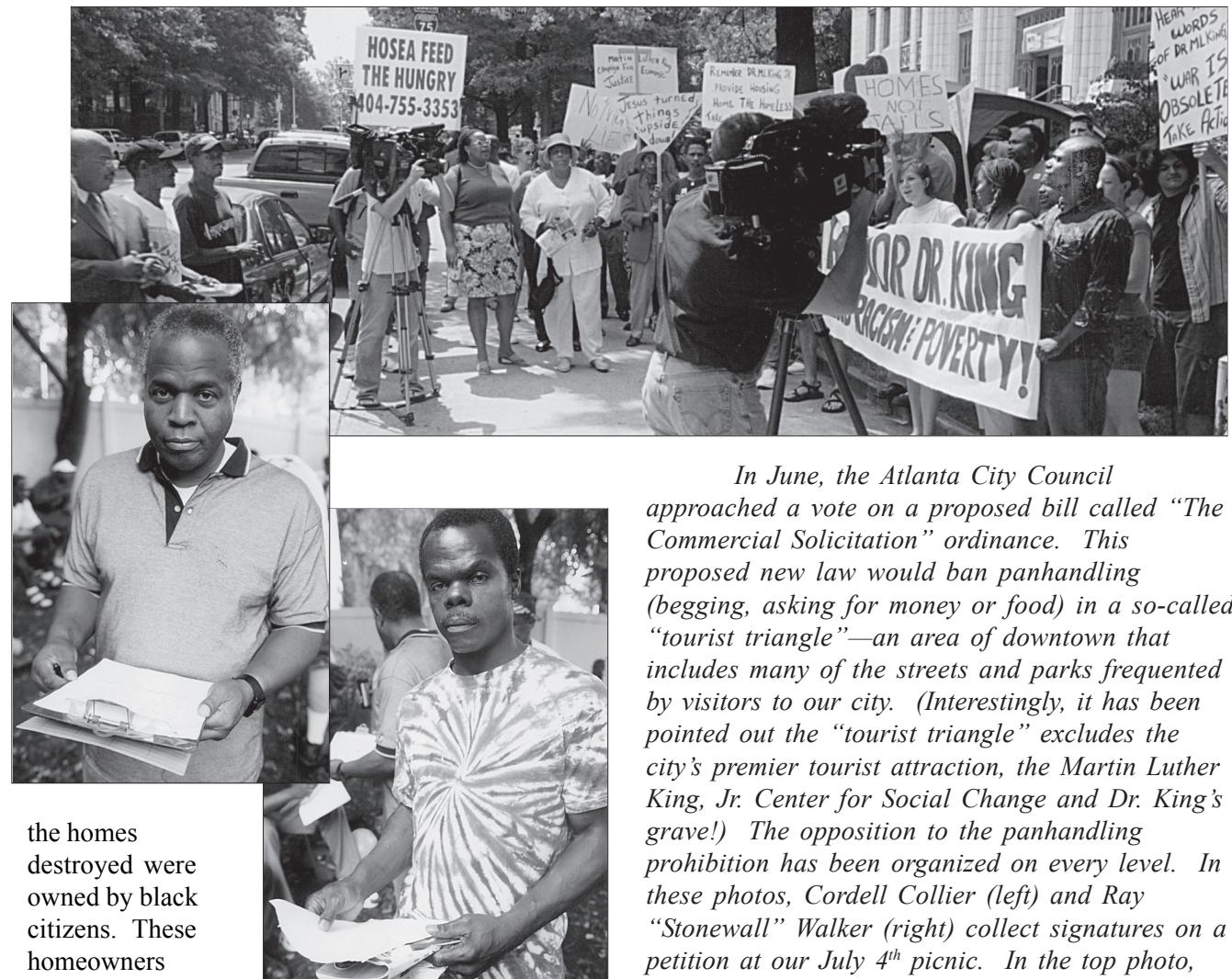
(Editor's note: In a June 20, 2005 meeting of the Atlanta City Council, Murphy Davis, a Partner at the Open Door Community, made the following comments. In this and several meetings since that time, we have joined with many other religious and community leaders in imploring the Council to vote down the "Commercial Solicitation" ordinance that would outlaw any form of begging in downtown Atlanta. More photographs of the public actions and rallies are on page 4.)

President Borders and Friends of the City Council, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to be heard. I am a Presbyterian minister, and since 1979, I have, with my family, lived with and among the homeless poor of our city. The Open Door Community, of which I am one of the founders, has been located in District 6 since 1981. I would like to speak against the so-called "Commercial Solicitation" ordinance that is before you.

In the 1950's, the Central Improvement Association of Atlanta publicly adopted a policy that they unashamedly called "Negro Removal." They preached that Negro Removal would be good for business in Atlanta, and especially good for the development of the Central Business District.

That organization eventually changed its name to the Central Atlanta Association, and later to Central Atlanta Progress. While the name has changed twice, I am afraid that something basic to its vision has not changed. Today they, along with Mayor Shirley Franklin, are asking you to pass yet one more law to hurt, harass, and "remove" the poor, and especially the African American poor, in and from the Central Business District (in this ordinance, described as a "triangle").

The business leaders of this city became quite adept in the 1950's and 60's at using federal funds and programs to carry out their plans. Through programs like Urban Renewal, Model Cities, and the building of civic projects like the Civic Center, Fulton-Atlanta Stadium (and later Turner Field), the construction of I-75-85, all of the thriving African American communities near downtown were systematically destroyed. It is important to note that, in many of these communities, like Buttermilk Bottom, the Old Fourth Ward, Summerhill, and others, most of



the homes destroyed were owned by black citizens. These homeowners generally became renters and public housing tenants, and the immeasurable value of these vital residential and commercial communities was forever lost.

From 1956 to 1966, a ten-year period, this policy destroyed 21,000 housing units and displaced at least 67,000 people. More recently, the construction of the Georgia Dome uprooted at least four strong African American church buildings, many more homes, and even a city-run shelter for the homeless. Today we have begun the process to destroy Grady Homes as the latest in the bulldozing of public housing that has included Techwood Homes, Capitol Homes, Carver Homes, etc.; and now we are moving on to the McDaniel-Glenn Project.

Federally subsidized public housing has become practically a thing of the past. And this city has showed no real interest in where its former

In June, the Atlanta City Council approached a vote on a proposed bill called "The Commercial Solicitation" ordinance. This proposed new law would ban panhandling (begging, asking for money or food) in a so-called "tourist triangle"—an area of downtown that includes many of the streets and parks frequented by visitors to our city. (Interestingly, it has been pointed out the "tourist triangle" excludes the city's premier tourist attraction, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change and Dr. King's grave!) The opposition to the panhandling prohibition has been organized on every level. In these photos, Cordell Collier (left) and Ray "Stonewall" Walker (right) collect signatures on a petition at our July 4th picnic. In the top photo, Open Door Community members gather with other activists, homeless people, clergy, and several elected officials outside City Hall to sing, pray and speak to the media. *More on page 4.*

residents might go.

I repeat all of this history as a reminder that homelessness did not fall out of the sky.

Homelessness in Atlanta is a *direct* result of public policy. We planned and systematically carried out the wholesale destruction of affordable housing during the same years that low-end wages were shrinking. The national and local phenomenon of systemic homelessness is a fruit of our political decisions, and now we blame and vilify those who suffer the consequences. We have criminalized the

Atlanta, continued on page 10

Photography by CALVIN KIMBROUGH

July 4 Picnic



Photography by CALVIN KIMBROUGH



The Open Door urgently needs the following items:

COFFEE

**T-SHIRTS
(L, XL, XXL, XXXL)**

SOCKS

This Labor Day, we need help to provide a festive holiday picnic for 500 hungry friends: watermelons, ground beef for hamburgers, potato chips, baked beans, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise

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



July 4 dawned overcast and a bit cooler than it had been, so we were delighted to celebrate our holiday picnic in the backyard of Nine-Ten. Around 500 of our friends enjoyed a feast around many tables with loving volunteers who came from far and near to help us serve. Andrew Quinn (center) drove in from Gray, GA to join community members Danny Solomon (left) and Stanley Kinnard (right) at the grills.

HOSPITALITY

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

Gladys Rustay and Tony Sinkfield: Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator

Ed Loring: Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host, Resident Volunteer Coordinator, Agitator

Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator (with Nelia & Calvin Kimbrough)

Phil Leonard: Administration and Finance, Hardwick Prison Trip, Resident Volunteer Applications

Dick Rustay and Lauren Cogswell: Dayspring Farm Coordinators

Jodi Garbison: Volunteer Coordinator



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

volunteer needs



- People to accompany community members to doctors' appointments

- Groups or individuals to make individually wrapped meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna, please) on whole-wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends

- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on certain Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings

- Volunteers for Monday and Tuesday breakfasts and for Wednesday and Thursday soup kitchens

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



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Donna Bonaparte (right) took a break during the picnic with her sister Debra. Donna spends every Monday night at the Open Door so that she can get up at 4:00 AM to cook grits, eggs and sausage for the Tuesday morning breakfast. We are so thankful for regular and occasional volunteers who help to make our work possible.

Newspaper

Editor: Murphy Davis

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Copy Editing: Julie Martin and Charlotta Norby

Circulation: A multitude of earthly hosts

Subscriptions or change of address: Charlotta Norby

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

Open Door Community

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Your Shoes

By Ed Loring

The feet of the homeless poor changed the way I walk. Like Yahweh-Elohim's Torah, the feet of Lonnie Moss have been a light unto my path. Lying at Grady Hospital, feet exposed, he moaned. His face was filled with the grimaces of the abandoned ones deemed "worthless." His toenails were round and tortuously extended. The downward bend of his toes pushed the horny nails into his foot-flesh.

Mr. Moss was not at Grady for his feet. He was dying of cancer. I had the honor and privilege to accompany him into his long last sleep. He did not rage against that good night. His death went unnoticed for the most part, as did Robert Conklin's execution, which took place as on July 12, 2005. For most of us, the lives and deaths of the homeless poor and the murderers on death row are not even a blip on the screen:

*Out, out brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

William Shakespeare (1564-1616),
Macbeth

Like Jesus, Peter Waldo, and Harriet Tubman, Lonnie Moss lives "inside my bony ribs under my red-valved heart" (Sandburg). He and a thousand other homeless friends live in me and my companions at the Open Door and the Catholic Worker Houses through the cry and outrage of their wounded and tortured feet. We cry, we shake, we tremble. What will become of us in this well-heeled land of ours?

Jesus, The Human One, gives us a couple of basic points about feet in the gospels. First, in John's Gospel, Jesus gives his Radical Remnant followers a special sacrament: footwashing. This sacrament is of particular power and meaning for those who practice "the faith of Jesus" and are not content with simply "faith in Jesus" (to use our friend Pete Gathje's language). Remember the Apostle's Creed, which mentions not one jot or tittle about Jesus' life or faith.

Jesus teaches his foot-following disciples, whose fannies are unfamiliar with pew pads:

After Jesus had washed their feet, he put his outer garment back on and returned to his place at the table. "Do you understand what I have just done to you?" he asked. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you...Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice! (John 13:12, Good News Bible)

This "practice sacrament" roots us in

symbolic acts of solidarity with slaves and poor people. This practice teaches us that we are to be servants to one another, to the people in Iraq, and to our guests. This Work of Mercy roots us with a savior who is misunderstood in most theologies and worship services. Says the cross bearer of the Roman cross, "...the Human One (Son of Man) came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

In the Early Church (28-381 A.D.), a church filled with martyrs, resistance workers, the poor, radicals, and people of means and money, followers of The Way washed each others' feet to their joy and happiness. However, as the Church became Mainline, and Christians became identified with political power, war, and wealth, the bending over, foot-touching, intimate care of the wounds, corns, bunions and unshorn nails was abandoned. Only heretics, sects, Anabaptists, and Primitive Baptists retained the blessing of the one whose Mitre was a rope of thorns. How could the church grow? Spend millions on family life centers? Support war and have the military

pay its chaplains with full church and military benefits? How could the Christian faith in the U.S. influence the President and Congress and wash feet? Absurd. Jesus must have been off that day. A little wacky, or just trying to get TV coverage, as one Atlanta Presbyterian minister rails against Murphy Davis as she publicly opposes the state killing a fellow Christian. Poor Jesus: he just wasn't realistic and corporate-wise. He had only street-smarts. What, *wash feet*? Practice servanthood? Find joy without killing the enemy and sinner? Absurd in a world where the wealthy want to jail and fine the poorest of the poor \$1,000 for begging.

President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry both claim the Cross of Jesus as their way of life. Methodist. Catholic. What the heck? What would American politics be like, if, after each debate, George & John had washed each others' feet?

Oh, I know these sins of which I speak. There are times I wish I could kill the killers. I know the fatigue and weariness of one more poor person

Your Shoes, continued on page 9

My Shoes

By Clive Bonner

Do we need three pairs of shoes?

I left Scotland for the Open Door with three pairs of shoes among my baggage. I had a "good" pair for traveling, an old pair for everyday use, and a pair of sandals for when the weather got hot.

During the Monday breakfast, my first since my return, I was asked to take a homeless man, Antonio, to the shoe closet and fit him up with a pair of shoes and socks.

I was happy do so. The shoes he was wearing were about two sizes too small and very worn. In fact, they were probably doing more harm than if he had been barefoot.

I opened up the closet and left him to select a pair of "new" shoes. (When dealing with the homeless, the word "new" is relative. They would be "new" to him, but they were in fact someone's cast-offs. They would, however, be a lot better than what he was wearing).

I left Antonio in order to fetch the new, clean socks. The socks were new in every meaning of the word. They were soft, clean, and didn't smell. Nobody had ever worn them before. Antonio would actually, for two days at least, have something in his possession that nobody had ever worn before.

When I returned to the shoe closet, Antonio was sitting staring into the closet, where there must have been twenty pairs of shoes, all better than those he had by now taken off his feet.

I asked him what was wrong. He replied that there were none that fit. All the shoes were too small for him! Antonio was despondent and was putting on his old and broken down shoes. Old is not a relative



SALLY ELIOT

word when dealing with homeless peoples' clothing.

Antonio was getting ready to leave. He had accepted that disappointment was his lot. I was unhappy that I had been party to building up his hopes of "new" shoes, only to dash them at the last.

As we talked, I suggested he at least put on the new socks. As he did, I saw the state of his feet. The shoes he was putting back on were so small that his toes had been bent under. Can you imagine how painful every step Antonio took was? He bore the pain of someone standing on his already

sore toes every step he took! Can you imagine this pain, with no hope of relief, every time you sat down to take your shoes off to ease the constant throbbing pain, a police officer moves you on, on pain of arrest?

While talking to Antonio I happened to look down at my shoes. You will remember my three pairs of shoes, the "new," the "old," and the sandals. Well, I was wearing the old pair and they looked about the right size for Antonio. So with no actual conscious thought, I asked him to sit back down and try these shoes on.

Antonio said that he couldn't take the shoes off my feet, and I said, "Why not? If they fit, I want you to have them. You need them more than I do."

I am very pleased to tell you that the shoes fit, and the look of relief of his face was payment in excess of any monetary value of the shoes. With no effort on my part I had had the privilege of, if not clothing the naked, at least of giving Antonio relief from his constant nagging painful feet. ♦

Since the summer of 2000, Clive Bonner has been a commuting volunteer from Annan, Dumfrieshire, Scotland. He was with us this year from May to July.



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

Clive Bonner (see his article on page 3), of Annan, Scotland, first came to us as a Resident Volunteer in the summer of 2000.

Join us as a Resident Volunteer

Live in a residential Christian community.

Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, homeless, and imprisoned.

Join street actions and peaceful demonstrations.

Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base.

You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Phil Leonard
For information and application forms, visit www.opendoorcommunity.org

A Broad Coalition Stands Against Panhandling Ordinance

Compiled by Murphy Davis
Photography by Calvin Kimbrough

When the ordinance was introduced to the Council, Council members were perhaps surprised to find the chambers filled, not only with members of Central Atlanta Progress who came in fine suits and high heels to see "their" ordinance passed, but even greater numbers of the homeless community and their advocates, dressed for the streets.

The public comment sessions were, from the beginning, passionate. The attendance grew through several meetings of the Public Safety Committee and another meeting of the full Council. Two meetings were preceded by a rally outside City Hall with singing, praying, and rousing speeches that reminded us of our need to protect and defend the poorest and most vulnerable among us. We cannot and we will not stand for the poor being vilified and criminalized for their own plight.

The July 18 meeting of Council was standing-room-only. After hearing 53 citizens spoke out against the bill, the Council voted to put the bill aside for another month so that a representative "working group" might talk together and seek a compromise.

We are very happy for this short-term victory, but we know that however you dress up a panhandling ordinance, it will still be an outrage. Our hope is that members of the Council and the Mayor's office will someday confront the real issues homelessness: the need for affordable and accessible housing. And in the meantime, let's suspend the criminalization of the poorest of the poor and stop arrests for "quality of life" ordinances that target the poor and squander public resources on the arrest-jail-court-streets cycle.



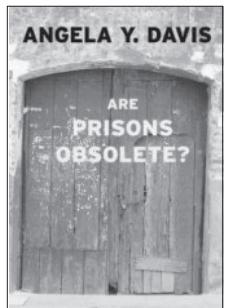
(Top left corner of the page) We rallied at Woodruff Park on June 30 to remember the starvation death of a 25-day old homeless baby two years ago. His loving parents ran through downtown pleading for help, only to have everyone rush away in fear or apathy (see "Who Killed the Baby?" by Murphy Davis, August 2003 Hospitality). With a panhandling ordinance, they could have been arrested on the spot. Former Councilmember Derrick Boazman (top right) and State Senator Vincent Fort joined us.



(Above and left) At the City Hall rally, Murphy Davis prays, Councilmember C.T. Martin speaks and Ed Loring hoops while Dawanda Farmer dances. Atlanta TV, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Associated Press, and National Public Radio have covered these events.

Understanding My Incarceration

Book Review



Are Prisons Obsolete? by Angela A. Davis. Seven Stories Press, New York, NY, 2003. 127 pp.

By Don Beisswenger

(Editor's note: Don Beisswenger is Professor Emeritus at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Last year he spent six months in federal prison for an act of civil disobedience calling for the closing of the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA.)

I am writing this review from the federal prison in Manchester, Kentucky, where I am a prisoner of conscience. I, along with 26 others, was

would you like to receive Hospitality?

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

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

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

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arrested at Ft. Benning, GA in November of 2003. I took six steps onto the army base and was given a sentence of six months in federal prison and a fine of \$1000. I am about half finished with the sentence and have made an effort to understand the prison system. This book has been of great assistance in coming to an understanding of why I am incarcerated and the system under which our prisons operate.

Davis seeks to do two things: first, to reveal the impact of prison on the lives of people on the inside and outside. The ones punished most harshly are often the families. Secondly, she seeks to challenge the "taken-for-grantedness" of prisons as a necessary and an inevitable part of our social system in the United States. She describes the historical development of what we have – a prison-industrial complex.

The purpose of prisons, she suggests, has, over the years, focused on different intentions and goals. The brutal forms of torture and personal punishment such as whipping, cutting off hands, stocks, and so on, were challenged as inhumane. There was a movement by the Quakers to provide space for persons to repent and start new lives. If persons were penitent, they could move on; penitentiaries had small cells, like monasteries. But this did not work for most. There developed broader concerns with rehabilitation – returning persons to society healed. Educational interventions, as well as religious conversions, were part of such operations. There were usually insufficient monies to offer what was needed and offerings were marginal. Punishment through incarceration became a central goal.

(I am incarcerated – pulled out of my life for six months as a form of punishment. It is not aimed at correcting me for anything. There are no offerings to help me grow, and work is so minimal as

to be absurd. I work about one hour a day and wait around about three to four hours a day to be counted.)

Some years ago, John Egerton, a Nashville author, wrote a fine book entitled *Speak Now Against the Day*. Egerton examined the civil rights movement prior to 1954 to ascertain what had been done about racial injustice. What he discovered was that almost everyone seeking change focused on *humanizing* the separate but equal system. They tried to secure equal educational opportunities within the separate school systems. The same applied with equal housing and transportation.

Egerton argued that there were few who spoke *against* the separate but equal laws; almost universally, he says, they tried to negotiate *within* the "separate but" system. (It is interesting to note that even Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Montgomery Association wanted to negotiate within the system at the beginning.) *Brown v. Board of Education* showed that the separate but equal system and structure was wrong and unconstitutional. It had to be dismantled. This meant a new day had begun. The whole system had to be transformed, and we still seek the reality of this transformation.

Davis argues along a similar line. We have tried reforming prisons and it did not work. Racism and sexism are deeply ingrained in the system, as well as homophobia. It cannot be fixed. It is obsolete. Prisons as a way to deal with persons who commit crime are obsolete.

The complication has now been compounded by the fact that prisons are a profitable business. The more prisons, the better. We have over two million citizens in prisons as of this day. The number of people in prison has escalated exponentially. There are nine million persons in prison throughout the world; two million of these are in the United States in prisons, jails, youth facilities, and immigrant detention. The U.S. population is five percent of the world, but we have more than 20% of the world's combined prison population. In the late 1960s there were 200,000 in prison. Now, thirty years later, we have ten times that number locked up.

Are we willing, Davis asks, to "relegate large numbers of persons from racially oppressed communities to an isolated existence marked by authoritarian regimes, violence, disease, and technologies of seclusion that produce several mental illnesses (p. 10)?"

Why has this happened?

During the Reagan administration (1980-88), there was a strong movement to be tough on crime. It was exaggerated in many ways. From this period came legislation leading to certain imprisonment and longer sentences. Power to exercise discretion was taken away from judges. There was also much unemployment and homelessness. The continued racism of the culture meant black persons were targeted. (One in three black men aged 20-29 is in prison, according to a 1995 study. Black women have also been incarcerated in increasingly high numbers.)

Segregation ruled the South until a century after the abolition of slavery. The system of exploitation saw black persons as property, and such views continue even now. After abolition, blacks were still treated as second-class citizens with curtailed voting rights and educational opportunities, and marginal jobs. Lynching was an extralegal institution where ruthless groups took 4,200 lives.

In prison, there is deep racism. We rarely acknowledge the role of race in prison. Is racism so deeply entrenched in the institution of prisons that it is almost impossible to eliminate it? (Here in this prison, there are few black staff and officers, though about 40% of the inmates are black.)

After slavery, Black Codes were established in slave states. Slavery and involuntary servitude has been abolished by the 13th amendment, but not as punishment for crime. The Black Codes defined crime from state to state, and only black persons were convicted.

Following slavery, the southern system hastened to establish new forms of restriction. Vagrancy became a crime punishable by incarceration or forced labor. Convict leasing programs were prominent.

Being in prison has made me aware of how prison fits into our economic system. The close relationship of prisons and corporations has become a pot of gold. The "tough on crime" legislation, which includes long sentences, has led to mass incarceration. More and more prisons are built year after year. And yet the statistics on crime go down.

Why? Why is there no major debate on the enormous increase in incarceration? Why is there no discussion on the important alternatives to prison? Let us begin the debate. ♦



The Hardwick Prison Trip begins (left) with announcements and prayer at the Open Door Community where volunteer drivers gather. We then make our way to the Edgewood-Candler Park MARTA Station and are met by 50 to 85 friends from the Atlanta area, who have been traveling on public transportation, some already for nearly two hours, to meet us for a ride to Hardwick, Georgia.



Phil Leonard (below left), who coordinates the trip with Tony Sinkfield, meets the passengers, checks them in, and assigns them to a van to make the trip down to Hardwick—a two-hour drive east on I-20 and south on 441. In addition to the Open Door vans and cars, we have regular cars, buses, and drivers from Covington First Presbyterian Church, Central Congregational Church, Central Presbyterian Church, and Druid Hills Baptist Church.

Going To Hardwick

Compiled by Elizabeth Dede and Murphy Davis
Photography by Calvin Kimbrough



The young and the old regularly make the journey to the prisons at Hardwick. The youngest passenger ever was eight-day-old Jamaica Holmes, who went to visit her uncle at Scott State Prison. In this photo, one of our passengers buckles up her little one. Most of our passengers would not be able to visit their family members without this monthly trip. It gives us great joy to be a part of helping to nurture and sustain family relationships through a time of imprisonment.

For 24 years now, First Presbyterian Church in Milledgeville has provided welcoming hospitality, offering a wonderful meal and a place to rest before visitation at the prisons. Members of the church are there to host us each month, and welcome the families with an unfailing spirit of love.





84-year-old Carrie Echols shares her wisdom and friendship with coordinator Tony Sinkfield.

Carrie visits her grandson Marlon and has been a passenger on the trip for more than 20 years. She is a sign for us of faith and hope, and we take great joy in the laughter she is always ready to share.

Several times a year Murphy Davis offers a teaching trip to drivers and volunteers, giving a tour of the ten prisons that are at the prison complex in Hardwick, Georgia. She tells about the history of the Central State Hospital, deinstitutionalization, homelessness, the rise of the Prison Industrial Complex, and the dehumanization of prison.

Below, the Church in Chains: one of the sites on the tour is this razor-wire-enclosed chapel at Men's State Prison.



RECOMMENDED READING

**I Shall Not Die:
Seventy-two Hours on Death Watch**
By Billy Neal Moore

The powerful memoir of Billy Neal Moore, detailing his time on deathwatch with only seventy-two hours to live, is a breathtaking saga of one man's journey deep behind the veil of execution protocol. This dramatic and compelling human account of how the same man embodied the worst and best humankind has to offer is a testament to the redemptive power of God touching the human soul - as the grace of forgiveness is granted to one man, giving him his life back again so that he can help others to experience the same forgiveness. This book is a timely and needed social commentary on the nature of crime, and a testament to the glory and power of God's love today as it spreads through each one of us, regardless of our mistakes.

For ordering information, visit www.ishallnotdie.com



By a friend in prison

Although it was an unusually warm March morning, they were entirely overdressed, all in black: long sleeves, bloused pants, gloves, caps, and boots. They were images of the Third Reich's infamous storm troopers, but these were Georgia Department of Corrections Tactical Units. It was an unannounced assault on the state prison at Jackson, home to Death Row.

The agenda was to search-and-seize. The purpose was to isolate-and-intimidate. In the event there was any doubt, we were about to learn a lesson in dehumanization.

Three officers stood before this cell: two men, one woman. I was ordered to strip. The routine is standard. You open your mouth, you lift your genitals, you spread your cheeks, and you cough on demand. Attired in boxers, there was the directive to face the opposite wall. Over and again he barked, "Do you understand?"

I complied; but I did not speak. Nary a word.

Once my hands were cuffed behind my back, the female guard said, "I've got him." She wrapped fingers around the chain that linked the handcuffs. Her other hand was placed on my shoulder. There were taunting questions, silly instructions, and inane comments. She then steered me out of the cell to a security fence. She pressed me against it. "Don't turn; don't talk."

She needed not worry. I looked through the steel and concrete maze until I located a section of sky. I prayed.

Twenty-five minutes later I was led back into the cell. More attempts to humiliate, more, "Do you understand?" More silence.

As the door slammed, I became nauseated.

Personal property is limited: seven books, letters, photographs, underwear, towels, and shoes. The prison issues uniforms and linen. Everything I owned was scattered across the bunk, piled upon the floor, or dumped on the cabinet. No care, no consideration, no compassion, no concern—to the contrary. I believe they reduce us to a subhuman status to justify their subhuman behavior. Their actions were not designed to uncover contraband. They "tossed" the cell to degrade the occupant.

My Bible was beside the toilet. I struggled with tears as I bent to retrieve it. I turned to find them at the bars. I wiped my Bible with a rumpled shirt, kissed the cover, and informed the trio, "God will forgive you."

I had nothing illegal: so they took legal possessions. "You have to take something."

The one permitted coffee cup. A plastic bowl. A couple of sheets. They could not remove my dignity.

I have survived, a bit weaker by the experience. Everyone violated had his own story. Some had pictures soiled, others had papers wrinkled, others lost important papers or addresses of friends and family. The drug dogs pounced here, salivated there. At least the canines were not consciously cruel.

They did not discover weapons, escape materials, alcohol, drugs, or cash—only "nuisance contraband."

This fact tended to fuel their anger.

They condemn me.
I pity them.

Signed me,
A Human Being ♦

Shakedown

Mend Your Ways

By Elizabeth Dede

(Editor's note: Elizabeth Dede, a Partner at the Open Door who works with the Prison & Jail Project in Americus, GA, preached the following sermon at worship on May 22, 2005.)

And now, sisters and brothers, I must say goodbye. Mend your ways. Encourage one another. Live in harmony and peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the holy ones send greetings to you. The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ and the love of God and the friendship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! (2 Corinthians 13: 1-14)

I know that when you heard the reading of the scripture, which begins with, "I must say goodbye," you hoped that this would be the shortest sermon in the world, I would say, "farewell," sit down, and it would be over for the evening.

But I'm going to concentrate on the few sentences that follow, and tell you some stories from our work down in Smithville, which seem appropriate to this reading.

When we first founded the Smithville Neighborhood Freedom Center in 2000, the town of Smithville was still ruled by the white minority. Jack Smith was the mayor, an old, racist white man, tied to church burnings in the 1960s. He saw to it that the police department in Smithville was white, hiring chief Walt Causey, who was later fired for using the city's computers for pornographic purposes and drinking confiscated alcohol while on the job.

Thankfully, after a successful voter registration drive spearheaded by the Smithville Neighborhood Freedom Center, city government in Smithville went through a major change. It is now completely African American, more representative of the 80% African American population in the town.

One of the first things the new administration did was to hire an African American chief of police. Unfortunately, we were not necessarily happy with the choice. Chief Artie Gardner had been a sheriff's deputy in Americus, Sumter County, under Sheriff Randy Howard, a feared and bigoted man. Gardner was a token Black man, who was used to threaten and spy on the African American community. He was not trusted. In one well-known incident, a white sheriff's deputy had been using

his car and his job time for lovers' trysts. To keep from getting caught one time, he concocted an amazing story about being shot at by an African American man in a pick-up truck. Using his own revolver, the deputy shot up his cruiser and his pager, which he claimed saved his life. Gardner was sent into the surrounding African American communities to stop and harass every African American male driving a pick-up truck. He even left Sumter County and went down into Lee County, abusing residents of Smithville, including Charlie Thomas, one of Carrie's brothers. Of course, the story of the deputy in Sumter Country very quickly unraveled, but Gardner's abuse of African American men could not be undone. Thus, there was much distrust of him in Smithville that he needed to overcome when he was appointed chief of police.

One day last summer as Ruby, Carrie, and I were cleaning up the Freedom Center after an afternoon with the children, a young man came rushing in. He asked if he could talk with us. We sat down around the table, and he said, "I'm afraid to go home. Chief Gardner keeps following me. And I think he might plant drugs at my house." What could we say or do in response? We worked it out that the young man would go to stay with his aunt who was at home and could offer him sanctuary. Then we sat around and strategized. For a while Gardner had been coming around to visit us at the Freedom Center, but his visits had stopped, and we no longer felt that we had a connection to the police department. In the course of the conversation, other examples of Gardner's harassment came out. We talked about whether it would be wise to invite Gardner to start dropping by to see us again. Carrie felt strongly opposed to this. She asked, "What if he decided to plant drugs on us here at the Freedom Center?" In the end, we decided to begin a petition drive to ask the City Council to remove Chief Artie Gardner from office.

At the same time, John Cole Vodicka was beginning to firm up plans for the annual Freedomwalk. We were planning to go through Smithville and John wanted to hold a community forum at the Freedom Center. We planned to invite the mayor, the city court judge, the public defender, the prosecutor, the chief of police, and the community to talk about the changes that had taken place over the four years of our work in

Smithville. I told John that we were organizing to remove Chief Artie Gardner, so it might be an interim police chief that we met with. Petition drives take time, so we were still in the midst of the work when the Freedomwalk came around.

The evening forum was an enormous success. Approximately 50 people attended, so the Freedom Center was packed. The judge, the public defender, the mayor, and the chief were all present. Each one had a chance to speak to the community about the role he plays in bringing justice to Smithville. I was especially impressed by the public defender, who said that people in court need a friend, and as their defender, that's how he approaches them.

After the officials spoke, we thanked them for their commitment to justice and for the good work that they were doing to bring freedom and hope to the people of Smithville.

After the chief spoke, I could tell that Carrie Thomas was just bursting with things to say. She stood up and very firmly said, "Artie, we're watching you." It was very much like the warning in 2 Corinthians: "Mend your ways."

Somehow, Gardner found himself on the other side of the scrutiny. He knew that we weren't playing games with him, that we were serious, and that we had the power to organize the community against him.

In the months that followed, Gardner's behavior changed dramatically. Complaints about the police force were reduced, and we were able to call off our petition drive. Gardner began to drop by the Freedom Center again, and we welcome his presence. We now have built up a sense of trust with him again.

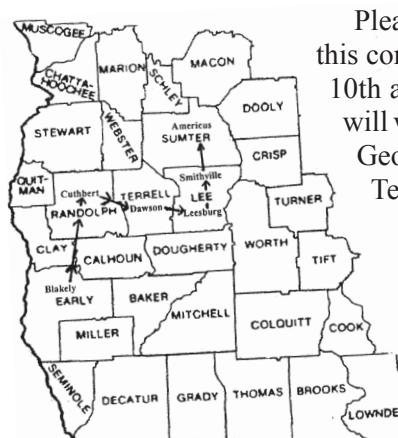
In the new year, the city court sessions were set quarterly rather than monthly because there are so few cases. This is a testament to the drastic reduction in police harassment over the years since the Freedom Center has been in existence.

It is good to be able to encourage one another. In Smithville we're now glad that Artie Gardner is an African American in leadership. We hope to live together in harmony and peace. We pray that the God of love and peace will be with us all. ♦

Freedomwalk 2005

September 11-17

A week-long "Journey for Justice" across six southwest Georgia counties, traveling through Blakely, Cuthbert, Dawson, Leesburg, Smithville, and Americus



Please plan to join the Prison & Jail Project this coming September as we embark upon our 10th annual *FREEDOMWALK*. This year we will walk 95 miles, beginning in Early County, Georgia and traveling through Randolph, Terrell, Lee, and Sumter Counties.

Along the way we will call attention to jailhouse conditions, courthouse oppression, police abuse, and other injustices we witness in this part of southwest Georgia. We will honor those who have gone before us and those who struggle for justice today in these rural Black Belt communities in our region's history. We will celebrate recent tremendous social justice victories that have happened in many of the communities through which we'll be walking.

Plan to join us for all or part of Freedomwalk!

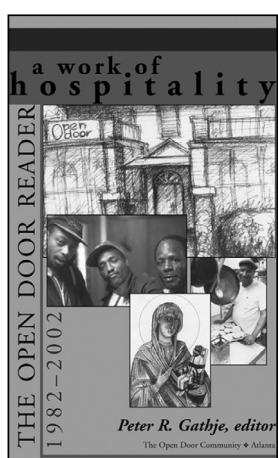
For more information, contact Prison & Jail Project:
P.O. Box 6749, Americus, GA 31709
(229) 928-2080

Your Shoes, from page 1
 asking for justice or a crust of bread that I cannot give. I want to run to the hills and hide forever; or call the police to haul them off and I don't care what happens. Yes, I stand before you the reader, as I kneel before God my Maker, with hands and feet that are dirty and a heart that is deceitful (Jeremiah). I, too, am broken and a breaker. Am wounded and a wounder. I, too, panhandle and beg for a crust of grace....

I am transformed by our footwashing at the Open Door Community. Often, I bend over someone that I have known for years, sometimes for days. Sometimes I bend over someone's feet to whom I have said a harsh word; other times I reach out to a foot that has walked toward me with support and comfort just hours before the enactment of this outward symbol of outward visible grace: the gentle touch, the bathing of feet, the "Yes" of faith and a shared community life.

I take toes, hold a foot, and dip into the warm soapy water. With my hands I wash and caress in an intimate and loving act. Lonnie Moss is with me when I go down on my knees before the ambassador of Christ whose feet I wash. Then, in turn, another comes before me, bends down upon his or her knees, takes one foot at a time, and washes them clean. Joy

GIVE A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader



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

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abounds.

Those of us who are Street Scholars need to wash at least two feet for every ten footnotes we employ. Linking footwashing with footnotes will help bridge the art of biblical and political reflection, writing, and talk to the streets, prisons, and locations of the poor, which will radically alter the theology and practice of the Church. We will discover a lot for truth and a lot less bullpodox.

The Human One teaches us a second point about feet in the gospels. Slaves were the foot washers in Jesus' day. The roads were dusty; so folk got their feet dirty. The roads were rocky; so folk got their feet bruised, cut, and sore. Free people, above the landless day laborers, wore sandals and got their feet washed. Many slaves in Palestine (like many slaves in the Confederate South) went barefooted because they did not possess shoes. The cry of the poor, then and now, is "all God's children gonna have shoes." Shoes, good shoes, are a sign of justice and fair distribution within our communities. I once knew a man who had a closet full of shoes. He died sad with holes in his socks.

The Homeland Church in America, like the FBI and the CIA, is committed to secrecy and what they euphemistically call "confidentiality." But today, in this very article, I want to blow the lid off the primary secret of American Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, and many Jews, too. Jesus was and is a **Radical Jewish Prophet** who reveals an entirely new dimension of Yahweh-Elohim and makes a **New Covenant** with history and the earth. This **Radical Jewish Prophet** turns the messianic expectations of a King David and a theocratic empire upside-down. This Human One, barn-born and bottomed-up, also turns the Mainline Church and Global Capitalism upside-down.

This new "Son of God," "Son of Man," "Messiah/Christ," "Human One," is not who you hear about in the Homeland Church or the Seminaries in North America. Now, in sympathy with the Churches and their educational institutions, let me add quickly, that there is no money, no Prosperity Gospel for Bishop Eddie Long or Creflo Dollar or Jerry Falwell, in telling the truth about this **Radical Jewish Prophet**.

I know a woman who pastors a large church. She would like to

tell the truth, but she has a declining number of members and a large building. What can she do? She wishes to sell the building to a restaurant, which will give 10% of its meals free to the homeless, and then tell the truth from a table filled with food. Her governing board thinks she is as wacky as the foot washing story about Jesus. So her church continues to have a Christmas tree, an American flag, and an Easter egg hunt. At least she knows the truth, and when health care becomes accessible to all in the United States of America, she will jump the sinking ship and admit that there were no WMD's in Iraq – but there is dynamite truth in the Bible.

Jesus was a footwasher. He taught his followers, **The Radical Remnant**, to care about everyone's feet, but to make a preferential option for the feet of the poor. (Rich people can go to a podiatrist.) Pharisees, doctors, and the teachers of the Law (with Priests and Sadducees joining in during the Final Engagement of Holy Week) kept issuing "Bogus Reports" about Jesus being an angry blasphemer who needed to get over being a **Radical Jewish Prophet**. But that is not who Jesus was at all. He loved feet not fists, soap not stones, discipleship community not a court system (John 8).

In one of his parables that sought to overthrow Roman rule and Temple domination, the Human One taught the poor and oppressed in the presence of grumbling Pharisees and Scholars. The parable is often titled "The Prodigal Son" and is interpreted by the beneficiaries of the Powers That Be as the return of a male college student to the fold of the American Way of Life & the Homeland Church after four years of fraternity life (a little autobiography here). The father represents a benign, forgiving God who demands little of us because we are saved by grace, not by doing what Jesus did. This interpretation is used in military sermons and in churches that protect the rights of bankers to take the houses of widows. Most sermons and biblical interpretations are "opiate for the American Consumer." Or they are intellectual gymnastics for scholars, to keep them seated in air-conditioned studies as they write about the heat of hell being an idea that became passé with the discovery of electricity and the Westinghouse Electric Chair for the poor. (Electricity gave Christians a more humane way to kill killers for killing, like the American Medical Association has given the needle to my generation. Those who witness the killing of killers to stop killing in the Georgia Death Chamber get to sit in a cool air-conditioned room and watch. In fact, it just occurred: Robert Conklin was coolly killed in violation of the Hippocratic Oath on the hot night of July 12, 2005.)

I know a woman who pastors a large church. She would like to

At the Open Door Community, one of our forms of fasting or discipleship disciplines is to live without air conditioning. This is because air conditioning increases the distance from the poor, the streets and prisons to such a great distance that even "ears trained by Scripture" (Murphy and Henri Nouwen) cannot hear the cry of the poor in their heart of hearts. Funny, isn't it?

Jesus, unairconditioned, the poor man and condemned criminal, is giving us a teaching for action. This teaching in the Prodigal Son is for liberation and the overthrow of the government as it practices war and death, be it Assyria, Babylon, Rome, or United States of America. This parable is about surplus-as-death and abundance-as-life.

The father did political analysis and experienced compassionate love on the basis of feet. The key to understanding this parable opens the lock when the jubilant father gives his returning son a pair of sandals. The son had become a slave. He was unclean, as worthless as an Atlanta beggar. He was starving in the slop of pigs as hog feces squished between his toes, much like it would with Harriet Tubman some 1900 years later in the Land of the Free.

This "Son of a King" had become like many of our extended family who stand or lie in our front yard several mornings a week. Our friends are dying for work and living wages. When the Employers of Darkness need their broken bodies, they call out sounding like hungry swine and offer starvation wages. That is one reason they are listing to starboard in our yard. 55% of the people who come to the Open Door Community work for wages! Sometimes the "sueie, sueie" is yelled out at a labor pool, sometimes at a "catch-out-for-work-corner." These friends of ours, God's beloved, the poorest of the poor in the Land of Plenty, are considered by business, church, police, and neighbors as worthless, unclean as swine, and a threat to social order. They come running to our home, like the prodigal son, feet swollen, nails twisted, sometimes bare of feet like slaves of ole, sometimes with shoes half rotten and too big or too small. Like the Son in the far country, right here these citizens are deemed as good as dead. "My son was lost, but now is found, was dead but now alive."

The recent killing of "Homeless Mike" in Daytona Beach is simply the latest testimony to the murderous values of a culture that since the Civil War (1861-65 are the war years; the culture war proceeds) has lynched 4,600 people. (It was a stretch of the neck when the U.S. Senate, in the late spring of 2005, apologized for never passing a **Your Feet, cont'd on page 10**

Your Shoes, from page 9

law against lynching.) In June, "Homeless Mike" was assaulted, tortured, and killed by four local teenage boys. When asked, "Why?" they matter of factly and without guile replied, "Oh, he was worthless anyway."

Abu Ghraib. Guantanamo Bay. Iraq. Atlanta. Daytona Beach. Bamberg, SC. Anywhere. Everywhere. All part of our single garment of destiny as the head-shattered, brain-blown King used to preach.

The Parable: When the father saw his son returning home from the wasteland of hell and poverty, the young man was barefooted. He was a slave, a panhandler; he stank from pig slop. Quickly, his dad ordered a pair of sandals for this piece of chattel on the loose. To receive sandals (shoes) was a sign and symbol of redemption, emancipation, and liberation. Shoes were and are an outward sign of a visible grace! Like footwashing. Our God (the father) works for justice and sides with the poor against the greedy; she runs to the broken, burdened and hungry younger brother – while the good, righteous, status-quo serving, but blind and deaf to the cry of the poor, older brother wears his Birkenstocks out. This is "liberation event." This is an account of a fulfillment of God's promise: "Liberty to Captives!" Knowing Jesus as I do, I imagine he would have added that the father washed the son's feet; however, the grumbling and accusations of the Religious Right(eous) and the scholars probably made him cut his story short.

At the Open Door Community, we have a shoe closet for our homeless friends and ourselves. We also have the "Needy Feet Project" (and we need contributions of good shoes and money, please). The "Needy Feet Project" is largely funded by a close and generous activist friend who asks to remain anonymous. Often when a sister or brother from the street corners or the jail house comes to live with us, the first thing this living Image of God wants is a pair of shoes. The liberation of our guests from street or jail to home and community has, over our 24 years, been signified by a good, often brand spanking new, pair of shoes. Thomas moved in last week with canvas rags covering his pained, but strong and beautiful, black feet. By supper time his new running shoes spangled like stars of peace and love in our hand-holding, prayer-laden, supper circle.

Watch out! All God's children gonna have shoes: in Atlanta, Baghdad, Kabul, The West Bank. In come the poorest of the poor, the most wounded by the Mainline Church and the American Way of Life, which, as William Stringfellow saw, is the American Way of Death. Sometimes they are crying for work boots for a promised job if only she can get a pair of steel toes. Most often they hunger for running shoes, for these friends wander 11.2 miles per day to nowhere. Few, like the Prodigal Son, want sandals; some do.

Responding. Tony Sinkfield or Meridith Owensby or an "outside" volunteer like Andy Henderson, a Republican and Bush supporter who loves us and finds Jesus in the flesh of those denied their human rights by public policies, takes our comrade to the shoe closet for shoes. Not her size? Off to the shoe store they go. The signs of the times?! Liberation. The New Society is a comin' in the shell of the old. What joy! Our sister experiences empowerment as though all things have been made new. "There is a crack in everything; that is how the light gets through" (Leonard Cohen). Simple acts of kindness. Lives anchored in the Works of Mercy.

These are resources for structural change by

the Radical Remnant who live, love, and struggle for justice in a social structure that has more than enough shoes and all that goes with getting shoes: housing, food, hope, medical care, education, love, umbrellas, picnics in the park without the police stealing all the meat sandwiches, transportation, play and fun, and a church of servanthood and prophetic practice along with political leadership committed to democracy, and, of course, time and freedom to goose all the old Confederate statues who remind us of our racist, depleted, and horrid history.

Surplus kills; abundance builds good life. We have more than enough shoes, but the most needful among us have little access. This is a deathful surplus. There is more than enough food in our land of the heaviest people in world history. Yet, the Atlanta Food Bank serves 25,000 hungry ones each month. Houses stand vacant while "Homeless Mike" is murdered in the woods by children of affluence whose friends live in Humveehomes, Monster houses, McMansions. The God of the prophets, the God of the Radical Remnant, always stands with the widows, the orphans, and children. She listens to the wheezing and gulps for air from our children who whimper with asthma underneath their kudzu hideouts. How long, O Lord? How long? Will you sit on your fury as Barnacle Marcus builds a \$200,000,000 aquarium? As Coca-Cola builds a worthless museum for people who have no imagination beyond the various hues of sugar water that rots teeth and bottle shapes that make no sound or fury and signify nothing? How long will your fury hold, O God of History and the poor? As Police Chief Pennington's force beats hell out of the poor and takes them to jail cursing, laughing, belittling all the way home? How long? How long?

Jesus calls for a discipleship community, which works for inner and outer transformation. What Dorothy Day teaches us is a "revolution of the heart." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. calls it a "revolution of values." This revolution returns us to the New Testament. To Acts 2 and 4, where the verification of the Gospel and discipleship is that *no one in the community is in need*.

If you hear a theologian, a scholar, a TV evangelist, a Revivalist, your pastor, Jew, Christian, or Muslim, blessing your wealth and war, or limiting ethical concerns to the fear of homosexuality and abortion, she/he is a liar. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about a way of life and a mode of death. It includes footwashing, liberation, peacemaking, courage by taking big risks for the sake of others and truth, and the giving of shoes as a sign of redemption and salvation. There is enough for everyone! The Prodigal Son parable calls us to the revolution of abundance. We must overthrow the Elder Brother of Surplus, greed, and meanness. Where anyone does not have enough, Jesus Christ is denied in the flesh and in the spirit. The Beast of Babylon is the ruler for that day. Unless we wash one another's feet and restructure our society so all God's children have shoes. ♦

Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Atlanta, from page 1

poorest of the poor for their victimization at the hands of our system.

In 1979, my husband and I were a part of a small group of people who started the first free shelter in Atlanta at Clifton Presbyterian Church. Many people thought we were crazy. **"Homelessness?"** Who ever heard of such a thing? Nobody is homeless in this city." The best guess by those who understood was that there were perhaps 1,500 homeless people

on the streets here. It was only a few years later (the early Reagan years) that we had more than 15,000 people on the streets, and growing numbers were intact families, many with small children. Since that time tens of thousands of women, men, and children have lived for short and long periods of time under bridges, in cat holes, in their cars, and in abandoned buildings. Many churches and charities have responded helpfully with meals and emergency shelter, but the primary response of city government has been to criminalize the very existence of people without housing.

Why is it that we act like the problem of homelessness is *homeless people themselves*? Central Atlanta Progress has proposed, and City Hall has often agreed, to the designation of the Central Business District as a "Vagrant Free Zone," a "Sanitized Zone," a "Hospitality Zone." And dozens of "Quality of Life" ordinances have been churned out of here like counterfeit bills: throwing bad money after bad money. And have we ever heard a word about the miserable "quality of life" for those who have no place to call home?

No, I don't think so. Instead, we have consistently treated the poorest of the poor as a threat and a danger. And so, anything concerning the homeless goes to the Public Safety Committee. In other words, we act out a belief that the only way to respond to the homeless poor is with police power. Nobody likes to be accosted or harassed, but how would you and I act if we spent last night on the concrete and hadn't had anything to eat? I think it's time we acknowledged that the poor have as much right to be obnoxious as the rich, and don't we all know some obnoxious rich folks? One well-heeled white downtown loft-owner actually said in this chamber several years ago, "We want *our city* back, so the homeless need to go." So we've had laws against sleeping on a park bench, "remaining" in a parking lot, public urination, "Urban Camping," etc., *ad nauseum*.

This proposed anti-panhandling ordinance is one more stupid, short-sighted, expensive game to avoid the real issue. And the real issue is this: it is not the *behavior* of homeless people that is the crime. The crime is that this city *tolerates* the misery and deprivation of so many of its citizens. For a city of such wealth and excess to sleep at night when somewhere between 6,000 and 20,000 of its women, men, and children live on the streets—hungry, miserable, despised and blamed for their own plight—IS itself a serious crime.

So, dear friends of City Council, the next time that our brothers and sisters from Central Atlanta Progress come to you and want another "Quality of Life" ordinance, please think again. If they really do want these downtown streets for middle and upper class white folks, why not invite them to sit down and talk about what we can do to HOUSE the homeless? Believe me please, nobody really chooses to be out there. Nobody *chooses* to beg for a living. Being poor is the hardest work in the world. Begging is one heck of a hard way to live.

Every time you fall for the same old set of assumptions, you are wasting your time and the city's moral and economic resources. I believe that the primary political and MORAL imperative for this city is to provide affordable housing for its people—access to a safe and decent place to live for every girl and boy, man and woman. Do you think that is preposterous? Well, perhaps we really have lost our way.

Please scrap this silly ordinance, and begin in earnest to act today on a new vision. There is still time for us to make this a safe and livable city for all of our citizens. ♦

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Lauren,

I admire the courage of your "Confessions" ("Confessions of a Cheerleader, by Lauren Cogswell, *Hospitality*, May 2005). It is risky to be that vulnerable, to expose your nakedness. I pray that multitudes will receive your honesty and humility, allowing it to be a catalyst for their own repentance.

As you are aware, Eddie Crawford and Tony Mobley were my friends. I did not know Robbie Hicks or Tim Carr; our paths simply never crossed. I appreciate your acknowledgement of their value. Sometimes, unfortunately, good people do bad things. It can make them criminals and sinners; but not necessarily evil and disposable. Your words eloquently and effectively addressed this truth. You put your heart on the page.

I already knew you to be an exceptional individual. Now I must seek new descriptions. You honored those executed. For this I thank you. I would not dare speak for Tony or Eddie or others; but I can assure you the forgiveness requested has been granted.

I ask our Lord to bless you for your witness and the direct impact here.

Love and gratitude,
A friend in prison

Dear Ed,

I'm sending you a few lines to let you hear from me. I've gone to a faith based recovery center in Houston, TX. We do a lot of Bible study, motivational tapes, meditation, etc. Point at hand: Out of all the ministries in Atlanta, this is the only one I've contacted; I miss those good grits and egg breakfast. I also miss the meaty soups. The hospitality is refreshing as the meals are.

Ed, I want you to know that I love you, and I encourage you to keep up the awesome ministry that God has given you. I love your willingness to stand up for the rights of the downtrodden. I've seen many ministries speak love, but 910 shows it. You've clothed the naked, fed the hungry, housed the homeless, helped the oppressed. I know I'm not the only one who feels this way. It's amazing how you can go to any state and if the person fell on hard times in Atlanta and you mention, have you been to 910? they smile.

Continue the good work. Somewhere in the Bible it says God is not so easy to forget our labors of love. Again, God healed 10 lepers; I came back to thank him. I thank you and your awesome hospitality staff and volunteers.

Michael Curtis
Houston, TX

Hi!

You are doing the loving work of Jesus. Also, do continue to use *Hospitality* as a voice against the ills of our culture and our "leaders." You perceive things that so many other people miss, ignore or are oblivious to. God bless you!

Bill Retoff
Minonk, Illinois

Reading the *Hospitality* April issue was a treat. Thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts and experiences with your readers ("Connections," by Tamar Orvel). Aida will be surprised when she sees her picture in *Hospitality*!

Tamar Orvel
Jerusalem, Israel

Dearest Friends,

Thank you for giving me the greatest gift of all, your concern and friendship. *Hospitality* is such a blessing in this darkness of prison. I'm so glad you can share it with me. It encourages me and gives me hope.

Next month I will be moving to a new prison, and ask you to change my address so the *Hospitality* paper follows me.

A friend in prison

Hello Ed,

I was recently reminded of something Malcolm X said in his biography. He said (paraphrased), "My cell is my dining room, my gym, my library, etc." One of man's greatnesses is revealed in his ability to be stronger than his conditions. Surely, both Malcolm and Abba Moses realized that oh so well.

Why do I love Dr. Martin Luther King? It is not because he was a black man. It is because he was a *man* (like Ghandi before him) who did more than others to transform the consciousness of a nation. Moreso, he was a man with nonviolent convictions and a nonviolent will. He not only espoused transforming the heart through nonviolence, he also shed blood, sweat, and tears during his humanitarian actions. He so loved the world that he gave his life to let freedom run from the tops of Stone Mountain.

You have a happy, healthy, cute-looking grandson. I'm sure that Neely and Kelly are very proud parents. Equally, I know that you and Murphy are very proud grandparents.

Please personally tell Murphy that I said to hang in there and eventually the door will be open. Many people are working to get a bone marrow match for her. She is in my daily prayers.

Shalom,
A friend in prison

I read about Murphy in your *Hospitality* newspaper and wanted to let her know that she is in my prayers. I used to be her customer service rep when I first came to Walton Press five years ago and enjoyed my contact with her. She is a wonderful lady and I just wanted to let her know I was thinking about her.

I also wanted to say that I enjoyed the articles on the front page of the April issue. I think that your organization does an excellent job of serving the community. May God continue to bless you all.

Sincerely,
Patty Sims
Walton Press
Conyers, GA

Ed Loring,

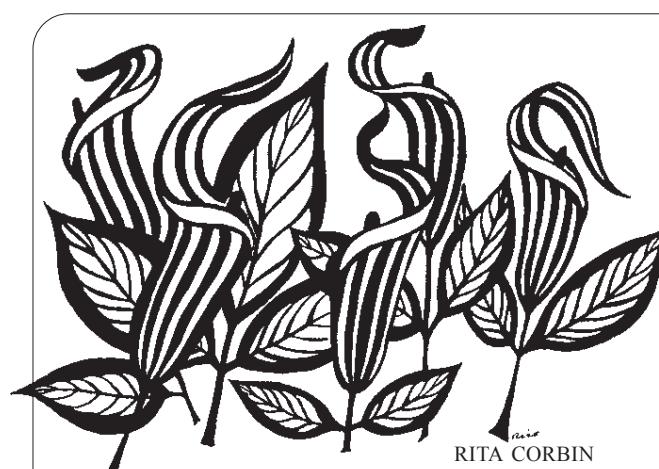
I want to congratulate you for inciting the wrath of Cynthia Tucker (of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), who's usually pretty good but she thinks you're in a time warp. Maybe we are all in a time warp.

You know, one of the things I thought was most peculiar is that the Visitors and Convention Bureau cancelled their mega-million dollar convention not because they thought they were going to get panhandled, but because they thought they were going to get robbed by the Atlanta Visitors and Convention Bureau in the hotels, who do far more damage in terms of millions and millions of dollars that are discouraged from this city because of their behavior.

I think that's just an oxymoron. I guess the time warp they're in is the time warp of greed and blaming the poor for their *own* ineptitude, trying to make this an attractive destination for tourists and other people.

So, Ed, I'm on your side.

Rick McDevitt
Georgia Alliance for Children
Atlanta, GA



What Wondrous Love is This!

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

August 25, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 19, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 22, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

For information on locations, please contact Ann Littlejohn at 404.224.0518 or ann.littlejohn@co.fulton.ga.us.

We are happy to announce that funds are available at the Open Door Community for those who would like to register as a donor (the processing fee is usually \$75) or organize a bone marrow donor drive. If you have questions, feel free to contact Lauren Cogswell, lauren_cogswell@yahoo.com, at the Open Door Community.

Open Door Community Ministries

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

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

Showers: Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

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

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and

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

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

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

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

We are open...

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

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

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

Join Us for Worship!

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

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

August 7 Worship at 910
Amy Cantrell preaching

August 14 Worship at 910
Rev. Ezekiel Holley preaching
(Rev. Holley is the President of the
Terrell County, Georgia N.A.A.C.P.)

August 21 No Worship at 910
On August 21 & 28, our community will worship
at Dayspring Farm as part of our Dayspring
Care week and our annual planning retreat

August 28 No Worship at 910



Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We will meet for clarification on
selected Tuesday evenings
in August 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

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

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

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

FOOT CLINIC NEEDS

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

Needs of the Community

JEANS

men's work shirts

underwear for men

women's underwear

men's belts

socks

EYEGLASSES, READING GLASSES

WALKING SHOES for men and women

(especially 9 1/2 and up)

T-SHIRTS: LARGE, XL, XXL, XXXL

BASEBALL CAPS

VACCUUM CLEANERS

hams and turkeys for our Soup Pot

sandwiches

quick grits

cheese

COFFEE

multi-vitamins

MARTA tokens

postage stamps

MINIVAN IN GOOD RUNNING CONDITION

alarm clocks

DOUBLE BED SHEETS

FUTON SOFA

50-CUPPERCOLATOR

disposable razors

deodorant

vaseline

COMBS

HAIR BRUSHES

toothbrushes

toothpaste (travel sized)

LIP BALM

SOAP (any size)

SHAMPOO (FULL SIZED)

shower powder

lotion (small bottles)

From 11am 'til 1:30pm, Wednesday and Thursday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!