

HOSPITALITY

Volume 8 No. 3

April 1989

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The Homeless and Hopeless

by Jeff Dietrich

Editor's Note: Jeff Dietrich is editor of the "Catholic Agitator" and a long-time member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker Community.

It is like a dance--they circle around and around, eyes fixed on each other. Suddenly, a clenched fist finds a landing place, with the slap of flesh on flesh, just below the eye.

Words are flung like weapons. Bodies crouch into defensive positions, as hands quickly reach into pockets. "Show me your stuff, mother-----." Is that just a butane lighter, buried inside of deep pockets, or is it a buck knife--tempered steel that can cut an iron bolt, folded into brass and old-fashioned wood--ready to leap out of dark pockets into deadly flashing action?

"Where's my fifty bucks? You asked me for fifty bucks, and like a man I reached into my pocket and gave it to you. Now I want it back."

"What fifty bucks? You never gave me fifty bucks."

"I'll kill you. I just done thirteen years in the pen, and I don't care if I go back or not. I'll kill you. I am a Crip."



The ambulance from the charity hospital is a familiar sight in front of the Open Door.

He is short, thick-necked and muscular, and his name is Cartoon. That's his *placa*, his street name, his gang name. He has only been coming to our soup kitchen since last June when he got out of Folsom State Prison. Fortunately, he recognizes me, and because he has "respect," decides not to kill anyone while he is here at the Catholic Worker soup kitchen.

At approximately thirty years of age, Cartoon has exceeded by eight to ten years the life expectancy of the average gang member. I don't know why he is called Cartoon, but to me it is a deadly accurate name, suggesting one who is not real, a mere sketching of reality, lacking in substance, merely a facsimile of a person.

Increasingly, the homeless population on Skid Row is coming to resemble Cartoon: young, black and angry. The depths of their despair and alienation finds its roots in a negative self-image, developed from a lifetime of being a non-person, a mere cartoon. Without family, community or cultural roots, they are the victims of institutional racism, poverty and social and political disenfranchisement. They know intuitively as well as from pragmatic experience that the doors to full participation in American community life are firmly locked to them.

They are poor in the economic sense, but more important, they are poor in the spiritual sense as well. They come from broken families, perhaps generations of broken families. If they are not drop-outs, then the diplomas they have received from substandard ghetto schools are worthless. Having been robbed of any authentic cultural experience, their values are derived from the sub-text of Western culture: violence and materialism, instant gratification. They are faithful adherents to the religion of consumerism, and fervently believe the constantly repeated media message that salvation comes through consumption.

If you do not have the money to be a consumer, then you are a non-person, you do not exist. Therefore, you steal, deal, get high or do all three. The values of the streets are the values of mass culture. Reality for these people consists of a constantly stimulated set of expectations, mixed with diminishing possibilities for fulfillment.

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We believe that the problem of homelessness goes to the heart of our problems as a culture, and with our foundress, Dorothy Day, we would say, "The problem is this filthy rotten system." Culture is such an ephemeral entity, not unlike the bacteria in yoghurt or the yeast in bread, that we are not aware of it until it has gone bad, leaving our yoghurt tasteless, our bread flat, and our lives without substance.

Thus we are appalled at the facile pronouncements on the homeless purveyed by a growing cadre of self-proclaimed experts and homeless administrators who seem to imply that the problem might be solved by funding a new program, passing a new piece of legislation or even changing the presidential administration.

No, the problem is deeper, darker, and more profoundly disturbing than any mere public policy change could address. It is not that we would ever want to deny the poor funding for any program designed to ease their situation, but the problem goes much farther. As the homeless population grows in size and degree of alienation, neither the economy nor the once traditional enclave of the marginated, the Skid Row neighborhood, can accommodate them.

The driving force of the culture seems to be the elimination of all those who do not have a degree in computer science, sell Tupperware, or offer courses in aerobics or Tai Chi. The once vigorous U.S. economy that offered unskilled people the opportunity to at least hit the beachhead of the mainstream no longer exists. At the same time, it is these same values that, since the mid-1950's, have systematically eliminated the neighborhoods of the marginally poor. Under the banner of redevelopment, so called "blighted" inner city neighborhoods were upgraded to office buildings, singles bars and gourmet restaurants. In the last two decades, New York City has lost over 20,000 units of single room occupancy hotels. A portion of this sub-standard housing was replaced with low-cost housing, but even low-cost housing is too expensive for marginal people. In the final analysis, the only thing standing between a marginalized person and homelessness is sub-standard housing.

Less than ten years ago, it was possible to rent a Skid Row hotel room for as little as \$50 per month. Today, because of the attrition rate of this housing and the increased demand by the newly marginated poor, these rooms rent for as much as \$400 per month, complete with rodents, roaches and dysfunctional bathrooms at the end of the hall.

The homeless situation is alarming in the extreme. It offers a perverse paradigm of our cultural and economic dysfunction. As the homeless population increases, the new poor, in their alienation, grow less tolerable, and the culture, caught up in its narcissism, grows less tolerant.

We believe the situation is hopeless, given the set of public policy alternatives and the predisposition of the American public. This isn't to say that we indulge in despair



HOSPITALITY is published 10 times a year by The Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of The Open Door and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry

Director

Ed Loring--Correspondence & Resident Volunteer

Co-ordinator

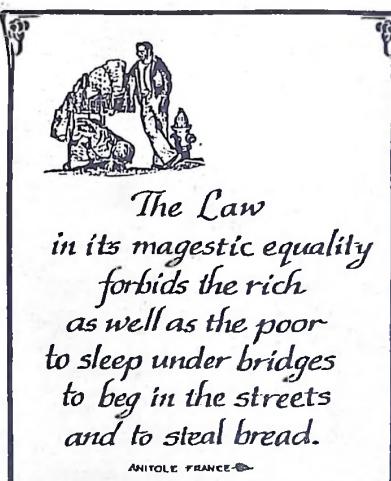
Joanne Solomon--Administrative Assistant
(Volunteer Co-ordination, Hardwick

Prison Trip)

Newspaper:
Editorial Staff--Ruth Allison, Murphy Davis,
Elizabeth Dede, Ed Loring

Layout--Ruth Allison

Circulation--Tim Wyse, Bettina Paul and a
multitude of earthly hosts and guests.



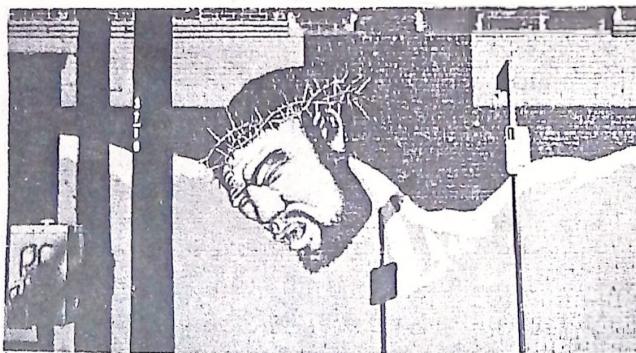
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because our hope doesn't lie in changing public policy or public opinion. Neither do we find hope in the stop-gap measures of politicians, nor in the bureaucratized compassion of administrators of homeless assistance programs. The system cannot be fine-tuned; it is rotten to the core. Rather we find hope in the God of life and the power of personal witness through the works of mercy: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and sheltering the homeless.



It is a scandal that in a nation as rich as ours the works of mercy remain a necessity. Our acts give daily testimony to the emptiness at the center of our culture. We are not naive; we realize that we will not change the world through these simple personal acts of compassion. We do these things not to change the world, but rather, as Rabbi Herschel said, that the world might not change us. The poor will always be with us. Our calling, as followers of Christ, is to be always with the poor.

Jesus did not transform public policy, he transformed human hearts. The daily practice of the works of mercy are merely exercises in compassion. Jesus said that he would take away our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh that we might love. The regular



Mural on wall of L.A. Catholic Worker House

exposure of our stony hearts to the experience of the poor insures that we remain tender to their suffering and travail.

To sit down each day and break bread with the poor, to offer some sense of community and connectedness is to say that even the least tolerable of our brothers and sisters has dignity and worth. All humans are animated with the fullness of life. No one is merely a cartoon.

Ricky Ricardo

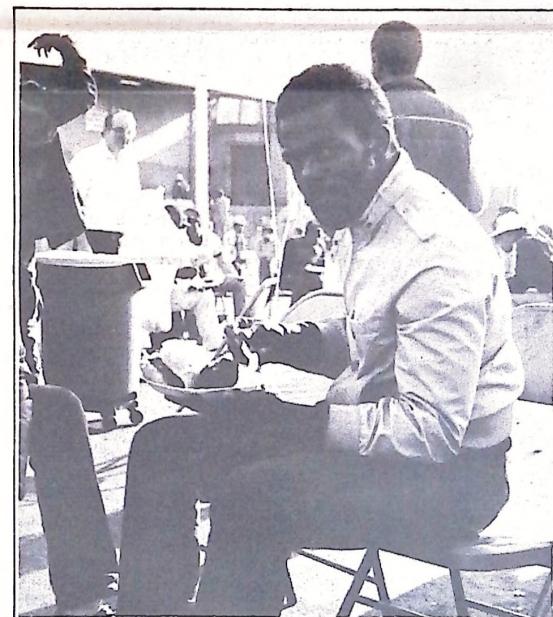
by Becky Foster

Editor's note: Becky Foster was a student at Paideia School when she spent several weeks volunteering at the Open Door last year. She is now in her first year at Williams College.

The first time I saw Ricky
His cast iron black body
Was curled like an infant in front of the door
It was mid-December and raining
But the shiver in his eyes
Didn't come from the cold
His youth and strength were blackened by anger
I was scared he might sit up and kill me
As I stepped over him reaching for the door

From then on I saw him at the Open Door every day
I handed him sandwiches of ham and mustard-mayo mix
Filled his bowls with turkey vegetable rice bean soup
Found him faded pairs of size 32/36 Levi jeans
And poured sugar-milk coffee into cup after cup after cup
I stopped asking if he wanted an extra peanut butter sandwich
So I found him a banana or an apple
Or a stale Royal bagel instead
Always wondering why he was there
Why he waited in the lines with the rest
The tired broken men, the drunks
The lunatics, the ugly women
And never spoke a word
Never joined in their political conversations
Never complained about the weather
Never laughed when Bama's old dog got stuck in the mud

I asked him once what his name was
Ricky Ricardo, he said and I laughed
Not really, I said
Yeah it is, he said
And for the first time I saw, or thought I saw
What might have been a smile
And for a tenth of a moment, maybe less
The shiver in his eyes disappeared



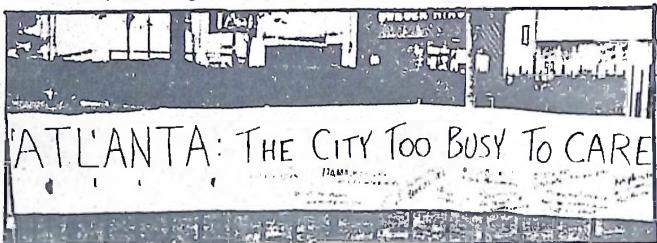
The next day I was in the kitchen cutting turkey for the soup
When Ed told me not to go outside
There was a man in the yard
With a knife in his hand
Threatening to kill anyone who came near
I stared at the turkey
Listening to the sirens stop outside
My throat swelled and my eyes stung with tears
I don't know why or how I knew who it was
But I knew

Then I watched through the window
As Ricky Ricardo was thrown into the back of a police car
Without a struggle.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA. U.S.A. THE FIRST WORLD
by Ed Loring

I come from God knows where
And I'm going to God knows
where
And that where is named
Atlanta, Georgia.
A city
Beautiful and bright
Tall and strong
And like Babylon before us
we want to build scrapers
of the skies
and make a name
for ourselves
to which end
we hide hunger and the
hungry
in jails and prisons
under bridges
and in the attics of abandoned
buildings
as though we had 10,000
Anne Franks waiting in
Terrible fear
that the Secret Police
of Poverty
or the Horrible hunters of
Hunger will come and
force her into the concentration
camps of
Homelessness
and
joblessness
or burn her in the ovens
of poverty
And execute her on the
gallows of
APATHY
Not yet to allow her frail
and rodent-bitten body to
swing slightly in the magnolia-
scented southern breeze
Rather
we spend millions of dollars
and tens of thousands of hours
to engrave an ignominious
epitaph upon her cardboard
grave marker.
"Here lies a lazy one
who didn't try hard enough."
A lazy, worthless person
who at best
Before her homelessness and hunger
Before her alcoholism
Before her whoredom
was a child. . . .
Yes, sometime back then
we were all children.
At least that's something.

Atlanta, Georgia. U.S.A. The First World. □



Blood: Human and Divine

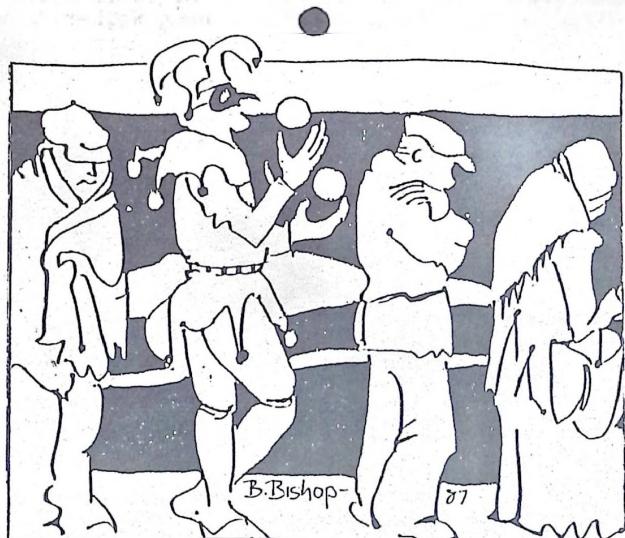
by Ed Loring

Delta Flight 693 hit the tarmac hard. Snow covered the runway--the entire city-- and sheets of bluish white ice spread far from land along the coast of Lake Erie. It was Ash Wednesday, and the memorable mark on my forehead had long since turned from ash to dust. But I sat there very cold and remembered the morning at 910. Darkness, scripture, loved ones huddled together, burning the 3x5 card with my sins and wounds written out, marking and being marked by the cross of Christ. Lent had begun.

Twelve hours later I sat between Curt and Priscilla in the St. Augustine Catholic Church in Cleveland, Ohio. We were there for Ash Wednesday Mass. The Body of Christ is ubiquitous: we share the same body and the same blood in Georgia and Ohio.

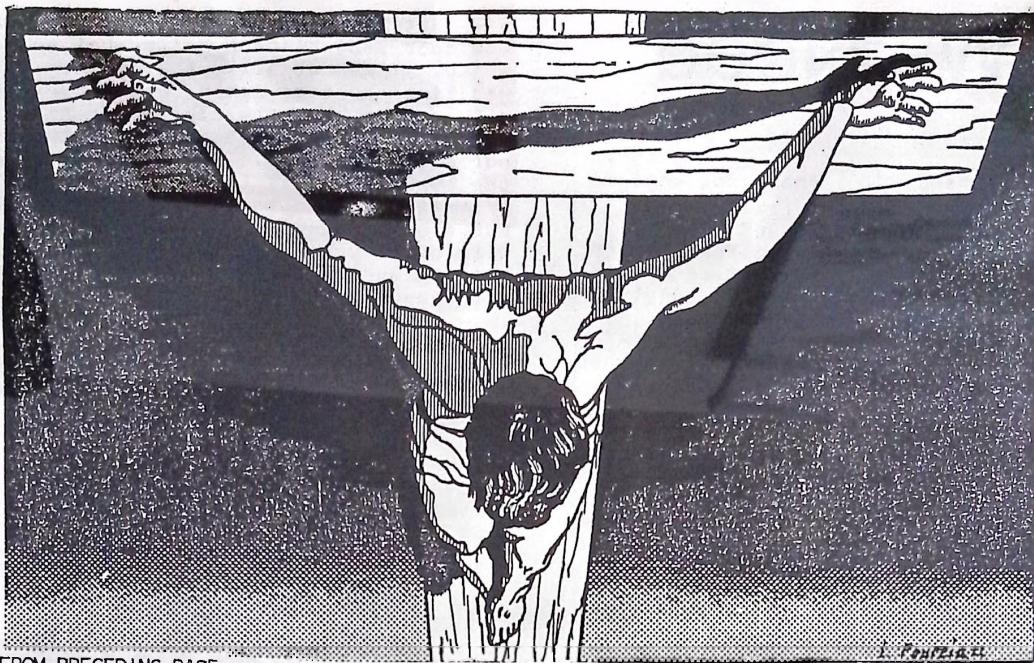
Because I have been so deeply moved by the little charismatic community--The Son of God--I try to make an annual visit to Cleveland. Serving the larger parish of St. Augustine, the community has houses of hospitality for the homeless and works with the church, feeding three meals per day to 175 folk at each meal. A special ministry to the deaf means that folk are always around signing to each other. The church reminds me of a medieval scene with people eating and dancing and scurrying around. I am so thankful for their love and witness to Jesus Christ and for their community with the poor and wounded ones.

It is the next day, and I am further from Mardi Gras and Ash Wednesday than I wanted to



be, but travel severs the past and pushes the mind forward to what's next. Thankful, I'm in another plane and shift from up to down. Once again there is lots and lots of snow and cold wind--Minneapolis, Minnesota. All that snow

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reminds me of July cotton fields in Bamberg County, South Carolina, in 1944. Clay picks me up and takes me to his home. While his wonderful son Nathan played with a wild bear under the table, we ate supper.

The next day is another day! God is good and creation is bright and clean and quiet. Mary Lin drives me into the city to the Walker Art Institute--what a place! I want to run but my injured knee screams. I walk.

(My dad had no father. The man who loved him and helped to raise him was named Walker. Walker was a Black man from the cotton fields who moved up toward the big house when Emmie and Kattie and Harold, my dad, moved in with Tatum. I've always loved the name Walker. Alice Walker notes in *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens* that her family name came from the fact that they walked and walked and walked. Walker had to walk a lot too. He loved my dad, and Daddy always loved Walker.)

Walker Art Institute is beautiful, as are many of the paintings and sculptures exhibited there. I had a grand time, and not long before I left I entered the basement which houses an exhibition of contemporary British sculpture. Just to the left as I entered the large room was a powerful work which grasped me and would not let go. "My Mother as a Mountain" was the title. Bright red was this mountain. . . . Red. . . . A red that splattered me as I slowly walked around the object. Blood. . . . Happy and joyous blood. . . . Creative and warm blood. . . . Agony and painful blood.

Along the front of the mountain there was movement. There was urethra. There was vagina. Mother, mountain, strength, life, blood. After a while I walked on.

My mother, too, is a mountain. I remembered an early name for God: the one who lives in the mountains. Mountains and blood:

both basic to the Holy Word of God--the Bible. For the Hebrews blood was the center of life. Leviticus is filled with laws against eating blood and against spilling human blood. Blood which gives us life in our mother's bodies, brings injury and death when we bleed.

The spilling of blood is a primordial symbol of healing in the life of an individual and community as well. Animals and even humans were sacrificed to the gods. Blood was thrown on the people of faith after the sacrifice to God. And central to our faith is the eucharist: eating the body and drinking the blood of Jesus--the God-human.

Yes, Lent is the remembrance of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Just outside the city, on the garbage heap, he shed his blood for the remission of our sins. Jesus bleeds in order to stop our bleeding.

To heal wounds is to stop the flow of blood of the children in Palestine, the Blacks in South Africa, the 1500 men and women on death row in the U.S.A. The blood of Jesus was spilled upon the earth and is drunk by his followers in order to stop the bleeding of the homeless and the hungry.

Another day passed, even two. . . . Home again. We cannot travel through Atlanta without passing men and women who sell their blood at the local blood banks. They get about \$1.75 per hour for their work. You and I get medicine and the benefits from research done on their blood. We live a little of our lives each day off the blood of the homeless and hungry in our cities. That is one of the root causes of poverty in the U.S.A.

Lent is over now. The snow in Minnesota will be flowing down the Mississippi River toward New Orleans before long. I hear the line forming outside for soup and sandwiches. Let's go. . . .

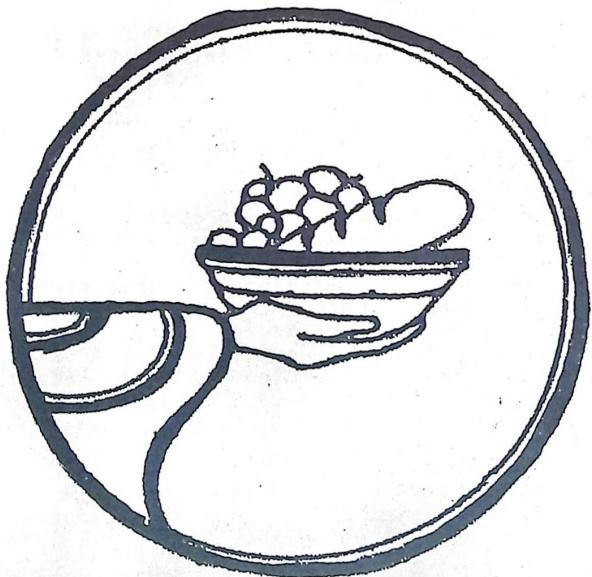
All We Need

by Elizabeth Dede

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

I guess the 23rd Psalm is the most familiar of all Bible passages. Every Sunday School child memorizes it, I'm sure, and it's been put to music hundreds of times. I still remember getting a gold star on my Bible memory chart when I was in the third grade for successfully reciting Psalm 23, and later when I became a Sunday school teacher, I listened to lots of children recite it, too.

But as with most things that we say over and over again, the 23rd Psalm had no meaning to me. Now as I read it, in the Good News version, I find a mystery, a puzzle that I can't quite solve. For me it is true: "I have everything I need." When I look at the goodness of life at the Open Door, I am amazed. Each month in Hospitality we publish a list of needs, and by God's grace those needs are met. And I have learned that we experience God's grace through each other. So we say that we need men's shoes, and the next day somebody comes to the door with a box of shoes. One month we listed our need for grits, and somebody called and said, "I'm going to try to work out a monthly donation of grits," and soon the big packages of grits began to arrive. Two months ago we sent out a letter that listed some major needs that went beyond those that are day-to-day at the Open Door. With an overwhelming response of love and good gifts, we were able to meet most of those needs. As I write this in the green fields of Dayspring Farm, where God has led me, I can surely claim that "the Lord is my shepherd. I have everything I need."



But I am haunted by Terry who comes to the door and whispers her secret need every month. I cannot solve the mystery of William, who time and time again, shows up at our door with nothing but the clothes on his back, and even that gets traded in every other day in our clothes closet. How can I put together the puzzle that is the life of John, a prisoner who had to trade his last two stamps for a bar of soap and now cannot communicate with his daughter? Certainly, Terry and William and John cannot recite the 23rd Psalm with any meaning or truth for their lives.



As I live in community and work with hundreds of people everyday, I have come to believe that the 23rd Psalm has meaning and truth for a select few of us because we are taught constantly to be egocentric. I remember in my catechism class being taught about a personal God, who created and preserved me, who gave me everything I needed and protected me. There was no mention of Terry, William, or John, and no implication that I should be concerned for them. Even the 23rd Psalm is egocentric, so I am happy when we make it inclusive to read, "Lord, you are our shepherd, we have everything we need." I believe that's how God intends the shepherding--it takes care of a whole flock.

After cataloguing all the good things God does for me, Martin Luther in his small catechism goes on to place some responsibility on the believer and recipient of God's goodness: "Therefore, I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey God. This is most certainly true." It seems to me that we can thank and praise God through prayer and singing, but we surely cannot serve and obey God unless we serve the people around us because we know God now in each other.

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So we keep a list of needs, and on it there are food, clothes, and toiletry items so that we can serve and obey God as we serve William and Terry on the streets. And on that list there are stamps and money orders so that we can serve and obey God as we serve John in prison.

But we must not stop at responses to needs lists. If I read the 23rd Psalm correctly, it is a present promise of good things for God's people, and it offers the fulfilment of our needs and even our desires as the real action of a loving and caring God in our lives.

Therefore, we are a faithless, sinful people if we continue to accept the system that allows Terry, William, and John to be so needy. Something is rotten in this nation, and I am amazed that God has not struck us all dead with the poisoning of our own rottenness. Instead, we wallow in goodness, and we know that we have more than everything we need.

I don't know how much patience we can expect from God, but I would suggest that the slow anger is about to explode. Since I know a little bit about the destructive power of explosive anger, I would like to call us to repentance and change. While we still know the goodness of paper, pencil, and stamps--while we still have telephones--let us contact our mayors, our congresspersons, our senators, our president, and tell them that we as taxpayers demand that our money be spent on homes, not bombs. While we still have homes, let us offer them to a stranger. While we still have our health, let us visit a sick person. While we still have our freedom, let us visit a prisoner. While we still have food and drink, let us give it to a hungry and thirsty person. While we still have clothes, let us share it with the naked.



Then all of us will know the goodness and mercy of God everyday of our lives, and we will all dwell in the freedom, justice, equality, and love of God's house. Let us all continue to pray and sing and dance and shout and work for that day.

7

Millie

by Patrick Burke

The Martin Luther King Award for Community Service to the homeless was presented to Millie Deanes during the King Center's week-long observance of Dr. King's birthday. This award was presented to Millie for her work at The Open Door, where she has cooked the Friday night meal for the last seven years.

In January 1982, one month after The Open Door's first meal, Millie offered her helping hand. A Montessori teacher and former Vista volunteer, Millie believes that "all the academics in the world are not worth anything without exposure to how people really live." So she decided to combine her Montessori teaching with volunteer work.

In 1986, the young children in Millie's afternoon class wrote and asked if they could help with the noon-time soup kitchen. When they were told that the soup kitchen was too demanding for such young volunteers, the children persisted and asked if they could come help Millie with the Friday supper. The answer was a resounding "Yes!"

Since then, the children, who are between the ages of four-and-a-half and seven, have been helping every Friday to fix a simple meal of rice, beans, a green vegetable and cornbread.

A member of St. Thomas More church in Decatur, Millie also volunteers with the Holy Trinity night shelter for women and children. When she is not teaching or volunteering, Millie is busy with outside activities involving her class, such as the recent trip to Washington, or training to run in marathons.

It is always a joy to have Millie in our kitchen. Thanks, Millie!



Millie and friends fix the Open Door's famous "Friday night cornbread".

Grace and peaces of mail

Dear Friends,

As I consider the recent article by Murphy Davis on constitutionally-sanctioned and publicly-condoned slavery, what surprises me the most is the surprise I have encountered. Though my world is small and my contacts are limited, I have engaged in a dozen different conversations with the same response: shock shame, and disbelief--"Not in America! Not in 1989!" The reaction has troubled me.

It is as if society's senses have been numbed by the sophisticated nomenclature and calculated deception. With vague titles and fraudulent phrases, our nation has managed to conceal the inhumanity of this institution.

Murphy Davis boldly identified the evil and, in my experience, individuals have been appalled.

I am led to wonder why, in a conscientious country where decency and dignity are promoted as inherent virtues, must the Murphy Davises grab us at the back of the head and rub our noses into the filth for us to recognize its existence and rebel at the stench.

The state of Georgia had a Department of Offender Rehabilitation in 1987. It became the Department of Corrections in 1988. Can you imagine the Department of Slavery for 1989? It won't happen. Those "safe, clean" terms are a buffer; they shield us from the filthy reality.

As I read the Thirteenth Amendment, the operative clause is "except as a punishment."

I can reflect upon fourteen-plus years of incarceration. If pressed to define punishment, I would answer: degradation, humiliation, and disrespect. These are traits synonymous with slavery.

It is an attitude as much as an action. Be it picking beans beneath a brutal sun with an overseer constantly demanding more, or confined to a concrete cage on death row with guards taunting your worthlessness, you feel the callousness, you suffer the dehumanization.

I will not do the disservice of comparing myself with those bound and condemned of centuries past, for as bad as my situation is, theirs was worse. I will readily agree that slavery is alive and well. . . yes, in America, in 1989.

Sincerely,

Jack Alderman
Death Row
Jackson, GA

Dear Murphy and Ed,

Your two articles on prisoners as slaves in the last issue of Hospitality is devastating and shocking. I could hardly believe our USA Constitution has a clause of "state slavery," and that this evil and degrading institution is still being practiced. The Thirteenth Amendment needs desperate and immediate amendment. I hope your two articles receive world-wide coverage.

Meanwhile, I as a poor and hidden monk, pour out my tears and heart-felt prayer that Jesus, the tortured, executed criminal, will bring all of us to Divine Justice, Universal Forgiveness, and Compassion.

A co-sufferer,

Tom Francis
Monastery of the Holy Spirit
Conyers, GA

Dear Friends,

I hope this small amount will be some help. Wish I could do more. I am so grateful for my free trip to Hardwick to see my grandson. If it was not for the Open Door I would not get a chance to see my grandson for I don't have no other way, and thanks again with all my love.

Carrie Echols
Atlanta, GA

Dear Ed,

Thanks for the new issue of Hospitality.

You certainly put your finger on things that need to be put right. Naturally, all this is a vast problem. In your radical and justified criticism, do you have any positive proposals, for not all will respond like Thony Green. Then, my pet peeve, "sin," "wrong," "deeds of violence" are not "mistakes;" the soap operas do not use the word "wrong" ever; it always is just a "mistake." NO it is not, no matter how understandable or widespread a sin is! Then, should the word "punishment" be stricken from the vocabulary?

Now go back to work; stay well and God bless!

Ludwig Dewitz
Decatur, GA

Editor's note: Dr. Ludwig Dewitz is a friend of the Open Door and a retired professor of Old Testament Studies at Columbia Seminary.

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Dear Ed,

Your February article on how Thony Green was "captured" at the Open Door and then sentenced to 481 years in a Louisiana prison brought to mind an incident which occurred in the mid-sixties while I was working at Penn Center in Beaufort County, South Carolina.

Abraham "Sonny" Brown, an African-American who had worked for several years at maintenance at Penn, was seized by two officers while working and taken directly to the Hampton County Jail, some 60 miles away. The charge was failure to continue to pay child support. Sonny explained to us that he paid child support until another male had moved into the home. S.C. had a law which required a person seeking welfare to file suit against the children's father. The charge was escalated since the officers claimed that Abraham was living under the alias of "Sonny."

Hampton County had a notorious reputation in the way that it dealt with African-Americans. I asked a Beaufort lawyer who had performed legal work for Penn to represent Abraham. He was unable to do so, but gave the name of a Hampton lawyer. This person, who had been nominated for a judgeship, indicated he could not practice before the court but that I should just speak to the judge when the case came up that morning.

The court session was rather informal as the cases were being heard. I sat by a parole officer who was to review Abraham's case, and indicated that Abraham had agreed to have a portion of his pay deducted for child support and it would be forwarded by Penn directly to the court. When the case came up, I was amazed that the parole officer said nothing about the proposed financial arrangement. I then spoke up and attempted to explain the repayment. The judge cut me off, asking who I was and where was I from. When I replied that I was from Penn in Beaufort County, he asked again, "Where was I really from?" I assumed that he meant "from the North" when actually I had come from Texas some two decades earlier. Then the judge shouted, "Get out of my courtroom," so I moved from the front to the back of the room, but he repeated the order, "I said 'Get out of my courtroom'." Since I had hoped to assist Abraham, I left because my presence wasn't helping.

Abraham was sentenced to a year at hard labor, unable to assist his children. We later visited Abraham at the segregated frame building. He arrived in the evening in the back of an open truck wearing a striped uniform with leg irons. However, jail time had not dimmed his cheerful disposition and we welcomed him back at Penn following his term in Hampton County.

Obviously neither justice nor compassion were part of the criminal justice system in Hampton County at the time.

Sincerely,
Courtney Siceloff
Atlanta, GA

The Extra Coat in Your Closet Belongs to the Poor

By PETER MAURIN

Share Your Wealth

What we give to the poor
for Christ's sake
is what we carry with us
when we die.
As Jean Jacques Rousseau says:
"When a man dies
he carries
in his clutched hands
only that
which he has given away."

The Wisdom of Giving

To give money to the poor
is to enable the poor to buy.
To enable the poor to buy
is to improve the market.
To improve the market
is to help business.
To help business
is to reduce unemployment.
To reduce unemployment
is to reduce crime.
To reduce crime
is to reduce taxation.
So why not give to the poor
for business' sake,
for humanity's sake,
for God's sake?

With Our Superfluous Goods

Bishop von Ketteler says
that we are bound
under pain of mortal sin
to relieve the extreme needs

of our needy brother
with our superfluous goods.
With our superfluous goods
we build white elephants
like the Empire State Building.
With our superfluous goods
we build power houses
which increase producing power
and therefore
increase unemployment.
With our superfluous goods
we build colleges
which turn out students
into a changing world
without telling them
how to keep it from changing
or how to change it
to suit college graduates

Ambassadors of God

What we give to the poor
for Christ's sake
is what we carry with us
when we die.
We are afraid
to pauperize the poor
because we are afraid
to be poor.
Pagan Greeks used to say
that the poor
"are the ambassadors
of the gods"
To become poor
is to become
an Ambassador of God.

What I Would Like
To Change
In 1989

1. I would like to do more work, and faster.
2. I would like to do much better in spelling.
3. I would like my sister to come over more often.
4. I would like everyone to have money that don't.
5. I wish that there would be no more death penalty.

By: Janice Springer
Davis

The Open Door as a Feminist Community

Because we believe that Jesus came into the world to break down dividing walls, and because Christ acts in our lives to bring reconciliation among all people and with God, we live and work together in ways that resist the powers and the principalities that would sever us from each other and from God. Throughout much of the human experience, women have been oppressed and enslaved and have not been free to enjoy the fullness of life that God promises us through Jesus. The Open Door Community seeks to resist the evil force of sexism and works as a community of justice, living and working for equality for all people.

As a feminist community, we act on our belief that women and men are equal. Therefore, in issues of authority and leadership, women and men share responsibilities. So for example, women have equal share in decision-making; women take primary roles of authority as people who do house duty, lead the soup kitchen, lead the breakfast line, and lead worship. That is, members of the Open Door Community relate to each other in ways that do not require women to be submissive or make them inferior; instead, our life and work together leads to equality among women and men.

One of the most obvious ways to express equality is in our language. We believe that language reflects and forms our reality. Therefore, we practice inclusive language and do not communicate in ways that offend or exclude. In public reading, prayer, speaking, and writing, we include all people by using feminine pronouns, plural pronouns, and images that embrace the whole human experience—that of women and of men. We do not refer to women in ways that belittle or exploit, but in ways that build up and reflect reality. Women are women, not girls, or ladies, or sweethearts, or babies. In addition, God embraces all of us. Therefore, we know God as a loving, gentle mother and as a strong and wise woman. Because we know God in this way, we think about and express God in her feminine attributes. As the world is not composed simply of men, God is not just a he.

Because we live in an imperfect world, we are committed to a struggle with the reality that women are not accepted as equals. As in any struggle, there are often misunderstandings. Often women would like to be simply gentle and loving—to give a hug, or to serve, as a mother might do. However, these actions are frequently misinterpreted: a hug can be seen as a come-on; sewing a button on a jacket can become a subservient act. Therefore, women must be strong and wise: a firm handshake and a benevolent glance can communicate love and concern; teaching a man to sew a button on his jacket can produce equality. And the joy in life in community is that women and men together take on the struggle. We respect each other in our language, we share authority, we do not belittle each other in action, and the men of the community are committed to stand behind the women of the community as we struggle for the freedom of all people.

HOW YOUR TAX DOLLARS ARE SPENT !

This year you and your family will pay hundreds and more likely thousands of dollars in income taxes to the U.S. government.

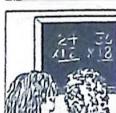
For every \$1 you pay in income taxes:



52¢ will go for military spending.



2¢ will go for housing.



2¢ will go for education.



2¢ will go for food and nutrition.

LIGHTING THE TORCH OF CONSCIENCE

A Joint Effort of
The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty,
The National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice
and
Amnesty International

Join us for a
SUMMIT MEETING

April 14, 1989 Atlanta
Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Change
449 Auburn Avenue, N.E.

9:30-11:30 a.m. Religious Leaders' Summit

1:00-4:00 p.m. Campaign Building Workshop

You are invited to join in to kick off this campaign to abolish the death penalty. To register or for further information, contact:

Frank Spratlin, 404-876-5661
Amnesty International

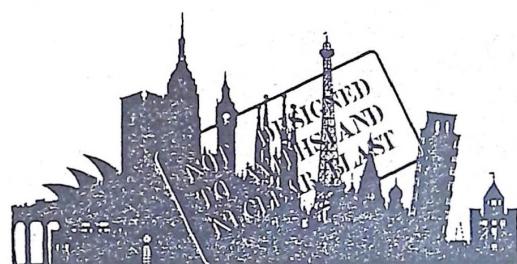
We've got to keep a focus on the death penalty. The death penalty is connected to every other type of oppression and death-orientation and hatred and vengeance that we can concoct in human society. It's not an isolated issue. It's not just a crime issue. It is a question about what we say it is to be human, and about what it means to live in community with one another. As long as life is expendable in the electric chair, life is also expendable in the streets of this nation, in the schools, in the projects, in our neighborhoods. We have an institution that supports the notion of disposable humanity. As long as we maintain it we degrade ourselves as a people and lose our souls.

— Rev. Murphy Davis

The Call for Abolition Death Penalty Awareness Day

Atlanta, Georgia • June 29, 1987

Southern Christian Leadership Conference • Amnesty International USA



A soon to be established Atlanta chapter of the National Organization of Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility is interested in your participation and ideas.

For more information please contact:

Dagmar Epstein-577-9176-10am-4pm Weekdays
Jeanne Mills 753-6265 8-10 AM or PM
Mohsen Salehi 378-1413 After 6pm



FINDING CHRIST AMONG THE POOR & HOMELESS

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker
Summer Internship Program '89

Please send more information on Summer
Program '89 (June 18 - Aug. 13).

Name _____

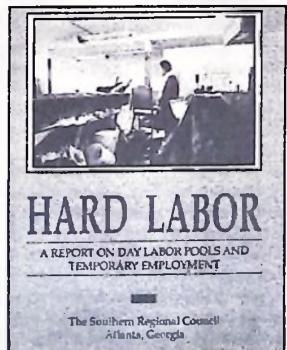
Address _____

City State _____

Phone _____

Return to L.A. Catholic Worker, 632 N.
Brittania St., L.A. CA 90033/213-267-8789.

A
report
from
the
SRC



HARD LABOR is the first comprehensive report on day labor pools, where thousands of unskilled, unemployed, and even homeless men line up for low wages, long hours and hazardous jobs. Send \$10 to the Southern Regional Council, 60 Walton Street, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Housing Now!

A National Call To Action

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has, and it never will.

Come to Washington, D.C. on October 7th to demand an end to homelessness in the United States, and the creation of affordable housing.

In late September, thousands of people from around the nation will begin to march to Washington, D.C. for nearly a week of actions culminating in a massive march from the Pentagon to the Capitol.

October 5, 1989
MARCHERS ARRIVE IN D.C.

October 7, 1989
MARCH FROM PENTAGON TO CAPITOL

10 AM — Leave Pentagon
Noon — Rally on the Mall



HOUSING NOW!
425 2nd Street NW
Washington DC 20001

(202) 347- 2405

Open Door Schedule

WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 1:30 until 6:00pm, and from 7:30 until 8:30pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days. (Both phone & door are not answered during our lunch break from noon until 1:30.) Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are closed until 1:00pm. Please do not make unscheduled drop-offs of clothing, food, etc. on Sunday mornings. Sunday afternoon our phones and door are answered from 1:00 until 5:00pm.

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN--Monday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon; Sunday 2-4pm

BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST--Monday-Friday, 7:15am

SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-11am
(Be sure to call; schedule varies)

USE OF PHONE--Monday-Saturday, 9am-4pm.

SHELTER REQUESTS--Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon.

BIBLE STUDY--Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.

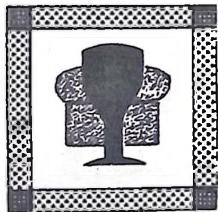
WEEKEND RETREATS--Every 6th Weekend (for our household & volunteers/supporters)--May 12,13,14.

Open Door Community Worship

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5:00pm on Sunday evenings followed by supper together.

Child care available.

Join us!



April 2	Retreat at Dayspring Farm
April 9	Worship at 910 Marie Fortune "Wings of Eagles and Holes in the Earth"
April 16	Worship at 910
April 23	Worship at 910
April 30	Worship at 910 5:00 Eucharist 5:30 Open Door Music Night
May 7	Worship at 910 5:00 Eucharist 5:30 Tandi Geabashe on South Africa
May 12-14	Retreat at Dayspring Farm
May 21	Worship at 910
May 28	Worship at 910

Every sixth Sunday the Community has a weekend retreat outside the city.
This replaces our evening worship at 910 Ponce de Leon Ave.

NEEDS

CAR	COFFEE
CHEESE	DEODORANT
MAYONNAISE	MEN'S COATS
VITAMIN C	HAMS AND TURKEYS
MARTA TOKENS	BONGO DRUMS
POSTAGE STAMPS	POSTAL MONEY ORDERS
MEN'S LARGE SHOES (12-14)	CHAPSTICK

From 11am - 1pm Monday- Saturday, 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 1:00, it would be helpful. Thanks.

Newspaper Requests - If you or a friend would like to receive HOSPITALITY, please fill in this form and return to Willie London at the Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30306-4212.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____