

# HOSPITALITY

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

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March 2006

## A Few Points About Five Points

### The 1906 Atlanta Race Riot: Tracing the Fault Line of Racialized Politics and Contested Space

By **Murphy Davis**

Five Points is the heart of downtown Atlanta. And for most of the history of our city, Five Points and the surrounding area of the Central Business District have been contested space. The victors in the contest have been and continue to be the white elite.

In September 1906, a white mob began a rampage through the city of Atlanta that lasted for four days and nights. “Official” reports say that the riot resulted in the deaths of 12 people, 11 of them black. But observers have estimated the actual death toll to be anywhere from 20 to 250 African American people. The riot also injured hundreds of black men, women and children, caused destruction of homes and businesses owned by black citizens, and it initiated a reign of terror directed toward the black citizens of Atlanta. The riot began at Five Points, the center of the central business district.

In 2006, Five Points remains contested space. By the designs of the ruling elite of the city, Five Points is an anchor in the so-called “Tourist Triangle,” a newly designated zone from which the poor, and especially the black homeless poor are excluded by law when they ask another person for money or any other form of help. Throughout this period of nearly 100 years, this geographic center of downtown Atlanta has been the location of power struggles again and again as the city has navigated social and political changes along the race and class divide. The white elites have never relinquished their power to determine the destiny and complexion of this, Atlanta’s center of gravity.

Around the turn of the 20th century, Atlanta had emerged as the thriving capital city of Georgia. It was known widely as the “gateway” city, uncontested capital of the “New South.” Led by the newspaper editor Henry Grady, Atlanta’s boosters moved beyond the ravages of the Civil War to establish a somewhat progressive climate for black and white economic ventures, and many successful African American churches, colleges, and businesses.

The black business leader, Alonzo Herndon was busily amassing a fortune with his several elegant barbershops and the fledgling Atlanta Life Insurance Company, and Harvard-educated Dr. W. E. B. Dubois was a professor at the Atlanta University and



AGAPE

undisputedly America’s leading Black Intellectual. Walter White, the future leader of the N.A.A.C.P. was a boy growing up in Atlanta accompanying his father who delivered the mail all over the city. His observations of the unprovoked beatings and killings of unarmed black citizens during the 1906 riot shaped his commitment to work for racial justice for the rest of his life.

White rage had festered amid the destruction of the South after the Civil War, and to a large extent, this hateful resentment was taken out on the former slaves. Having lost their “property,” it galled many white southerners to see the freed African Americans come and go freely and to experience them being treated like real *citizens* by the short-lived Reconstruction government. The story of the machinations that brought about an end to Reconstruction and destroyed the political space in which many black public officials had been duly elected are a long and interesting narrative outside the purview of this article. But even though white resentment lingered, Atlanta seemed, by the turn of the century, to have settled

into something of a functional peace between the races. Lynching and other forms of random racial violence certainly continued, and the cruel convict lease system re-enslaved many blacks under the hastily legislated “Black Codes.” But there was a definite growth in the cultural, political, and entrepreneurial presence of the black community as well.

In the summer of 1906, the Georgia Governor’s race was heating up. Both candidates were closely tied to two of the four Atlanta daily newspapers. Hoke Smith was former editor the *Atlanta Journal* and Clark Howell edited the *Atlanta Constitution*. Each paper was soon trying to outdo the other with a racialized politics of fear. David Godshalk’s “Veiled Visions” describes these events that led up to the riot (and the riot itself) as a part of a larger campaign to crush Populism, which in its early years, was an interracial movement. There were other violent white rampages in this era — most notably the Wilmington, North Carolina riot of 1898, and the horrific Tulsa, Oklahoma riot of 1921. The Atlanta vigilantes had surely taken note that the Wilmington riot, which destroyed black businesses, a daily black newspaper, and killed countless victims, but for which there was never a criminal investigation or federal response. In other words, the white supremacists of Atlanta correctly assumed that they were free to carry out whatever violence they wanted against black people and their communities without being held accountable by “the law.”

Tom Watson was elected to Congress from Georgia around the turn of the last century. In 1904 and 1908, the Populist Party nominated him as their candidate for President. He had begun his long political career working for black and white working class unity against big business and big government, and he courageously fought at the side of black farmers.

But somewhere along the line, Watson decided that the black vote was a liability he could no longer afford, and he resorted to vicious white supremacist aims and tactics. In the 1906 Georgia Governors race, he supported the more “liberal” Hoke Smith in exchange for Smith’s support for Negro disfranchisement. This raised the stakes for the political debate and reduced the race to a contest of racial hatred.

The newspapers set a new standard for baiting white fears of the African American community that has

**A Few Points, continued on page 4**

# Displacement 101: Naboth's Vineyard and the Other Atlanta

By Houston Wheeler

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

With the recent forced displacement from hurricanes, we have a clearer understanding about a storms' impact when hundreds and thousands of poor people have to go someplace else. Our hearts and resources go out to them.

But how should we as people of faith respond when leaders *intentionally* plan the displacement of poor people?

The story of Naboth's vineyard (I Kings 21) has been relived in Atlanta for over 50 years, where civic and government leaders have developed renewal plans and want the land where poor people live. The prophet Elijah said that God saw the injustice Jezebel and Ahab did to Naboth. God was angry and punished them.

In the 1950's, the Central Atlanta Improvement Association (now Central Atlanta Progress) mapped out a strategy to move the low-income population, especially the black population, away from the central business district.

The City of Atlanta used mostly federal dollars through the urban renewal, model cities, and federal interstate highway programs to implement this strategy during the 60's, 70's, and 80's. Massive displacement — over 100,000 people — occurred to the east and south of the business district.

In the 90's, with the Summer Olympics coming to town, the city began to direct its displacement strategies toward public housing and the homeless population. To date, eleven public housing communities have been completely torn down by the Atlanta Housing Authority and redeveloped as mixed-income communities using federal Hope VI funding. With these mixed-income communities has come the gentrification of

surrounding single-family housing — that is, the displacement of both low-income rental and owner-occupied housing, and the “re-neighboring” of these communities with higher-income families.

At a recent housing conference, two developers suggested that this gentrification is a sign of the “beloved community” in our midst. Gentrification has occurred at a time when the need for affordable housing is even more critical than ever before.

Proportionally, there is less affordable housing in the city now, than there was in the 1950's. Another significant factor has been the ongoing destruction of single-room-occupancy hotels downtown, which contributed to the numbers of disabled and elderly people, day laborers and other working poor people, who lost housing and became homeless from the late 1970's through the 1990's. In June 1990, members of the Open Door Community and friends engaged in a 14-day occupation of the Imperial Hotel in downtown Atlanta to demand housing for the homeless. More than 300 women, men and children came in from the streets to find shelter, and joined in the political demands. Mayor Maynard Jackson appointed his “secret weapon,” executive assistant Shirley Franklin, to negotiate a settlement to the occupation. The Mayor and Ms. Franklin on his behalf, promised to build 3,500 new units of SRO housing in the downtown area before 1994. Approximately 914 units of single-room-occupancy have been produced by non-profit organizations since the Imperial Hotel promise and this number does *not* account for other SRO's that were closed or demolished after the promise was made. Only 70 units have been produced since 1998.

The (several) Mayors, City Council and Central Atlanta Progress have let it be known that homeless people are, for the most part, not welcome in the city. The Mayor, City Council, and members of Central Atlanta Progress claim to be people of faith. Shouldn't the intentions of these leaders be held accountable by someone? Why haven't church leaders spoken out?

As we've seen from the hurricanes,

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displacement is a life-and-death matter. Is it not equally a life-and-death matter when poor people are *intentionally* displaced? What do you think? What would the prophet Elijah say to the Ahabs and Jezebels of our day? What do you think? Would God be angry at our treatment of the least of these our sisters and brothers? ✠

## 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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CALVIN KIMBROUGH

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# Performing the Gospel Life in Response to the Cry of the Poor

By **Eduard-the-Agitator Loring**

There we were – standing, singing, shouting in the middle of downtown Atlanta in Woodruff Park. The Mayor had sent word that she did not allow people to feed the hungry in Atlanta parks. A new law? No, an executive order. So here we were, in a basic conflict in the heartlessness of so many American cities. The powers that be say “No” to the presence of the poor and the hungry in the tourist and business districts. The power and love of God in Jesus Christ says: Feed the hungry wherever you hear the cry of hunger, whenever you see the human anguish created by a system that oppresses, that refuses to pay a minimum wage that is a living wage.

So, obedient to the God of liberation, we continued to unfold our tables and set up our outdoor dining room in the midst and flurry of noontime Atlanta. The police came, then two representatives from Mayor Shirley Franklin’s office arrived, ties too tight, wing-tips tipping.

“Do you have a permit?” one asked.

“Yes,” I replied, opening my Bible to Isaiah 58:

*The kind of fasting I want is this: remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives. (Good News Bible, 1992)*

The mayor’s man laughed and shook his head. He looked to the police for help as they were ready to arrest us. We said we would not move – that we had to feed the hungry even if that meant going to jail. All of sudden, the phone rang. He moved just beyond the margin of the crowd, then slowly disappeared. Two by two the police followed behind. The Mayor had backed down. We had a feast: Black and white, rich and poor, housed and homeless.

But that was not enough. Eating together, we became hungry and thirsty for justice. We were working to overturn the system that creates hunger and grows obese on the poverty of the poor while waging war in Iraq. God shouts for justice and calls her Radical Remnant to the fore for a revolution of values and a new society in the shell of the old.

Christianity, for the most part, has gone sour, like milk trapped in a refrigerator in New Orleans. Christianity as we know it in the mainline churches is bull pedokey. The Church of the American Way of

Life became the church of the well-to-do and now, with the rise of the Bush Dynasty, the church has become the Homeland Church.

The fire of the Black Liberation Movement in Christianity from Nat Turner (1831) to Jesse Jackson has been banked by the likes of Bishop Eddie Long,

Christ. Names like Anne Hutchinson, Elijah Lovejoy, Harriet Tubman, Walter Rauschenbusch, Dorothy Day, Dan and Phil Berrigan, “Able” Mabel Thomas, Jeff Dietrich and Catherine Morris come shouting toward us as embodiment of “dangerous memory” calling us into a radical “Resurrection Hope.” We are

Radical Remnants, wild and fiery, committed and politically engaged against the domination systems of war, capitalism, prison industries, oppression of women and the belittling of homosexuals. We live on the margins, like Jesus Christ, like Peter Waldo (d. 1209). We live with the homeless and the prisoner. We choose life abundant and the Works of Mercy and the long-haul life demanding justice which is rooted in equality, freedom, enough for all and the Democratic process of government and decision-making. Actually, most of us are socialist, children of Jesus the Jew and Karl Marx with hearts and eyes formed by singer-songwriters, poets, arts, and lovers whose passion is for the common good and the body politic.

At the center of our performance of the Gospel Life stands the Cross. This is the most domesticated and misunderstood of all the religious symbols of all the great religions in the world.

The cross was the Roman instrument of torture and execution: a political expression of terror against dominated people. When Jesus says “pick up your cross,” he means that we are to live a life so full of love and resistance that the Empire will scorn, persecute, jail, and even kill us for our abundant life for others. We must be in the streets, city hall, state legislatures, wherever power is exercised in an unjust way. The means to peace is the struggle for justice.

The nonviolent God and the barn-born donkey-riding Prince of Peace is on the side of the poor. Demonstrating, worshipping, fasting and feasting, raising hell in order to get to heaven, one finds this God and this Gospel in the lives of the poor in and out of prison. We hear this God in the cry of the poor. We touch this God when we touch the oppressed and marginalized. Jesus calls us to a new way of life inside the American Empire. Won’t you pick up your cross today and come along with us? ✠

*Eduard-the-Agitator Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community. This article has been adapted from an article published in Peoples’ Tribune, November 2005, vol. 32, No. 11.*



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*Woodruff Park is the public space at Five Points that has been hotly contested space since it was created in the 1980’s. In these photos, our hungry and homeless sisters and brothers wait in line to be served a meal by the Open Door Community, defying Mayor Shirley Franklin’s 2003 “executive order” that meals cannot be served in public parks. The Mayor said that there are “at least a dozen” “feeding sites” (sic) in easy walking distance from the park. However, when we made a telephone call, no one in the Mayor’s office could give us a list of where someone might find a meal on a Tuesday afternoon.*

whose Republican congregation of 94.2% African Americans follow his heretical Gospel of Prosperity while he drives through the gentrifying Black ghettos of Atlanta in his \$350,000 Bentley automobile.

The Homeland Church of the whites has been despoiled from the start. The right to kill and take the land of the Native Americans was based upon a murderous ethic of white European superiority and the only true Biblical people. Their warrior God said loud and clear: Kill the natives; take the land for my glory, which is your glory.

Then the Prince of Peace, Jesus, The Human One, was turned into a pro-slavery God more like Mars than any Hebrew character. The Christian justification of slavery continues to mar the Homeland Church as it dehumanizes Lesbians and Gays, fights to keep the minimum wage below a living wage, and stands for war against the so-called enemies of the American Empire. A clear way to identify a Homeland Church is look for an American Flag on display in the sanctuary and a Coke or Pepsi machine in the fellowship hall.

But there has always been, and is increasingly today, a Radical Remnant within the Body of Jesus



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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



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*In January, Roseanne Bowen, Religious Education Director at Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Alpharetta, helped her fifth graders hold a blanket drive for the Open Door. With their parents and teachers, they formed an assembly line to bring them into 910. What a wonderful gift it is to have plenty of warm covers to give to our friends who are out in the cold. Thanks to the Holy Redeemer children and all who have contributed blankets, quilts, coats, and other warm clothing.*

**For more information, contact Jodi Garbison  
at [odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net](mailto:odcvolunteer@bellsouth.net)  
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### A Few Points, continued from page 1

never been seriously acknowledged nor disavowed. In more recent years, we have seen this pattern repeated many times. In 1948, South Carolina's Strom Thurmond led the Dixiecrat Party to the stage of national politics in response to President Truman's actions and plans on behalf of civil rights. Richard Nixon used the code language of "law and order" to appeal to white southerners in his successful 1968 Presidential campaign; would it not be fair to say that the "law and order" language was a coded response to the emerging cry for "Black Power?" George Bush, Sr. and his spinmeister, Lee Atwater, followed this well-established "Southern strategy" when they conceived the Willie Horton campaign playing on the same kind of white race-based fears to successfully sweep the Southern vote and win the White House toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. District Attorneys, Judges, and other politicians frequently stoop to the same tactics and are most often unchallenged.

In 1906, the candidates' newspapers deftly and crudely combined rumors and fantasy to "report" a "Negro crime wave." *In the face of a debate about Negro political power, the political powers turned to a vicious fabrication of "black crime," particularly fanning charges of attacks on white women.*

"Mrs. J. A. Kimble is Brutally Attacked By A Black Fiend." was one of many headlines that whipped frightened white folks into a frenzy of violence. As self-appointed posses of up to 500 white men were formed, one newspaper responded, "There will be no court costs if he is found."

Another paper editorialized, "We will suppress these great indignities upon our fair wives and daughters if we have to kill every Negro in a thousand miles of this place." These frantic cries echoed the response to the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831.

As crowds of whites gathered around Five Points in downtown Atlanta, the newspapers cranked out "Extras" — special editions hawked in the streets by newsboys, that numbered the "assaults" and insults borne by the fair flowers of the city. By the 22nd, a hot September day, a mob formed and began to attack and beat lone black men and women, dragged black riders from the trolley, smashed the windows of black businesses, and killed two black barbers in their workplace. Godshalk writes, "three corpses [the two barbers and another black man] were heaped together at the base of the famous Henry Grady Monument [on Marietta Street, two blocks from Five Points], an ironic tribute to the New South spokesperson who had argued in the 1870's and 1880's that racial conflict no longer threatened the South."

A newspaper indignantly reported that one Negro woman dragged from a trolley, fought her attackers "like a savage wildcat." Shall we assume that she should have demurely and politely accepted her fate? Where are the police and the emotional editorials when such crimes are committed against black women?

Mayor Woodward tried to disperse the crowds, promising that the "law" would dispense "justice to the guilty." The mob should go home, so as "not to cause this blot on the fair name of our most beautiful city." The mob heard him out until someone screamed, "After the n-gg--s!" and the crowd ran off with murder in their eyes and brickbats in their hands.

The Governor called out the state militia (many of the soldiers were later witnessed joining in the violence), the city jail filled up, and the segregated emergency rooms of Grady Hospitals overflowed. The mobs spread out to East Point, "Brownsville," and the areas around Clark College and Gammon Seminary (now near the Lakewood area). At the end of four days, the official report counted 11 Negroes and one white officer dead. The actual number of dead and wounded were apparently never

counted, nor the damage to black homes, churches and businesses. A few white men did up to 30 days in the city jail, but no white person was ever tried for murder. Hundreds of blacks were arrested, and 60 were charged with the murder of the one white officer.

At the end of the four days, white and black leaders came together at City Hall and negotiated a fragile peace. White folks moved quickly to try to forget the viciousness of these events. The ugly twisted faces and images of white people beating black people to death in the streets of the city was intolerable to good (mostly) Christian white folks who wanted to see themselves as polite, kind, genteel, and mannerly. It seemed, as they might have said, tacky. Not evil, tacky.

Georgia State University professor Cliff Kuhn observes that the riot had the effect of enforcing and rigidifying racial segregation in the "New South" capital city. Black-owned businesses, located on Auburn Avenue near Peachtree Street before the riot, were forced to retrench. White-owned homes, such as the Martin Luther King birth home, were sold as whites took flight.

Godshalk writes that whites who took part in negotiating the interracial "peace," expected that black leaders would give up "their civil rights and free speech ideals," but they did not. There must be many accounts of how these ideals were taken "underground," shall we say, to find a rebirth in another era. The compromises demanded by white folks, then and now, force more militant poor and working class black people to set aside their demands. And still, white "leaders" expect gratitude when the harshness is even slightly mitigated.

In 1915, the film "Birth of a Nation," the sensationalized story of the formation and motives of the Ku Klux Klan, made its Atlanta premier to weeping, cheering throngs of white Atlanta movie-goers. An Atlanta staging of Thomas Dixon's "The Clansman," on which the film was based, almost provoked a riot in 1905. The Klan itself was revived on the top of Stone Mountain, and by 1924, the national office on Peachtree Road, reported 15,000 members in Atlanta alone. Emory professor, Mark Bauerlein, writes in "Negrophobia," his book about Atlanta:

The former seat of black intellectual life and moderate white Progressivism, Atlanta was now the base of organized racist aggression. Condemned as cowardly, illegal and lower class in 1906, vigilantism emerged in 1915 as community wisdom. In the 1922 mayoral election, leading Klansman Walter Sims defeated James Woodward, while suspected Klansmen won the senate, gubernatorial and superior court judge races.

White supremacy no longer had to discharge itself in a race riot. *Atlanta had become the hub of American Negrophobia* (my emphasis), and that attitude would reign for forty years until another Atlanta-based movement arose to overcome what four days and nights in September 1906 had wrought.

But the "attitude" referred to by Bauerlein expressed itself in continuing actions of white terrorism as well. The KKK thrived in Georgia for many years. In addition to the Klan's continuing influence in city politics, it became an important influence within the police department. To my knowledge, in spite of many years of black leadership in the city's police services, this influence established long ago by the Ku Klux Klan has never been completely exposed nor disavowed. Sporadic terrorism enforced the residential exclusion of African Americans,

**A Few Points, continued on page 5**



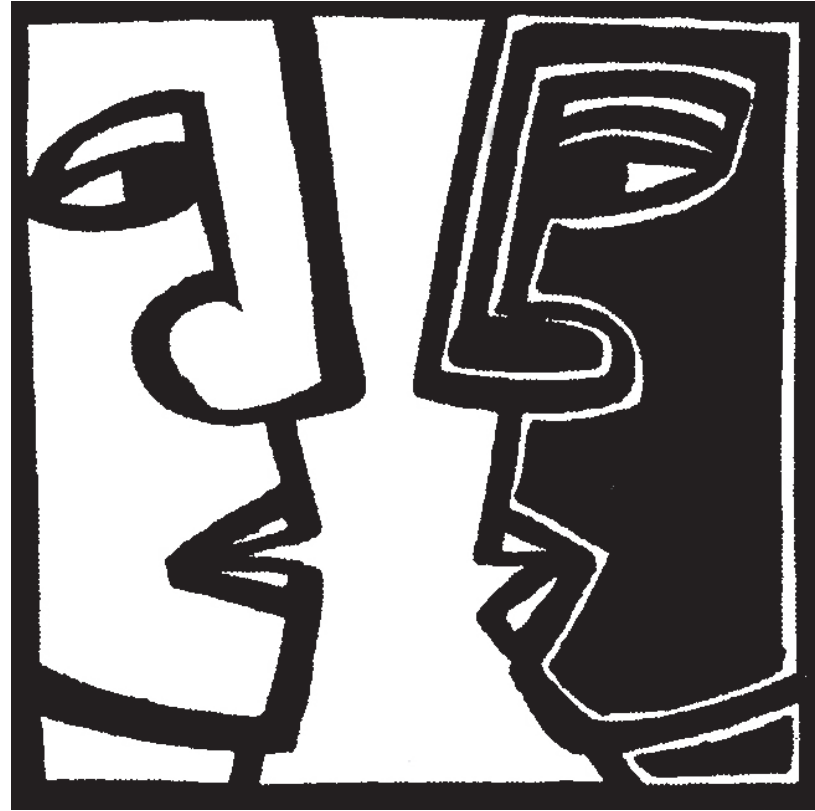
**A Few Points**, *continued from page 4* especially in making it clear that northside Atlanta was “off limits” for blacks who might want to move their homes and businesses out of the proscribed areas. A series of city ordinances in 1913, 1917, and 1922 decreed this exclusion by law. State courts found that each of these ordinances violated the state constitution and, in time, struck each of them down; but by that time, the point had been clearly made. It is a fine and well-used tactic — employed by today’s City Hall — to pass laws that clearly will not pass constitutional muster. The powers know that by the time legal challenges to the law have worked their way through the courts, the law has been *used to establish a pattern* for many months or years, and the governing elite are always ready to start again with a new round of bad law. The point is never this or that particular law. The point is to constantly expand police power and police discretion (under direction from the ruling powers) to exclude “undesirables” from certain areas, arrest and jail them, and move them around as needed.

The raw tactics of white terror also continued beyond the 1920’s. In 1930, when employment became scarce, whites who were fearful of losing jobs to blacks, formed the Order of the Black Shirts to ensure (by means of violence and threats of violence) that even the lowest wage jobs were taken by whites instead of blacks. After World War II, facing rapid population growth and expanding neighborhoods, whites formed a group called the Columbians to terrorize blacks who might try to move into all-white neighborhoods. (see Clarence Stone, “Regime Politics,” p. 11 ff)

There was at least one major community effort to counter this racist aggression. In 1919, a group primarily made up of white and black ministers, formed the Commission on Interracial Cooperation. This group focused on “biracial understanding,” but like the efforts of so many well-intentioned white liberals over the years, the group focused on personal relationships and opportunities. They were probably unprepared, unable, and most likely ignorant of how to engage the *power* of white racism that had permeated not only the attitudes but the economic, social, and political *structures* of the city of Atlanta. In our era there are many such efforts to bring together blacks and whites for worship or community events. These tend to be “feel good” events in which white people can feel that their willingness to share a common experience with black folks demonstrates that racism is dead and gone. But the white bank president and real estate executive can smile through the singing of “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” without being confronted or required to face how their policies have destroyed communities of color and continued patterns of exclusion and segregation. In fact, the very black folks with whom powerful white folks might be glad to share a prayer

and a song would be seen as a civic problem if they began to speak of the ways in which their communities continue to be strangled by the webs of racial and class oppression. The blessed tie might “bind our *hearts* in Christian love,” but it sure has nothing to do with our economic stability or the quality of our neighborhoods or the fairness of our courts.

Because these patterns in the religious community are deeply entrenched, we at the Open Door Community understand the appropriate response to be the *disruption* of “business as usual.” Radical people of faith are not likely to



RITA CORBIN

quickly change the patterns of domination. So we must cry out to give voice to the suffering of victims of racist oppression. How might our history have been different if a few Christian ministers or lay folks had disrupted the meetings and workings of city government until the leaders took action to redress the wrongs of the violence and mayhem?

Atlanta was a center of much of the action of the black led Civil Rights Movement in the 1950’s and 60’s, and it is difficult to describe how much changed in our lives during those years. For our city, like the rest of the United States, schools were desegregated, voting rights were assured, public accommodations were opened to people of all races and racist institutions like Georgia’s county unit system, poll tax, and other exclusionary laws were removed by new federal law, actions of the federal courts, and by other federal mandates. It is very important *not* to say, “Nothing changed,” because a lot changed. But it is also important to say that there is a great deal that did *not* change. The law forced white folks to change many patterns, and most folks eventually did just that. A few, like Lester Maddox, became famous for their racist shenanigans. Maddox chased would-be black customers away from his fried chicken restaurant with an ax-handle,

closed the “Pickrick” rather than obey the law that said he must integrate his business, and went on to become Governor of Georgia on the strength of his violent racist rhetoric and his resistance to every form of racial integration. Retired U.S. Senator Zell Miller was his executive assistant.

But after the 1960’s the socio-political landscape had to change. It became impossible, thankfully, to scream racial epithets in public or print them in the newspaper. Because the laws changed, much public behavior had to change. But much in the hearts and minds of white people remained unchanged. There are no

doubt many reasons for this, but suffice it to say that we left much work undone in seeking to build the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. King. The racist powers that be have shown a remarkable capacity to adapt to and even co-opt the civil rights movement.

Even as they decreed that poor and homeless black citizens be swept off the streets and hidden away in jail, the city “fathers” marketed Atlanta for the 1996 Olympics as the “Civil Rights Capital of the World.”

In the wake of some of the successes of the civil rights struggles, doors opened for some African Americans to move forward in all areas of public and private life. There are today, many more black elected officials, black middle class folks, black people with advanced degrees, and black millionaires. This hardly means, however, that racism has gone away. Rather than disappearing, much of the post-civil rights brand of racism has *adapted* to allow a select few African Americans to break through the traditional social, legal, and political limitations to enjoy some of the privileges of the white elites. But new forms of racism began to bear down especially hard on the black poor. Systemic homelessness, continuing police brutality, and an explosive growth in the numbers of African Americans imprisoned have been two major expressions of American racism in the 21st century. And of course there are many others.

But to understand where we are today, we need to back up a little bit.

In 1941, a group called the Central Atlanta Improvement Association was

organized. The group later was called the Central Atlanta Association, and today we know it as Central Atlanta Progress. The group was made up of the business elites who were major property owners in the central business district (the Five Points area). By creating a small organization separate from the Chamber of Commerce, these white elites saw the opportunity to work efficiently to plan and promote their own interests in controlling the space and direction of downtown Atlanta. (In the mid-1990’s, they even instituted a self-imposed tax to support their own private para-police force called Ambassadors). Since the Chamber was a larger and more diverse group that included small business owners as well, this tighter organization could function efficiently to be “lean and mean” in building a consensus to create enormous benefits for themselves and those who help to promote their agenda.

One of the early initiatives of the Central Atlanta Improvement Association was a program that they called (without embarrassment) Negro Removal. Their stated assumption was that the black community around the edges of the central business district was “bad for business.” Showing an early disposition for sloganeering, they began to proclaim, “What’s good for business is good for Atlanta!” We have spoken of this set of events many times in *Hospitality*, but these are important events to remember and understand in finding our way through the complex interweaving of policies based on racial and class exclusion.

As Houston Wheeler points out on page 2 of this issue, the various programs pushed by the downtown elite “removed” some 100,000 citizens, or about one-fifth of Atlanta’s population. In the demolished areas there were, indeed, areas of “slum” housing where white folks reaped huge profits from their substandard rental properties in black neighborhoods. But these neighborhoods were also thriving black communities that included many homeowners, established businesses, churches and community centers. Old folks in Atlanta today remember growing up in these strong, close-knit communities that fostered a deep culture of art, faith, and resistance. But the MoneyBoys determined that they had to go. The Central Atlanta Improvement Association had come into the Five Points area to establish itself as the bulwark of white businessmen staking their claim to establish the undisputed power of the white business elite. It was their purpose to determine and control the future of the downtown area, producing benefits for its members and any elected officials who would cooperate with their plans.

This re-structuring of the land surrounding the Central Business District left no question about who was really “in charge” of downtown Atlanta. Central Atlanta Progress emerged as *the* major player in the governance and destiny of Atlanta. Elected officials would from

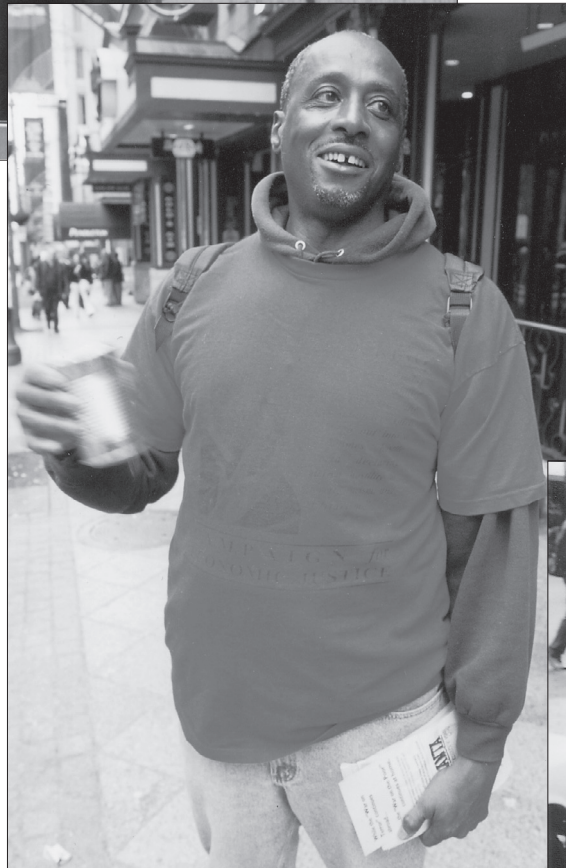
**A Few Points**, *continued on page 9*



# In, Out & Around 910

Compiled by Calvin Kimbrough and Murphy Davis

Photographs by Calvin Kimbrough



*The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday was, as usual, an opportunity to join hundreds of other activists for peace, justice, and human rights in a march through the heart of downtown Atlanta in honor of Dr. King's life and legacy.*

*After serving a delicious special breakfast with our homeless friends, members of the Open Door Community carried begging cups to protest downtown*

*Atlanta's new segregated zone, the "Tourist Triangle" (aka Vagrant Free Zone), in which so-called "Commercial Solicitation" is outlawed. As Christians, we believe and act on the Biblical promise that in the presence of the beggar, we find the suffering presence of the Executed God. Besides, as Peter Maurin often pointed out, begging gives to others "the opportunity to do good."*

*The beggars pictured here are (upper left) Carlton Carmichael, (center) Tony Sinkfield (do you think he looks like an aggressive panhandler?) and (below) Lauren Cogswell and Heather Barger.*

*Faces of those shouting and carrying the banners (above right) through downtown are Katie Aiken, Alan Jenkins (with bullhorn), Nicole Lambelet, John Slaughter, Ira Terrell, Nelia Kimbrough, Suzanne Wakefield, Tony Sinkfield, and Lauren Cogswell.*

*When we reached the M. L. King Historic Site, we formed a human barrier to warn others of the dangers of passing through the area. From left to right holding the signs are Nicole Lambelet, Eric Garbison, Heather Barger, Mike Vosburg-Casey and Donna Bonaparte. (In August, the City Council added the King site to the Tourist Triangle as something of an afterthought. Do you think they're ever able to laugh at themselves and the irony of trying to re-segregate the area around Dr. King's birthplace and tomb?)*







## Warning: Now Entering the Tourist Triangle Atlanta's New Segregation Zone

*During our annual January Dayspring Care week, we welcomed Dee Dee Risher and Will O'Brien and their children Luke and Thea (in the wheelbarrow) who visited us from Philadelphia. Dee Dee and Will, former editors of The Other Side magazine, led us in several days of Bible study of Mark's accounts of the casting out of demons. Dee Dee's poem, "When the Spirit Was Cast Out," is featured in the Poetry Corner on page 8.*



*On Friday, January 13, we celebrated Nelia Kimbrough's 60th birthday with many friends and a great feast. Nelia stands (on the right) after blowing out 60 candles to thank God, her community, and friends for the good life we share. Also pictured (right side of table) Hannah Loring-Davis, David McIntyre, Manfred Hoffmann, Murphy Davis, and Henri and Ana Garbison. (left side of table) Betsy Lunz, Eduard Loring, Elizabeth Dede, and Winston Roberts.*

*Henri's gift to Nelia was a debut performance on his new violin for an adoring audience. (Henri and Ana's mama, Jodi, would like to learn to play along with the children. Does anybody have an adult-size violin that you might donate to the community?)*



TONY SINKFIELD



## 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

## When the Spirit Was Cast Out

By Dee Dee Risher

The first grace is that I remember only  
Eyes so deep I drowned in them;  
Burning hands on my cold skin;  
A voice whispering hoarse  
Across my homeless soul.  
I tried to answer,  
My throat stitched shut with thread.  
He touched me.  
The sky split with fire.

Now, at night, they tell stories of possession  
Around the fire.  
I cannot remember when my body  
Was a place for spirits to pass through.  
I sit apart from them,  
Feeling miracles —  
The air on my skin,  
The quiet dark.  
I rest,  
Breathing long, even.  
Like a child.

*(Editor's note: Dee Dee Risher is the former editor of The Other Side magazine. She and her family continue to live in Philadelphia. Their photograph is on page 7.)*

# Coming Soon !

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

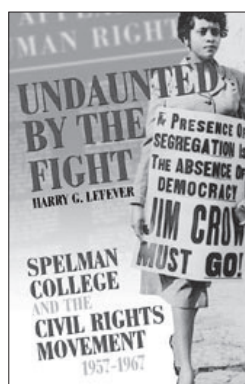


CALVIN KIMBROUGH

## Sharing the Bread of Life

**Hospitality and Resistance  
at the Open Door Community**

## Book Review



**Undaunted by  
the Fight:  
Spelman College  
and the  
Civil Rights  
Movement  
1957-1967.**

By Harry Lefever.  
Illustrated.  
304 pp. Mercer  
University Press.  
\$25, paper.

By Gladys Rustay

Does the name Ruby Doris Smith mean anything to you? Smith's name didn't mean anything to me until I read Harry Lefever's book "Undaunted by the Fight: Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement 1957-1967."

Smith — who stood out for me as the book's heroine — and her Spelman classmates were at the center of Atlanta's civil rights movement. "Undaunted" tells their story.

Classmates described Smith as the glue of the Atlanta Movement, walking protest lines and encouraging folks by whispering to them to remember why they were there.

Born in Atlanta's Summerhill neighborhood, she graduated from Price High School and went on to Spelman. Her baptism into the movement occurred when she was arrested at the State Capitol's lunch counter at a sit-in on March 20, 1960.

In August of 1960, Smith was involved in a kneel-in at First Baptist Church on Peachtree, believing her action to be an appeal to the consciences of Christians. She spoke of being sad and disillusioned when she was told that she needed a reservation to kneel beside her white neighbor. The next Sunday, she and others were turned away from Druid Hills Methodist Church.

Meanwhile, Smith was also involved in a boycott and picket at Rich's department store, where African Americans were refused service in store restaurants. She identified other centers of racism such as the A & P on Edgewood Avenue and the Fulton County Cafeteria. She is credited with working on meetings and plans that led to the successful integration of several downtown facilities.

In her Junior year she was one of several students arrested along with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the Magnolia Dining room of Rich's department store on October 19, 1960.

A year later, Smith and nine other students were arrested at a downtown demonstration in Rock Hill, South Carolina; they spent thirty days in jail. When Smith and cell mate Diane Nash were interviewed about their incarceration, they said that sacrifices needed to be made by many people if there was to be freedom for all.

There are many more of Smith's adventures, but I leave them for you to read about.

"Undaunted" also explains how Charles Merrill Jr., son of the founder of the brokerage firm Merrill Lynch, started a scholarship that allowed Spelman students to study abroad for a year. The scholars spoke of how their experiences overseas had changed them forever. Three of these students became active in the civil rights movement upon returning to Spelman: Marian Wright, Roslyn Pope and Herschelle Sullivan. Sullivan was in Paris during the French-Algerian War, and was exposed not only to racism in Europe but also to student demonstrations.

Early in the Movement, a group of Atlanta University Center students got together to organize a protest. The presidents of the different colleges tried to dissuade them, and suggested as an alternative that the students write a position paper about their grievances and the presidents would see that it got into the Atlanta newspapers. The students took on the challenge and came up with what would be called the Manifesto. It was published March 9, 1960, as a full-page ad. The Manifesto had a wide circulation. Georgia Governor Vandiver said that it was so well written that it couldn't possibly have been written by students. New York Senator Javits later entered it into the Congressional Record with his own positive comments.

Howard Zinn, activist historian and author of the essential "People's History of the United States," was on the Spelman faculty in the early 60's; and "Undaunted" includes stories of his early influence in the students' Movement towards justice. The story of how his contract with Spelman was not renewed is also here.

And there is a great story of a demonstration against a restaurant at the corner of Forsyth and Luckie Streets in Atlanta. Protesters on one side of the street saw hooded Klansmen arrive on the other side. There were call-and-response exchanges between the two sides and tension built up. Dick Gregory, the comedian, had come to support the protestors. He was distracted by a Klansman in a satin Cyclops costume. Gregory walked up to him and, looking him in the eye, asked, "Is that you, Lawd?"

There's so much more. I encourage you to read about it.

I shared this review with our friend Leo McGuire, who told me that as a little boy in the 1950's he often brought packages to his sister at Spelman. Horace Tribble, who volunteers with us every week, grew up in the Summerhill neighborhood, very close to Spelman College and all of the events chronicled here. Our history, the Movement, and the stories in Harry Lefever's book are alive all around us. ♦

*Gladys Rustay is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



**A Few Points**, *continued from page 5* thenceforth and forevermore, come and go. They would be white and black. But the *real* power in Atlanta, Georgia would be situated in the offices, private clubs, and suites of the (still primarily white) business elite.

By the early 1980's, systemic homelessness became a reality in Atlanta and across the nation as the configuration of various policies such as the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, model cities, urban renewal and construction of sports arenas and interstate highways converged to dump ever-growing numbers of Atlantans on the streets. Many of the folks on the streets then and now are descendants of the black homeowners and even business owners in obliterated neighborhoods like Buttermilk Bottom, Summerhill, the Old 4th Ward, etc. When folks lost their homes in those neighborhoods, they lost not only the social, cultural, and political cohesion of the historic neighborhoods, they lost the economic power that went with it. Most of the displaced families became renters, and many of them moved into public housing projects. (And many of these housing projects have now *also* been destroyed. Again, see page 2 of this issue.) The children and grandchildren of these displaced citizens have the inheritance of neither home ownership nor neighborhood solidarity.

With the advent of the Reagan Revolution and the radical agenda to dismantle housing and other forms of support for the poor, the numbers of the homeless hemorrhaged. As the dam broke in Atlanta, our congregation at Clifton Presbyterian Church opened the first free shelter for men in Atlanta in 1979. Dan Sweat, then the Executive Director of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) was the first public critic. In a letter to the newspaper, he denied the existence of systemic homelessness, and he disparaged the silly efforts of the church to respond with charity to the non-issue.

As the numbers of homeless men, women, and children grew, CAP began to propose an endless stream of policies for the city that would once again "remove" the (mostly black) poor from the downtown area. Echoing the language of the post-Civil War Black Codes, CAP in 1984 proposed a "Vagrant Free Zone" from 5 Points north along the Peachtree Street Corridor. Civil rights movement veteran and, then-Mayor, Andrew Young, supported the proposal, but the language of the "Vagrant Free Zone" proved an embarrassment for the Mayor and they were forced to retreat. The next failed proposal was the "Sanitized Zone," and finally the "Hospitality Zone." These proposals represented a series of (thankfully) failed attempts to specifically designate a segregated zone in downtown Atlanta.

Even though the 1980's have been called the "me decade," there was

more civic compassion for homeless persons than we find now. In fact, most Atlantans, black and white were horrified that such a thing as "homelessness" could exist in the United States. This is a far cry from these days when large-scale homelessness is an accepted part of the social/political landscape. Perhaps the closer proximity of the 1980's to the 1960's civil rights era helped Atlantans to be more sensitive to new proposals of segregation.

So the Vagrant Free Zone never became an official policy for the city, but this dream of a downtown free of the poor never went away for CAP. With the help of right-wing Republican funded urban think tanks and their "canned laws" to control and exclude homeless persons, CAP has proposed over the years a series of city ordinances designed to chase, hound, and harass homeless people — always with a thinly veiled focus on destitute black men. While they have supported various "charitable" programs designed to draw homeless people away from the center of downtown, CAP has yet to come forth with a serious plan to address the real problem of homelessness, which would be to rebuild and make available affordable housing — or even to stop the *loss* of the affordable housing stock. Their interests seem to be simply in controlling "their" space in the center of downtown by moving the homeless poor out of sight. They have never been able to explain where "they" are supposed to go. Just go away.

These ordinances are generally referred to as "Quality of Life Ordinances." But you might safely wager that the concern is NOT for the quality of life for poor and homeless men, women and children. It is about the same power to define what is needed for the Quality of Life for the white and wealthy folks who have always controlled the space in downtown Atlanta. And this is a group of people who never want to be disturbed by having to see, smell, hear or in any way encounter poor people — especially poor people who might be disheveled, drunk, high, or mentally ill. The ordinances prohibiting "remaining in a parking lot," "urban camping," "lying or slouching on a park bench" were cranked out of City Council one after another under the direction of CAP.

I recall a particular moment of clarity in the Council's public hearings on the ordinance to prohibit "urban camping." A well-heeled white woman named Kathy Holland came to speak as the leader of the downtown loft-owners and declared, "I lived out in Gwinnett County for a long time, but now *we want our city back*" (my emphasis). She (and others) expressed disgust about (black) men who sat in Woodruff Park (adjacent to Five Points) and urinated in doorways and alleys. There was little embarrassment in saying openly that the streets of the Central Business District still belong to the white elite and those African Americans who cooperate with their agenda. Poor people should get out of "our" way.

**A Few Points**, *continued on page 10*

# 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

## 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 winter  
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. In the winter 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.



## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



CALVIN KIMBROUGH

*We're at Dayspring Farm for Retreat. It's a warm and sunny winter day. The children are playing happily and the clothes are drying on the line. Resident Volunteers Jodi and Eric Garbison kick back and agree: Life is Good!*

*Live in a residential Christian community.*

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

*Join street actions and loud and loving non-violent 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.*

## Become a Novice



ELLEN GRIFFITH SPEARS

*On Sunday, January 22, community members Tony Sinkfield and Lauren Cogswell (left) became Novices in the Open Door Community. Both Tony and Lauren have been with us for more than two years and they continue to share their considerable gifts with friends on death row, the homeless, poor, and the residential community. Novices Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough (right) are happy to keep the trend alive as they prepare to become Partners.*

**Contact: Phil Leonard**  
For information  
and application forms, visit  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)

### A Few Points, continued from page 9

And of course the business community has continually pressed the police to make arrests for the trusty old stand-by laws that prohibit public urination and defecation (despite the fact that the city still has not one single public toilet), criminal trespass (for sleeping in an abandoned building), jaywalking, etc., etc., etc. *ad nauseum*.

In 2005, Central Atlanta Progress promoted an ordinance prohibiting "Commercial Solicitation." This ordinance defines a "Tourist Triangle" in the Central Business District, and says that within this triangle it will be illegal to verbally ask for any kind of help — money or other assistance. Despite the "commercial" designation, the ordinance is, of course, about the poor and homeless. The Mayor quickly signed on, and it was on its way through the City Council when someone who cared for the homeless noticed it and sounded the alarm.

Despite extensive opposition and delay, the ordinance passed the City Council by a vote of 12-3. (For a full account, see *Hospitality* issues from July, August, and September of 2005). Six members of the Open Door Community and one former member of City Council went to jail for protesting the vote. We wailed and screamed in the elegant chambers of City Council. We shouted "Shame!" and we refused to move quickly as the police pushed, pulled, yanked and cursed us at the direction of City Council President Lisa Borders.

The vote that accomplished these long-held purposes of the white power structure represented great suffering that was planned for the poor of our city, and it was no time to "mind our manners" or keep silent. Silence ultimately equals death and oppression. Anyone who keeps silence in the face of such a legislative process *supports* the process. As Thoreau said, "Dissent without resistance *is* consent." And the resistance in the midst of these events must be loud and intrusive. We — the homeless poor and advocates — lost the battle over the Tourist (Racist) Triangle. But we are not gone, nor will we try to forget, as white folks tried to forget the 1906 riot. We hope to be faithful to continue to "remember" all of these violent offenses with our bodies and our cries — always in the hope that we might be transformed together into the Beloved Community.

The Vagrant Free Zone is at last in place. "Negro Removal" is again in full swing. Though they don't say it out loud these days, you can almost hear the echoes of "the presence of poor Negroes is not good for business; and what's good for business — big business, that is — is good for Atlanta." Though it is now called the Tourist Triangle, it is the same thing: a defined portion of the central business district that is and will remain segregated. Now it is not *just* segregated by race, but by race *and* class.

But why did this particular ordinance pass and become law this time around? For one thing, this time involved a great deal more money than had ever been at issue before. Bernard Marcus, billionaire co-founder of the Home Depot Corporation, gave \$280 million of his personal fortune to build a state of the art aquarium in downtown Atlanta. As the aquarium neared completion and its heralded opening date, Marcus, exasperated that the no begging ordinance was being held up in City

Council, declared that "the future of Atlanta depends on the City Council passing this ordinance" to prohibit begging. *The future of the city?* The full power of Central Atlanta Progress was aligned as a clear presence at every meeting of the Council. Speakers were organized. The newspapers carried the party line. The configuration was finally right to influence the passage of the long-held dream of the legal re-segregation of downtown Atlanta, probably because one white man had SO much money that doing what he and his buddies at CAP wanted became the most important issue.

In 2006, most people in Atlanta — black or white — have never heard of the 1906 Race Riot. The MoneyBoys made sure of that in 1906 with their response to the race riot: "What race riot?" (In fact, you can trace the sloganeering of "The City Too Busy to Hate" straight back to 1906, when powerful whites ran black journalists who wanted to tell the story of the race riot out of town, and rewarded black journalists and others who agreed to go along to get along. But that may be a story for another day.) It has not been in our history books or in any of our public accounts of the city's history. But there are mystic chords of memory in the black community. At times, the particular story is probably still told. But not often.

More often, there is just the simple memory that black people must always be on the lookout for random eruptions of white violence. Never relax. It can come at any time. It can come from an innocuous looking white man walking down the street. More often, in these days, it can come from a police officer. So be very, very careful. If my great-granddaddy was lynched or great aunt Lizzie was pulled off a trolley car and beaten almost to death, then those white folks' great grandsons and daughters are still probably carrying some of that same hatred and violence.

But even more than the randomness of white violence, the problem is the *system* of white supremacy that continues to carry the power to define and proscribe the space for the rest of us. This phenomenon is further complicated and obscured now by the fact that a certain few African Americans are allowed and even enticed to enjoy membership among the white elite. The condition is always that these few must turn their backs on the larger number of poor black people and show alienation if not disgust for African Americans who are homeless and isolated as "criminals."

What is at stake are matters of simple justice and participatory democracy. Who is able to walk freely and without fear on the city streets? Who is designated to make the decisions about who is/is not free to come and go in public spaces?

Our Mayor and City Council, like our President and members of Congress, are "freely and democratically elected." But what does that mean anymore? Have we not all-but reached consensus that while we do hold "free elections" for national leaders, our country is "run" by corporate interests? Who is more powerful, the Senate Armed Services Committee or the weapons manufacturing corporations? FEMA or Halliburton?

If it is clear at a national level, why do we have such a hard time seeing it at a *local* level? Yes, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and City Council President Lisa Borders are black. Their being black elected officials is indeed a fruit of the Civil Rights Movement, and in particular the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But WHO HAS THE POWER IN ATLANTA? Is it Mayor Shirley Franklin or Bernie Marcus and Home Depot? Is it the City Council or the Coca Cola Corporation? The elected "leaders" will come and go. The power of the elite is here to stay unless and until we join hearts, hands, and voices to say NO. Again and again and again, NO.

Those with the real power in this and most other American Cities are the mostly white men and some

**A Few Points, continued on page 11**



**A Few Points**, *continued from page 10*

women who run the banks, the real estate industry, the Coca Cola Corporation, Delta Airlines, Georgia Power, and the other important leading economic institutions and landholders. There are, of course, some individual black people who are very wealthy, and those who are in selected leadership positions. But the color of money in Atlanta, Georgia (and the United States as well) is still basically white. And the complex configuration of race and class renders all of this worthy of serious reflection for all those who care about justice and democracy.

Let me put it as simply as possible. Atlanta suffers today from a largely unacknowledged legacy of violent and terrorist white supremacy. We as a city have never truthfully acknowledged this legacy, and we have never repudiated its power nor have we sought appropriate forgiveness, reparations, healing, restoration, or transformation. Instead, we have continued in the age-old racist patterns that assume that the contested space of downtown should rightly be determined by the white ruling elite, and that the poor, especially the black poor should be treated as criminals when they infringe on this space.

Atlanta has been my home for 36 years, and I love this city. There is so much good about Atlanta in all its diversity. It could be so much better as a city if we could share it and care more about the well being of our neighbors than the value of our property. And those values must, of course, be acted out if they are to mean anything at all.

We are approaching the 100th anniversary of the September 1906 Race Riot. It could be an appropriate time to reassess our corporate memory: examining not only the racist terror of the past, but the racist power structures and decision-making process of the present. The race and class hatred in our history is also our destiny as a city unless and until we make corporate, democratic decisions to disrupt the current regime in order to change "the way business is done" in Atlanta and who does the business.

The heat of mob violence has given way to cool polite long-range plans of exclusion. People are not as often being beaten to death in the streets today. We believe ourselves to be too civilized for that. But the cruel deprivations of homelessness are a savage violation against the humanity of the poor. And to criminalize the homeless poor simply because of their status and because the only place they have to "be" is in public space, is nothing less than violent.

Who will control the streets of our city? Who will say who can come and go in freedom? Is there any shred of democracy left among us?

Or does the violence and mayhem of the 1906 white race riot in Five Points still tell us much more about who we are in the heart of our city than we ever wanted to know? ♦

(Thanks for sources for this article include Clarence Stone's "Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988," 1989, Professors Ellen Spears, Todd Moyer, and Eduard Loring, David Godshalk's "Veiled Visions," 2005 [the best new book on the subject of the riot], [www.bookmarkmedia.com/Atlanta1906/site/](http://www.bookmarkmedia.com/Atlanta1906/site/) [Mark Baulein's "Negrophobia" is quoted from this web site], and [www.1906atlantaraceriot.org](http://www.1906atlantaraceriot.org) has a calendar of events commemorating the 100 years, a list of known dead, and a bibliography of several good books on these events. But as usual, my primary source material is from 26 years of living with and among the homeless people of Atlanta, learning from them, and experiencing Atlanta's politics from the vantage point of the streets.)

Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

I thank God for you and your work! I hope this letter finds y'all well and happy and looking forward to the holidays. I am enclosing a little something with this letter that I hope will contribute to my receiving Hospitality — something I look forward to each month.

I often think of you and all of you feature regularly in our prayers here. Although it was five years ago, my time with you as a volunteer is one that continues to encourage and sustain me in my ministry. The Open Door taught me to read the Bible by reading the streets and opening my eyes to the people and situations that Jesus talked about two thousand years ago and is still talking about today.

I have moved from the Northeast of England to the South East of Wales to the community of Penrhys. Penrhys is now a small housing estate perched on top of a mountain, over looking the Rhondda Valley. Way back in the middle ages, Penrhys was a holy site on the Cistercian Way, a place of pilgrimage. Today, Penrhys is still a holy place although it suffers from bad publicity. Some of the news cuttings stress the issues of chronic unemployment, run-down housing and deprivation. 15-20 years ago these things were endemic and people living here had a very hard time of it. However we are able to tell a different story now. Penrhys is a place of new life and hope. There is a little piece of our story at [www.penrhys.com](http://www.penrhys.com) and a little bit more at [www.llanfairpenrhys.co.uk](http://www.llanfairpenrhys.co.uk)

I hope one day I shall be able to bring some of our folk to visit you and maybe you can come and visit us? If you are ever in Britain it would be great to meet and catch up. In the meantime, I hope the enclosed is useful!

Every blessing and lots of love,  
Sian Collins  
Penrhys, Rhondda,  
Wales, UK

(Editor's note: Sian is a minister in the United Reformed Church. She did a summer internship at the Open Door Community when she was a student at Westminster College, Cambridge University.)

...I enjoyed the photographs of the uproar that the Resurrection City Seven staged at the City Council meeting ("Yes, It Is a Crime to be Poor in Atlanta, Georgia!," *Hospitality*, October 2005). Murphy's talk to the Council ("Atlanta, Georgia: Is it Really a Crime to be Poor?," *Hospitality*, August 2005) was the most eloquent, incisive analysis of the problem of homelessness I have ever read. As Sherlock Holmes would say, "Elementary, my dear Watson. They are on the streets because you tore down all their houses." That the Council persists in blaming the victims, after being so clearly shown the truth, is really unthinkable!

I'm profoundly grateful to you and your colleagues who have lived in solidarity with the poor. That's precisely what Jesus did.

With love and admiration,  
Al Winn  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

(Editor's note: Al is a retired Presbyterian Pastor, Seminary President, and Moderator of the denomination.)

I hope these packages find you well and strong. Although we have never met, my daughter works for the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, and she has introduced me to your wonderful organization. I have been receiving your newsletters for some time now, and have tremendous respect for your ministry.

I have pulled together a number of items, mostly clothing, that I am hoping that can be of use to you in your work.

Meanwhile, thank you again for everything that you're doing. I will continue to pray for Murphy's health along with my prayers for peace in our Beloved Community on Earth.

Peace and Goodwill,  
Naomi Price  
Denver, Colorado



SAM RAWLS



# 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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| March 5  | First Sunday of Lent Worship at 9:10<br>Socorro Bernasconi preaching   |
| March 12 | Second Sunday of Lent Worship at 9:10<br>Short Eucharist<br>Connie Curry speaking on<br>"The Continuing Civil Rights Agenda:<br>Pipelines From Schools to Prisons" |
| March 19 | Third Sunday of Lent Worship at 9:10<br>Kyle Thompson preaching  |
| March 26 | Fourth Sunday of Lent Worship at 9:10<br>Nelía Kimbrough preaching   |



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](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

### Medicine Needs List

#### Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic

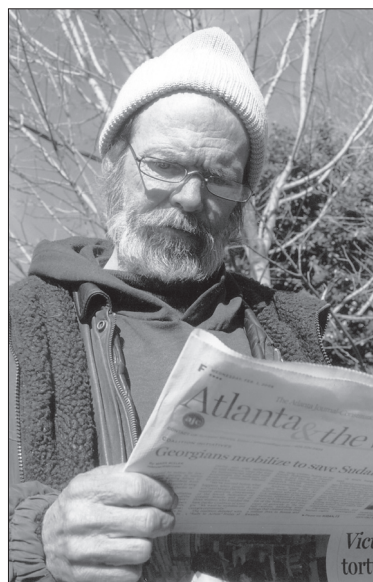
ibuprofen  
lubriderm lotion  
**COUGH DROPS**  
non-drowsy allergy tablets  
**COUGH MEDICINE (alcohol free)**

#### 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

*Randall Cook puts his new reading glasses to work.*

**COFFEE**  
quick grits  
cheese  
sandwiches  
**JEANS**  
men's work shirts  
men's underwear  
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**

disposable razors  
deodorant  
vaseline  
**COMBS**  
**HAIR BRUSHES**  
toothbrushes  
toothpaste (travel sized)  
**LIP BALM**  
**SOAP**  
**SHAMPOO (FULL SIZED)**  
shower powder  
lotion (small bottles)  
multi-vitamins  
MARTA tokens  
postage stamps  
alarm clocks  
**DOUBLE BED**

From 11:00 am until 1:30 pm, 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 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. **THANK YOU!**