

HOSPITALITY

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

April 1995

"Contract With America?"

(Dr. Gerald Durley is President of the Concerned Black Clergy of Metropolitan Atlanta, Pastor of Providence Baptist Church and on the faculty of Morehouse Medical School. Reprinted here are statements Dr. Durley made recently at a press conference held in Atlanta attended by representatives from the Concerned Black Clergy, the Children's Defense Fund, the Black Community Crusade for Children and several other groups representing concerns of children. Since the press conference, the Balanced Budget Amendment failed by a narrow margin, but attempts to cut the budget of programs for the poor and vulnerable continue. We are glad to bring Dr. Durley's wisdom and insight to the pages of *Hospitality*.)

"The 'Contract With America' will hurt children."

by Dr. Gerald L. Durley

It is appropriate and timely that the Concerned Black Clergy, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Black Community Crusade for Children come together as a voice of one to speak boldly and forcibly about the potential dangers to children, which the "Contract With America" will present in its current state. The "Contract With America" will hurt children. To leave America's children behind is to leave America behind.

The impact on the children of Georgia will be devastating. The Contract With America calls for balancing the federal budget by fiscal year 2002 while cutting some taxes. Experts estimate that doing so without cutting Social Security or defense spending or raising taxes would require slicing all federal expenditures by 30 percent. Children's programs could suffer even more if cuts in such programs as Medicare or veteran's services were limited, as is likely.

Costs might be cut in the following ways:

- by dropping groups of children from programs and putting them on waiting lists;
- by reducing benefits or the quality of services (for example, by ending Medicaid coverage for some health treatments or cutting AFDC grants by 30 percent; or
- by making families pick up more costs through co-payments and cost sharing.

In Georgia alone (Nationwide figures are in brackets)....

- 61,850 (1,992,550) babies, preschoolers, and pregnant women would lose infant formula and other WIC nutrition supplements.
- 288,150 (7,564,550) children would lose free or subsidized School Lunch Program lunches.
- 183,450 (6,604,450) children would lose Medicaid health coverage.
- 143,450 (5,133,150) cases now served by the state child support agency would lose help to establish paternity or collect child support.
- 6,800 (231,100) blind and disabled children would lose Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- 7,950 (209,050) or more children would lose the federal childcare subsidies that enable parents to work or get education and training.
- 5,850 (222,150) children would lose Head Start early childhood services.
- 50,450 (1,920,900) would lose remedial education through Title 1.

These staggering numbers are projected here in Georgia. Additionally, the following nationwide numbers apply:

- 4,258,750 children would lose food stamps.
- 2,861,550 children would lose welfare benefits (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)
- 629,250 children in child care and Head Start would lose Child and Adult Care Food Program meals.

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Nationwide 6.6 million children would lose health care coverage through Medicaid, and 222,000 preschool-age children would lose the chance to participate in Head Start.

We didn't ask you to come here this morning to listen to a long list of projected assaults on the American child, but to call for a defeat of Congressional proposals to unfairly balance the budget on the backs of children, and recklessly dismantle decades of crucial child protection without adequate debate, facts, or analysis of human consequences.

We feel Congress needs to slow down, lay out the facts and consequences of their actions for the American people. Americans may have voted for change but we didn't vote for poverty, homelessness, orphaning children or increased violence. While Americans voted for less government, they did not vote for callous government or to hurt millions of children.

The Concerned Black Clergy and the Children's Defense Fund support responsible change. We believe

government can and should operate more effectively. We believe some programs can be consolidated with accountability to protect children. We believe a thoughtful debate about the role of government at all levels and about congressional reform is overdue. We believe the budget should and can be balanced—fairly. But we strongly oppose tinkering precipitously with the Constitution—our national bedrock—so politicians can avoid making hard, thoughtful political choices and ensuring fair sacrifice from the rich and powerful as well as the poor. It is unhealthy—indeed dangerous—to risk destroying in 100 days or a year the foundation of child investments built painstakingly and incrementally over decades.

We are calling on the new Congress to impose a political moratorium on child bashing and to make a new commitment to placing children's needs above the political fray. Our children's ability to live, learn, and be healthy and safe should not depend on whether Republicans, Democrats, liberals, moderates or conservative politicians are in office.

"While Americans voted for less government, they did not vote for callous government or to hurt millions of children."

HOSPITALITY

MICHAEL SCHWARZ



910 Ponce de Leon

Hospitality is published 11 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, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry

Ed Loring--Correspondence

Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry

Dick Rustay--Group Work Project Co-ordinator

Murphy Davis--Hardwick Prison Trip

Jeannie Lukkar--Volunteer Co-ordinator

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(A \$7 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality**.)

Something To Think About

"...if the richest one percent of Americans were taxed in 1990 under the tax laws that were in effect in 1977, they would have paid \$39 Billion dollars more in taxes in 1990. This money, says a study by the Children's Defense Fund, would be enough to lift every poor child in the country (there are 12.6 million of them) out of poverty."



LEO MCGUIRE

Here's To Your Health, Atlanta

by Jim Beaty

Editor's note: This is an article written by Jim Beaty, Executive Director of the Task Force For The Homeless in Atlanta, requested by Atlanta City Council Chairman, Marvin Arrington, for publication in Mr. Arrington's newsletter. The article has not appeared in the newsletter.

At a banquet a prominent politician asked me to write a piece on why we should help homeless people. I went back to my table and toasted the health of that man and our good city. Helping homeless people is primarily a health issue. By "health issue" I do not refer to health care for the populace in general or medicine for homeless people in particular. I refer to the spiritual health of us all.

Atlanta has been called by some Atlantans "a City too busy to hate." Writer Elie Wiesel warns that the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. Our indifference to economic slavery in the 1990's differs little from the hatred that fostered literal slavery in the 1860's, if human beings are the victims. While pleading for emancipation, Frederick Douglass said, "Any attempt now to separate the freedom of the slave from the victory of the government and any attempt to secure the peace of the whites while leaving the Blacks in chains will be labor lost." Let Atlantans learn from that wise man.

Before we know it the 1996 Olympics will be here. In all likelihood another World Series or two. As we count our successes dare we separate them from citizens of our city who eat in shelters and sleep anywhere they can find? Separating our comfort from their pain is labor lost.

As we become a "world-class" city economically, let us be a great city practicing compassion for all our people. One third of the persons who seek shelter through the Task Force are turned away because we lack occupancy space. The most accurate barometer of our spiritual health is our treatment of the poor. "Here's to your health, Atlanta."

Two States, Two Death Penalties

States vary in their approach to the death penalty. Here is a look at differences in scope and administration in New Jersey and Texas. This is reprinted from the February 23, 1995 issue of *The New York Times*.

NEW JERSEY pop 7,904,000

ENACTED Aug. 6, 1982
ON DEATH ROW 9
EXECUTED SINCE 1976 0
CAPITAL OFFENSES First-degree murder, felony murder
PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE Established in 1967, the statewide system has offices in all 21 New Jersey counties. Represents all indigent defendants from trial to state appeals to the U. S. Supreme Court.

COSTS Defense costs in capital cases are paid by the state. There is no cap on money spent in defending capital cases.

NEW EVIDENCE There is no time limit for filing a new trial motion based on undiscovered evidence.

TEXAS Pop 18,378,000

ENACTED June 14, 1973
ON DEATH ROW 400
EXECUTED SINCE 1976 92
CAPITAL OFFENSES First-degree murder, felony murder
PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE Texas does not have a public defender's office. Indigent defendants are represented by counsel appointed by county judges. Guilty convictions in capital cases are automatically appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeals.

COSTS For the trial and direct appeal, the county provides the defense and sets a fee schedule. Fees are determined by the judge and defense attorney. There is no set standard for the state as a whole, and many counties have no such schedule. Counties are not required to provide compensated counsel for Federal appeals.

NEW EVIDENCE the law provides 30 days after conviction for filing a new trial motion based on undiscovered evidence.

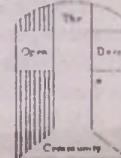
Population figures are Census Bureau estimates for July 1, 1994

Holy Week with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship and/or a 24-hour period of solidarity with our friends on the street during Holy Week.

Services of Worship,
(April 9 - 16):

PALM SUNDAY	Open Door Community, 5pm
MONDAY	Grady Hospital, Butler St., 5pm
TUESDAY	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW, 5pm
WEDNESDAY	Trust Co. Bank, Park Place, 5pm
MAUNDY THURSDAY	City Hall, Trinity Ave., 5pm
GOOD FRIDAY	State Capitol, Washington St., 5pm
HOLY SATURDAY	City Shelter, Jefferson St., 5pm
EASTER MORNING	23 Butler St., 6:30am Worship of the Resurrected Lord Followed by a ham and egg breakfast



Share the Resurrection Morning With Our Homeless Friends

Each Easter, the Open Door Community gathers at sunrise with the homeless in our city, amidst flowers and balloons, to share in worship and a ham and eggs breakfast.

We need and appreciate your help in providing this Easter meal which is served to 200 - 300 folks. Our needs include: Ham, Eggs, Grits, Sweet Rolls, Ground Coffee, Money, Flowers, and Balloons.

Join us for Worship and Breakfast on Easter Sunday Morning,
6:30am, 23 Butler Street.



RITA CORBIN

I Have A Dream

Reconstruction Today, part 7

by Nibs Stroupe

Editor's note: We continue here with the seventh of a 10-part series on Reconstruction. Nibs Stroupe is pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA and is active in the Civil Rights Movement.

On the day after W.E.B. Dubois died in Ghana at age 95, Martin Luther King, Jr., gave the greatest American speech of the century on a sweltering August day in Washington, D.C. in 1963. In this speech, he called for a continuing transformation of American society. The Civil Rights Movement was in full swing, and hope was abroad in the land.

King spoke of the hopes and motivations that led us as a nation through a second experiment in democracy. Although there are no precise dates for the beginning of the second experiment, most observers date it from two events. The first was the May 17, 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education unanimous Supreme Court decision. In Brown vs. Board, the Court threw out "separate but equal" with regard to separate public schools. The second was Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat in the white section of the bus in Montgomery on December 1, 1955. With these events, the struggle for racial justice seemed to catch fire, and the need for steps towards justice moved closer to the forefront of public awareness. Although there was no massive and destructive war in the modern movement as there had been in the last century with the Civil War, there was a war of words and ideas and wills, and there was violence and death.

By the time of the Washington march in 1963, at which King gave his famous speech, there had already been startling change. The buses in Montgomery had been boycotted and finally ordered desegregated, federal troops had enforced the Supreme Court order to integrate schools in Little Rock, black students all over the South had "sat in" at lunch counters previously reserved for whites, freedom riders had integrated public transportation in the South and had been beaten for it, James Meredith had become the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi (with a white riot to follow), and police dogs had been turned loose on black children in Birmingham. Much more would happen after this gathering in Washington. President Kennedy would be assassinated, students and others would lead a massive voter registration campaign in Mississippi Freedom Summer, the Civil Rights Act would pass in 1964, and the Voting Rights Act would pass in 1965—followed ten days later by a widespread rebellion by black people in the Watts section of Los Angeles.

Even in the face of all the reactionary violence and white resistance, the progress was considerable. President Lyndon Johnson, rather than saying that he was tired of the Negro, as President Grant had said ninety years earlier, joined in the push for democracy and equal rights. President Johnson said: "We shall overcome," in a nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress in 1965 after the white violence in Selma, Alabama.

Indeed, much was done to promote human rights for all. This echo of Reconstruction promised the possibility that the idea that all people are created with equal dignity would become truth in the United States. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments began to be reaffirmed, and the Supreme Court seemed inclined to uphold them rather than strip them of their meaning and authority. This was a time of great opportunity and some progress. The War on Poverty was born, the seeds of affirmative action were sown, and the dignity and humanity of African-American people were beginning to be affirmed. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act, the years 1964 to 1968 seemed to promise great possibilities, and the system of race seemed to be faltering.

As with Reconstruction, however, there were disturbing voices. White violence rang out—the President was assassinated, civil rights workers were beaten and murdered, citizens were killed as they endeavored to exercise their constitutional rights. In a sad commentary on King's stirring speech in Washington, whites waited only eighteen days before bombing Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham on a bloody Sunday, killing four black girls.

By 1966, the tide had begun to turn. In that year the Republicans gained forty-seven seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. The political party that had tied itself to Goldwater in 1964 and had supposedly been crushed in doing so, now began to make its comeback, building on the politics of

race. Also, in 1966, Ronald Reagan was elected Governor of California on the strength of the white suburban vote. From here, he built the base that enabled him to lead the "white" movement as President.

Building on the voting shifts in 1966, the year 1968 was pivotal in beginning the entrenchment of white society to resist the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. After eight years of Democratic support for the Civil Rights Movement (albeit reluctant support at times), the Republicans won the presidency on the strength of the white reaction to the Civil Rights Movement. Four factors influenced this election: the conflicts that revolved around the Vietnam War, the withdrawal of Lyndon Johnson, the first redemption of Richard Nixon, and the emergence of George Wallace as a presidential contender and a voice for whites who did not want to share power with black people. In the 1968 vote, whites showed their preference and their power—Nixon and Wallace had a combined fifty-seven percent of the vote.

From my point of view, Wallace was the most important factor, because he sought to legitimize the power of racism by asserting that the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's had discriminated against white people. Called "reverse discrimination," it later became the hallmark of the white movement to refuse access to black people. Wallace shifted the ground of resistance to the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. Instead of shouting "White Power!", he shouted "Discrimination!", and thus the debate was centered not on white resistance but on the deprivation of rights for white people. The most important contribution by Wallace, then, was to enable whites to make their case for keeping power without ever referring to racism.

During the twenty-seven years since 1968, there has been a resurgence of white power over black people, a return to the system of "race" as fundamental, and an attempt to disavow the gains of this second human rights movement. There has been less overt violence in this modern repudiation; more often it has taken a more subtle but still deadly course—the gradual and systematic stripping of the humanity of black people. As James Cone put it, the dream of the second human rights movement would soon become a nightmare.

During the years that followed the first human rights movement, white people stymied the gains of Reconstruction by returning to "race." In the conflict between equality and race, whites chose race. In this choice, whites reasserted race as fundamental and sought to strip black people of their humanity in order to blunt the power of the idea of equality. They did this by violence, by discrediting the human rights movement, and by blaming black people for its failure. In the modern era, white people are using the same methods in their struggle to re-establish the primacy of race and racism. Although there is not as much white violence as there was one hundred years ago, white violence still breaks out—from the re-emergence of the Klu Klux Klan; to Conintelpro (the FBI attack on King, the Black Panthers and others); to the current occupying armies of the ghettos, known as the police (ask Rodney King or Malice Green); to Bensonhurst; to Howard Beach, then Bernard Goetz. This is not to suggest that the police understand their purpose to be that of an occupying army whose duty it is to repress black people, but rather it is to say that many black people see the police in this manner. It is also to raise the vital issue of the tension between intent and results.

Racial discrimination has always worked best when "intent" is emphasized over "results." Those who benefit from the system of race gain the most when intent to discriminate is disavowed. The U.S. Supreme Court endorsed this idea in the 1890's when it upheld the new constitutions of southern states which resulted in the disenfranchising of black voters. Despite clear demonstrations that these constitutions would result in the denial of the vote to black people, the Supreme Court upheld them because they expressed no intent to disenfranchise. Thus, in our time, the police may not intend to be an extension of the forces of racism or an occupying army. They may intend to deter crime. Yet, this lack of conscious intent cannot invalidate the results when they act as a force of racism or when they are seen by many in the African-American community as an occupying army.

(Continued on page 5)

(I Have A Dream, continued from page 4)

This tension between intent and results is essential in understanding the resurgence of racism in our time. I am not suggesting that there is a massive, conscious conspiracy to disempower people of darker color, although there are conscious political strategies to win votes based on race. We will visit these strategies shortly. I am suggesting, however, that the drama of a return to racism is being seen again in our time. From a "white" point of view, there is not racism if there is not intent to judge by race. From a "black" point of view, the expressed intent by whites is relatively unimportant in comparison to the results of the actions of white people.

Racial discrimination functions best when intent is emphasized over results. Most white people will not publicly claim any intent to discriminate based on race. Many white people may not be aware of any conscious attempt on their part to judge by race. For those of us who claim the name "white," this lack of conscious intent to discriminate means that we are not racist and that we do not participate in the system of race. However, the results of our actions indicate otherwise, for instance we flee neighborhoods into which black people move because we are afraid our property values will drop. When white bankers "red-line" a neighborhood, their rationale is not because people of darker color live there but rather because the neighborhood contains bad credit risks. When a school system places a vastly disproportionate number of black children in special education classes, it is not because of their racial classification but because of their low socioeconomic level. These are the rationales that white people use both externally and internally to avoid an acknowledgment of the continuing power of race in our lives.

When I assert that "race" has been re-established as primary in response to the Civil Rights Movement, I am not asserting a vast conspiracy. I am asserting that the fundamental power of race is so great that it operates regardless of the level of consciousness. In other words, the humanity and equality of African-Americans is not currently in dispute in public discourse. Even David Duke felt compelled to use code language for race and to deny his Klan heritage in his political campaigns. Yet, we must not deceive ourselves in this crucial period. The system of race is making a strong comeback in response to the idea of the equality of black people. This growing racism is developing despite white disavowals of it. It is developing because the idea of "race" is stronger than the ideal of "equality" in our culture.

Part of the reason for this growth of racism is that white people still feel threatened by people of darker color, especially African-American people. This sense of fear on the part of white people at the destruction of the system of race (and its accompanying racism) is no exaggeration. It is essential to acknowledge how deep and painful this threat is to white

people. One clear example of this fear is seen in a study conducted in 1985 by Stanley Greenberg, who is now a political consultant to President Bill Clinton. The 1985 study was conducted in Macomb County, a white working class suburb on the edge of Detroit. It was studied by the Democrats because of its dramatic shift in presidential voting. In 1960, this district went sixty-three percent to thirty-seven percent Democratic for Kennedy over Nixon. In 1984, it went sixty-three percent to thirty-three percent Republican for Reagan over Mondale. What happened to cause the shift? Greenberg's summary tells us:

These white Democratic defectors express a profound distaste for blacks, a sentiment that pervades almost everything they think about government and politics...Blacks constitute the explanation for their (white defectors') vulnerability and for almost everything that has gone wrong in their lives; not being black is what constitutes being middle class; not living with blacks is what makes a neighborhood a decent place to live. These sentiments have important implications for Democrats, as virtually all progressive symbols and themes have been redefined in racial and pejorative terms...The special status of blacks is perceived by almost all of these individuals as a serious obstacle to their personal advancement. Indeed, discrimination against whites has become a well-assimilated and ready explanation for their status, vulnerability and failures...Ronald Reagan's image (was) formed against this (Democratic) backdrop—disorder and weakness, passivity, and humiliation and a party that failed to speak for the average person. By contrast, Reagan represented a determined consistency and an aspiration to unity and pride.

Growing up as a white Southerner in the 1950's and 1960's, I always heard that the Civil Rights Movement would fail because it was said that what needed to be changed were not the laws but rather the human heart. I have felt that such an argument was merely a subterfuge for racism, and I still feel that. Laws are important. And yet, the continuing resistance to the laws passed during the Civil Rights Movement has led me to acknowledge how essential and how difficult is the human heart. In our next part, we will look at the ways that we who call ourselves "white" have resisted the idea of equality.

See the May issue of Hospitality for part 8 in this series on Reconstruction.

You are invited...

to a Book Signing



with *Nibs Stroupe*

for his book

While We Run This Race: COUNTERING THE POWER OF RACISM

- Refreshments and snacks will be served -

- Books will be available for purchase -

In a book that is challenging, illuminating, and ultimately hopeful, Nibs Stroupe, the white pastor of the multi-cultural Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, grapples with this question: why, after the Civil Rights movement has become part of American history, does racism still pervade society? What can be done to change this? As Stroupe unflinchingly examines racism in the United States, adding her voice is Inez Fleming, a black elder at Oakhurst, who tells the story of tears and laughter within the congregation as blacks and whites struggle together, creating an extraordinary church family.

Date: May 19, 1995

Time: 5:30pm - 8:00pm

Place: Open Door Community

910 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Northeast
Atlanta

Call for directions: 404-874-9652

LABOR POOLS

Holy Places in the Belly of the Beast

by Ed Loring

A Labor Pool is a holy place. If you are like me well-fed, housed, and employed, you may never have visited a Labor Pool much less turned to one for a day's work. Labor pools are foreign territory to most of us, and Labor Pool workers are foreigners and fugitives in this land.

A most important step on our journey in faith is to reduce the distance between ourselves and the poor. Herein lies the HOPE for our personal and societal transformation toward love and justice, toward what Martin Luther King, Jr. called The Beloved Community. To reduce the distance requires us to journey into the Land of Nod, the turf of the poor and dispossessed, rather than invite them to our table. Videos, Internet, books, computer software, photos, or speakers won't reduce the distance although they can certainly build tools and be bread for the trip. We must go in the flesh just as Yahweh decided to do in 4 BCE. Information can travel as fast as the latest laser beam, prophetic truth cannot move much more than 3 miles an hour. You have to go there yourself, walk and talk, touch and be touched, listen and unveil your nasty wound. For there is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, to cure the sin-sick soul.

There is power and healing when we reduce the distance and enter into holy places where the poor are dying because of our sins. Labor Pools are holy places.

Over the last several years I have asked college students and seminarians, "What are you willing to die for?" I follow that discussion with: "and what are you willing to kill for?" Most replies center around (1) "I will not kill for any reason," followed by a discussion of the non-retaliation ethic of the Sermon on the Mount, (2) "I will kill for my family", followed by a reasoned argument justifying self-defense. Only once have I met a seminarian, a woman, who would be willing to kill for the protection of the congregation or Christian community. Dr. King, Jr. preached that we must discover what we are willing to die for in order to know what we shall live for.

In these nights of murderous assault on the poor, we need to know how far we will reduce the distance. The minimum wage kills the poor. The minimum wage is a wolf that devours the sheep. Shall the shepherd only stand and watch? Shall she only pick up the bones and entrails after the wolf is satiated and then perform a funeral service rooted in the Theology of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? Is every funeral an Easter event? I sometimes dream I am an Eastern European Rabbi. I am in a boxcar headed toward Auschwitz. I am with my congregation and there is nothing I can do. When Dick Armey (R-Texas) introduces into congress the removal of the minimum wage or Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia) removes the crumbs from the table already intended for dogs, my guts growl and I feel the fear of death rumbling down the road into the hell holes of poverty and prison.

Two biblical reasons that Labor Pools are holy places are the three-mile-per-hour prophetic truths of God, and the Biblical leadership given to us as guides and models. One of the great gifts Yahweh is giving to modern America is the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. This chapter has had a special relevance since World War II but has been a burning light since April 4, 1968. Listen to a little bit and then go read all 31 verses,

Says the Sovereign LORD:

"You are doomed, you shepherds of Israel! You take care of yourselves, but never tend the sheep. You drink the milk, wear clothes made from wool, and kill and eat the finest sheep. But you never tend the sheep. You have not taken care of the weak ones, healed the ones that are sick, bandaged the ones that are hurt, brought back the ones that wandered off, or looked for the ones that were lost. Instead, you treated them cruelly....so listen to me, you shepherds, I, the sovereign LORD, declare that I am your enemy."

Ezekiel not only saw wheels over his head; he also saw the future Food Banks of developed nations:

"Some of you are not satisfied with eating the best grass; you even trample down what you don't eat. You drink the clear water and muddy what you don't drink! My other sheep have to eat the grass you trample down and drink the water you muddy."

.... I will rescue my sheep and not let them be mistreated anymore."

God is present in Labor Pools, God is angry, on fire with a passion on behalf of Yahweh's beloved poor and wounded. God hears the cry of the poor; sees the death of the minimum wage; experiences eating trampled grass and drinking muddy water. God has made a choice, reduces the distance, joins the Labor Pool worker and calls us to follow suit: "I, the Sovereign Lord, declare that I am your enemy." The Labor Pool is a Holy Place.

Prophetic truth can't move much faster than a prophet can walk or ride a jackass. One hot afternoon after being raised in what Malcolm X calls "the big house," Moses went for a walk to see how his people, the slaves (i.e. Labor Pool workers), were doing. Dangerous is the act of reducing the distance. We are forced to see what we have not seen, to hear what we have not heard. We, like Moses, must, if we "visit our people" (Exodus 2:11) make a choice. Either we will affirm slavery or we shall be transformed into brothers and sisters of the prophetic Beloved Community. When Moses reduced the distance, became a visitor on the turf of the poor, he became a murderer. He discovered what he was willing to kill for.

When Moses opened his eyes standing on new ground, he saw that his community were slaves and that they were forced to do hard labor. No longer could he eat the best grass or drink sweet water at Pharaoh's table. In discovering the slaves at hard labor, Moses met Moses. But that's not all. "He even saw an Egyptian kill a Hebrew, one of Moses' own people. Moses looked all around, and when he saw that no one was watching, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand." (Exodus 2:11b-12)

Word got out—Moses fled—became a fugitive—made a new life—got a wife, and they had a child. Moses became, like Horace Tribble, a shepherd. One day Moses came to a place not unlike a Labor Pool. A Holy Place. A bush was burning but not consumed. Moses' murder of the Egyptian slave driver must have impressed Yahweh, for out of the bush came burning two hot gifts. The first gift was vocation and commission: Said the God of Sarah and Abraham:

"I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out to be rescued from their slave drivers. I know all about their suffering and so I have come down to rescue them [reduced the distance] from the Egyptians and to bring them out of Egypt to a spacious land...Now I am sending you to the Pharaoh of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country." (Exodus 3:7-10)

Moses met this God who hears the cries of those at hard labor at a wage that does not satisfy. But this God does not channel surf, rather she reduces the distance, plans a shift in the labor market, and calls up a leader. The place of the burning bush was holy ground for there God spoke and dreamed of freedom and economic justice. Labor Pools are holy places run by Egyptian slave drivers but visited by the God who rescues the workers from Pharaoh's grip.



LEO McGUIRE

The second gift God gave to Moses was God's very own name—Yahweh: I Am who I Am. Just tell the slave owners and labor bosses I Am sent you. Ah, what power to behold, even though many plagues and much death were necessary. The one who visits, upon hearing the cries of the poor, is I Am—Yahweh—reducing the distance so freedom and justice, love and salvation, houses and food may abound for all God's people. We, like Moses, must listen. We must go into the places where God's name is burning hot, like the passion of a mother's love when her child is being abused. A Labor Pool is a holy place, for there we learn the name(s) of God.

Labor Pools are holy places for that is where Jesus is crucified. I have known people who have paid over \$3,000 for a trip to Jerusalem. They have wanted to go to the Holy Land and walk the walk that Jesus walked. They have stood on Golgotha, and like the woman in the Gospels have not fled when seeing the very spot where Jesus was crucified. Perhaps with imaginative insight and intuitive power they have even experienced The Shriek of dereliction: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" But there is really no need to fly away to a far country, for in the center of the city, in the belly of the beast, Jesus is crucified today.

Yahweh reduced the distance when she came to Moses in the bush giving him truth (liberty to captives) and her name. But that was not enough. Words are important but visitation in the flesh is a necessity. God still had, as we all have, some distance to go. So God was born in a barn taking on not simply human flesh, but the flesh and life of the poor. For God to be the one named Yahweh—the I Am—who comes to those held at hard labor—God had come in a stranger's guise.

"What does labor want?"

**"We want more schoolhouses and less jails.
We want more learning and less vice.
We want more leisure and less greed.
We want more of the opportunities to improve
our lives."**

- Samuel Gompers, founding President of the American Federation of Labor, voicing the hope of Labor in the late 1800's.

Had Jesus been born to parents of power, wealth or prestige, Yahweh would not be Yahweh and the Gospel would be nothing more than a song of saving souls and maximizing profits, which it is not. The character of God is such that for God to be human, Yahweh had to be a poor and marginalized person. The Crucifixion follows the necessity of Yahweh's birth as naturally as death

follows the minimum wage of \$4.25 or \$5.15 per hour. As Moses was transformed when he visited those at hard labor, so God was transformed in Jesus Christ. When we reduce the distance we are transformed, converted and made new into brothers and sisters in a life of solidarity with the poor and marginalized. The minimum wage is the economic infrastructure of the Labor Pool. Here, Jesus in the flesh of those forced to hard labor is crucified. The minimum wage is a cross, a slow hanging death. People yell at you "come down from that cross" or, said in today's business language, "get a job you lazy bum; you welfare cheat." Here Jesus dies. The Labor Pool is a holy place. Come and see for yourself.

The most powerful place in Scripture for an articulation of God in Jesus reducing the distance in the poor is Matthew 25:31-46. Here Jesus speaks his solidarity and he identifies with those who are assaulted by the powers in the U.S. Congress, the Olympic Committee, the multi-national corporations, and those who work to gain for themselves while others have not enough.

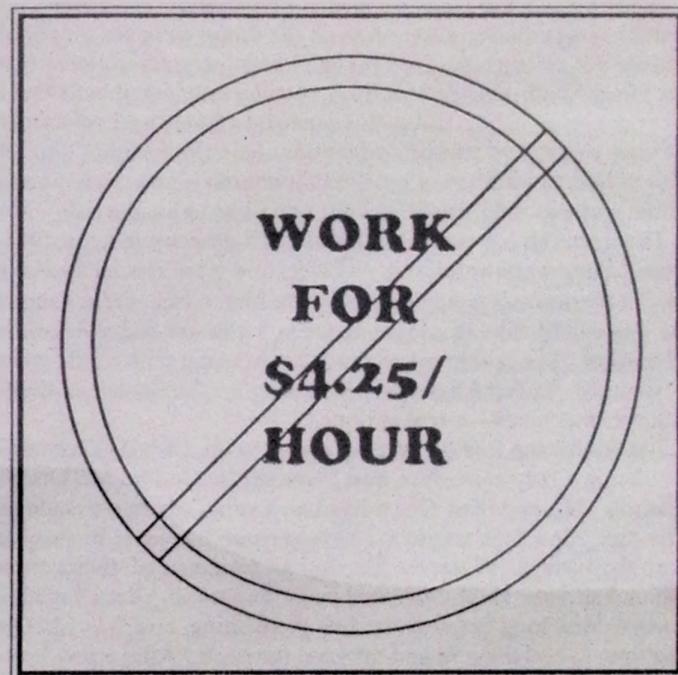
Matthew 25 is closely related to Ezekiel 34. There is judgement. God separates the sheep or sheep and goats. God declares solidarity and life with the oppressed and declares Godself an enemy of those who have not met the needs of the poor. In Ezekiel (34:16b) Yahweh says that "those who are fat and strong I will destroy, because I am a shepherd who does what is right." In Matthew 25 Jesus teaches: "I tell you, whenever you refuse to help one of the least important ones, you refuse to help me. These, then, will be sent off to eternal punishment, but the righteous will go to eternal life."

Of whom is Jesus speaking: the hungry, thirsty, naked, prisoner, sick, lonely, homeless, African American, many women, all the poor, and, of course, Labor Pool workers. Jesus is in the flesh of the poor. He stands in our soup kitchen line with the hungry. He died at Grady last month with Piedmont Joe. Jesus works at hard labor for \$4.25 an hour at the most dangerous and boring jobs our system produces.

Jesus preached the powerful liberation sermon—The Nazarene Manifesto (Luke 4:16-30)—in his home town where he said, "God has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed..." Long before he preached this, he had reduced the distance. Matthew 25 precedes Luke 4. Before we preach or make public policy, before we seek salvation for others or sell goods in the marketplace, we must enter the terrain of the

poor and abandoned in our cities and across the land. From visiting holy places like jails we may proclaim liberty to captives. From sitting in the Labor Pool we may be taught how to join the long hard battle to set free the oppressed. One step begins to reduce the distance. Let it be so among us.

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community



Visit Your Nearest "Holy Place"

Labor Pools in Atlanta:

Action Labor
630-10th Street
at the Interstate and 10th Street
ph: 875-7535

Dixie Temporary Labor
Techwood Drive
ph: 355-9887

Labor Services Inc.
142 Peachtree Street
ph: 586-0303

Peakload Temporary Service
475 North Avenue
ph: 525-4817

Right Handman
70-4th and Spring St.
the building behind Arby's, on Spring St.
ph: 881-6004

Temp Corp
690 Paines Avenue
corner of Paines Ave. and Bankhead Hwy.
ph: 815-9696

How Is A Man On Death Row Like A Little Old Lady In A Retirement Community In South Florida?

by Elizabeth Dede

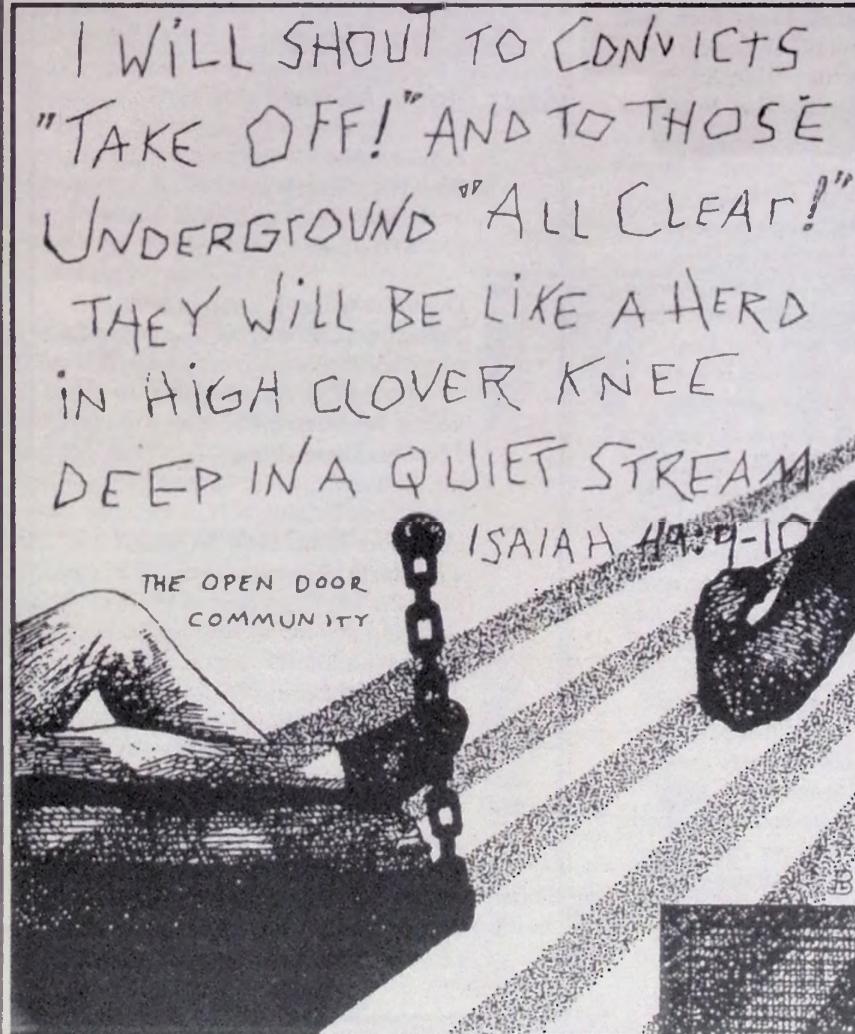
Nothing fills me more with wonder and joy than to make connections—to see how two wildly different people, objects, or events have similarities, or are related to each other. I suppose in some way it helps me to make sense of a chaotic world, to understand how my sister and I could come from the same family, and to love and appreciate all of creation, because in some fundamental, intimate way, we are all connected.

When I was a kid I was somewhat of a tomboy, and I guess my mother despaired that I would ever grow up to do the things girls are supposed to do. I was certainly not a little lady, even though I was reminded frequently to act like one. But life in South Florida was lived outside with lots of activities that weren't conducive to sitting still with your hands folded and your feet crossed neatly at your ankles and tucked under your chair. You couldn't play football in a dress, your hair wouldn't stay brushed for church if you were running on the playground, and you didn't smell good if you liked to handle fish.

There was an old couple in the church I grew up in named Mr. and Mrs. Olsen. They were wonderful, old folks and were special friends of the kids. I think there was a conspiracy between Mrs. Olsen and my mother to make me into a lady. She would invite me to her house and show me how to knit and crochet. She taught me to sew, always using pink as the color for the dresses we made. In fact I have her old sewing machine—one of the first electric Singer machines—a real antique.

But for me the true pleasure of a visit to the Olsens came when the lessons in being a lady were over, and I was set free to find Mr. Olsen for a fishing lesson. Mr. and Mrs. Olsen lived on a canal where we could catch blue gill by the ton. Mr. Olsen taught me how to chum the water by throwing bread crumbs on the surface. When the fish had all congregated, then we cast in the hook, which had been skillfully baited according to Mr. Olsen's method. You didn't have to wait long before those fish were biting, and then Mr. Olsen would show you how to reel them in and take out the hook. After a few lessons, you were no longer allowed to shy away from that part: if you caught a fish, then you had to take it off the hook.

Most often we would toss the fish back into the canal. But on a few occasions my dad would volunteer to clean them, and then Mom would cook us up a fresh fish dinner.



Mrs. Olsen was fond of arts and crafts, and she and my mom were always taking on a project to create some new little trinket. They made refrigerator magnets from shells found at the beach; Christmas wreaths from recycled computer cards; vests from cans; bird feeders from coconuts; beaded jewelry; weave-craft ornaments; and an amazing assortment of bookmarks and decorations delicately crocheted, using light thread and tiny crochet hooks.

You may be wondering at this point what in the world any of this has to do with a man on death row. And the title of this piece may sound like a riddle. Perhaps it is.

Stanley is one of our friends on death row. Like Mrs. Olsen, he is fond of arts and crafts. He has crocheted beautiful vests and bookmarks and delicate snowflakes for the Christmas tree. Each time I see one of his creations I think of Mrs. Olsen, and this is strange because you cannot imagine two more completely different people.

Mrs. Olsen was a slight, delicate, refined, white-haired old lady, although she was not always this way. Once I saw a picture of her taken in the 1920's. She was riding a motorcycle and her hair was blowing in the breeze.

Stanley is a big, tall, strong, dark man. Most often he has no hair on his head. Maybe in his smile and laughter there is something to remind me of Mrs. Olsen. There is a creative crinkle around his eyes, but really two people couldn't be further apart from each other on a scale of comparisons.

And yet I could pull out a cross crocheted by Mrs. Olsen and one made by Stanley, and you'd think the same hand had fashioned them.

Almost I can imagine them sitting together, their heads bent over, nearly touching, conferring about their latest design: what colors to use, which hook, what thread. But this meeting can't take place. Mrs. Olsen died many, many years ago. The world is a little bit less without her. Fewer knick-knacks adorn the refrigerator. A pine cone has become more ordinary without the unlimited possibilities for creation Mrs. Olsen could see in it.

Invariably when I see Stanley in the visiting room on death row I think of Mrs. Olsen. In some essential way they are the same person to me.

Nobody could ever imagine executing Mrs. Olsen. You wouldn't sit that sweet, frail lady in an electric chair and throw the switch. She was part of God's creation and made life beautiful and more fun with her creations.

And then there's Stanley. He makes life beautiful and more fun with his creations. I think God reused the formula with a different body. God liked Mrs. Olsen so well.

Stanley and Mrs. Olsen...an amazing connection. How could you even think about executing Stanley?

Elizabeth Dede is a partner at the Open Door.

Music In May

Fri., May 12, 8 p.m.

Central Congregational Church

\$5



with

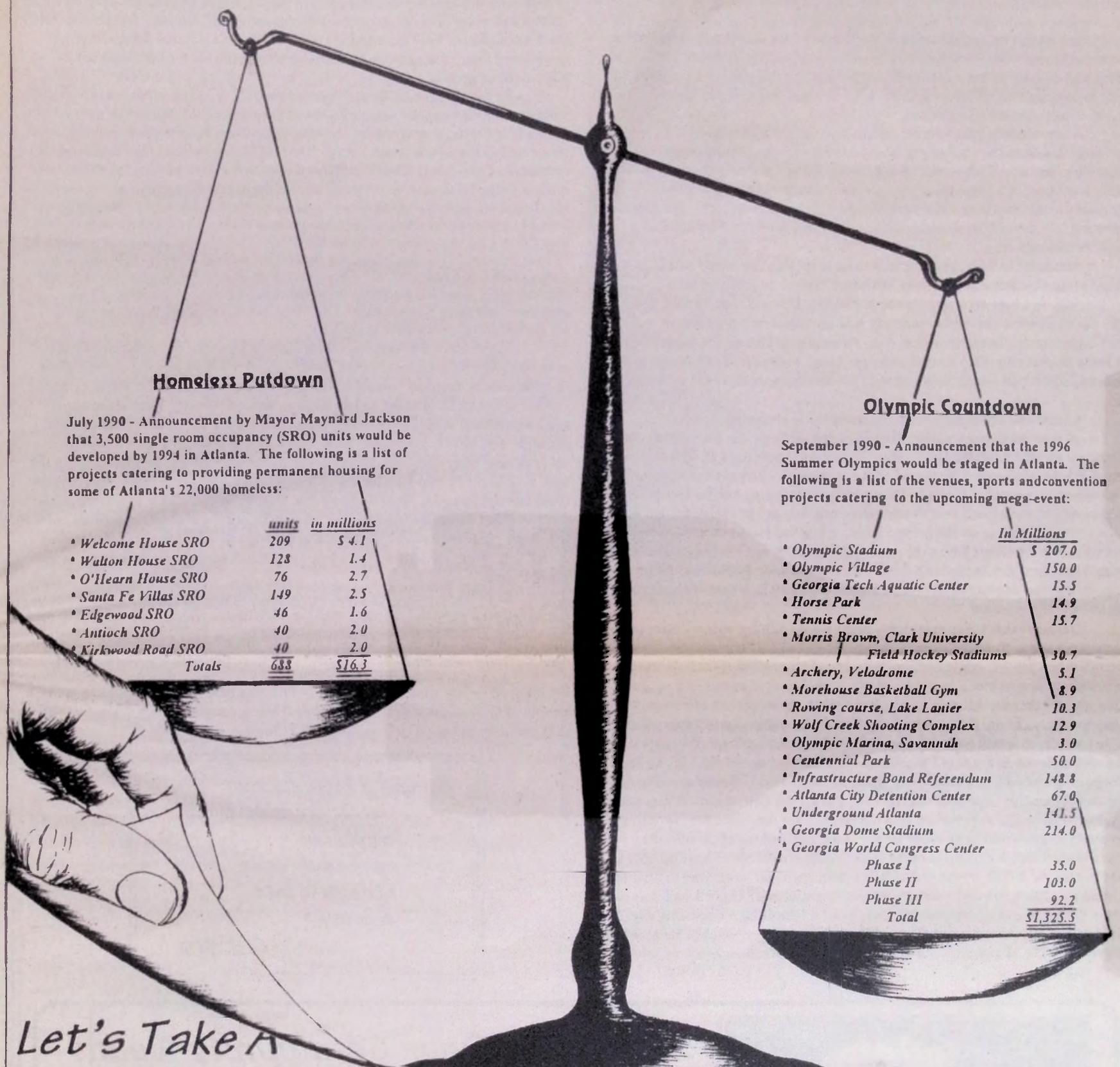
Elise Witt

Joyce Brookshire

Global, Local & Homemade Music

A benefit for
Southern Ministry Network
Rev. Houston Wheeler
(404) 624-9079

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?



Let's Take A
New Look...

Here is the Cost To House & Serve Homeless People in Atlanta:

Immediate/Short Term Needs

In Millions

• Day Shelter	\$ 3.0
• Residential Shelter	3.0
• Rental Assistance	2.5
• Transportation Assistance	.5
• Day Care	2.0
Sub-Total	\$11.0

GRAND TOTAL

\$188.5 million

Long Term Needs

In Millions

• Public Housing (federal; vacancy unit prep)	\$ 25.0
• Supportive Housing	67.5
• Single Room Occupancy Housing	75.0
• Non-Profit Capacity Building & Operation	10.0
Sub-Total	\$177.5

Earnestly Seeking Unity, Not Violence

by Tim Nafziger

There are two types of people in this world; good citizens and evil criminals. While this is a common image created in our world, I don't think it is true. Violence is an ugly act, an inflamed word, or a gripping emotion that is a part of each one of us, including even those good, law-abiding citizens. As I have experienced violence in my urban community of Recife, Brazil, I have had to face and own up to the violent side within me. In the same way, our world needs to own up to its violent side in order to break the cycle of violence. We need to create nonviolent solutions.

A few months ago, I was awakened one night by the sound of someone removing tiles from the roof of my house. What followed was an armed robbery by four youth who took all the money I had. It was suspected that the youths were part of a local gang who stole the money to buy marijuana. While they didn't touch me, they did a very violent act by pointing a gun at my head. Afterwards, to avoid future robberies, I moved to a more secure house in a nearby neighborhood.

Two months later, another unfortunate incident occurred. At nine o'clock at night, I left a community meeting to return to my new house. Shortly after leaving, as I was on a street near my former house, I was robbed again. I really didn't know if the robber actually had a weapon in his pocket or not and I didn't bother to ask in order to find out. After giving him all the money I had, just some pocket change, I turned and ran. Now, at the advice of community members, when I am in the community, I am always accompanied by someone else.

After these sad events occurred, something strange began happening to me. I started to have many violent thoughts and feelings like never before in my life. Being an ethnic, ardent-pacifistic Mennonite (and proud of it, too), I was quite startled and shocked by these "filthy" emotions. The scenes of the robberies would pass through my mind. In my imagination, I would see myself with a gun shooting at the armed youths who were robbing my house. Or, I would imagine myself beating on the person who robbed me on the street. Also, I had some wild dreams where I was the leader of a band of bank robbers who were having a machine gun battle with the police (by the way, in the end of the dream, my group of bandits did make a good getaway in a boat with all the money).

I realized that these acts in my heart were contrary to my desire to live a nonviolent life with a Christian faith that creates more peace in this world. Through much prayer, conversations with friends, personal reflection, and reading about nonviolence as a way of life, I tried to find and create peace within myself, thereby helping to break the cycle of violence in our society. Trying to be true to my faith and spirituality, I was not going to allow other people and situations to make me be violent. Even though I tried to deny it, there was violence in me that I needed to confront and not avoid. My violent feelings were natural, not inherently sinful or evil. This violence was like an indigenously earthly seed that was scattered in my garden of life. It was natural for the seed to be there; however, it is not healthy for me when the sprouting seed starts to grow and bear bitter fruit. Thus, evil and sin come into the picture when I lose control and become destructive with who I am and how I relate to others. While it was difficult, my own personal work was to own up to the violence within me that was a part of my natural self. Since I had dreams of being a robber, I had to assume this identity of a bandit by recognizing my violent self. Only after I accomplished this important step would I be able to try to leave the cycle of violence and start to be open to create nonviolent solutions.

Just as I have passed through experiences that have helped me deal openly with my violent side, our greater society needs to pass through that same awakening in order to confront the question of violence. I have seen two stark examples of how the societies of Brazil and the United States have not confronted their violent sides by denying responsibility for the deaths of marginalized people.

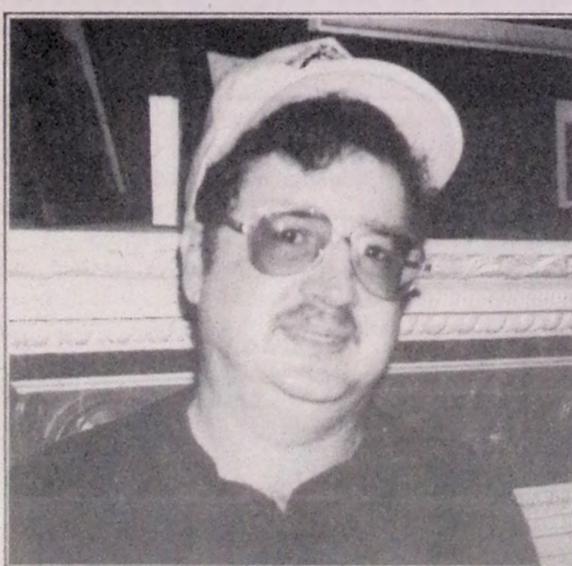
In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 15, a police station was sprayed with gunfire that injured three officers. Three days later, the police entered a favela (the Portuguese word for shantytown) where drug traffickers, who were suspected of the attack, were living. That night, the police killed seventeen members of the gang. The Secretary of the Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro was quoted in the leading newspaper of Recife, *Jornal do Comercio*, as saying that the drug traffickers were killed for "resisting arrest." However, the newspaper failed to mention the name of this top police officer. The message seems clear that there is no one who is responsible for those deaths in an apparent attack by "death squads." The larger society is unable to claim responsibility for its violent side. A week after the police attack in Rio de Janeiro, it was reported that the drug rings were arming themselves with heavier weapons. Thus, instead of reaching a resolution to the problem of violence, the stage was set for another war on a larger scale.

In the United States, on Death Row in Georgia, the same avoidance of responsibility occurs. Near the death chamber where lies the electric chair, there is a room that has two switches that are used to allow the electric current to flow to the chair in order to kill the condemned person. Before the execution, one person enters the room, adjusts one switch to allow current to pass through, and disables the other switch to render it useless. Afterwards, two other people enter the room to flip the switches that kill the condemned. In the end, no one really knows who killed the human being in the chair. Thus, there is no one to blame for the murder of this human being. Once again, the social structure has avoided assuming the responsibility for its violent actions. Since the death penalty has been reinstated in Georgia in 1977, the murder rate has increased. This violent solution certainly doesn't seem to be creating a safer place to live.

In order to break the cycle of violence in our world and in our lives, we ourselves, in a personal manner, and the societies in which we live need to face our violent side. Maybe we need to learn the lesson that was taught to the Pharisees who wanted to stone the adulterous woman in John 8. Instead of using violence to resolve our problems, we must find a peaceful journey where we all need to "go and sin no more." With this type of loving attitude, we as a people of God could seek unity instead of being caught up in a violent world that can only see good citizens and evil criminals.

But what if I should discover
that the very enemy himself
is within me,
that I myself am the enemy
who must be loved--
what then?

- C. G. Jung



PAUL SCOUTEN

Jim Alford is a welcomed addition to our family of Resident Volunteers.

The Open Door Community Needs Resident Volunteers!

Spend 6 to 12 months as a Resident Volunteer

Live in a residential Christian community. Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, homeless and prisoners. Bible study and theological reflections from the Base. Street actions and peaceful demonstrations. Regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Contact: Ed Loring
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212
404/874-9652; 874-7964 (fax)

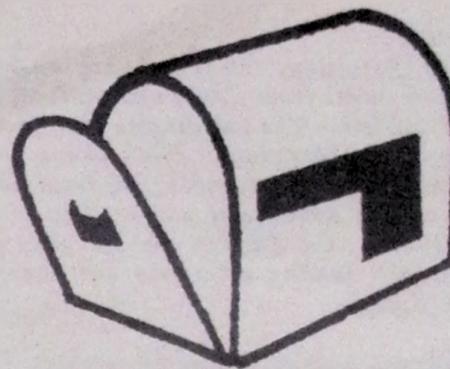
Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Ed,

I believe you are helping bring about the Kingdom of God on this earth by the sheer repetition of the words "open your homes to homeless poor," and by the living incarnation of those words that you and your friends at the Open Door have made of yourselves. I read Hospitality hungrily upon its arrival each month and look forward to attending one of your services.

Love,

Gerard McHugh
Decatur, GA



I See Things...

*I see things that are not quite right.
People are dying both day and night.
Some freeze to death when it is cold, because of a lack of a warm home.
Some die of drugs or drink, because of lack of care.
If I bought into the lie, I would probably say,
It's so hard to do what is right.
If it wasn't hard, it would not be worthwhile*

Ed Potts



To the Open Door:

Our library staff chose to donate to a charitable organization rather than give each other gifts. We know of your strong ministry and of your ministry to Vanderbilt Divinity students. We wanted you to have this gift.

Peace in Christ,

Anne Womack
Associate Director
The Jean and Alexander Heard Library
Vanderbilt University

Dear Ed,

How are you? It has been a while since I have been in touch with you all, but rest assured that you have always been in my thoughts and especially in my prayers. I got married this summer, and my wife and I have moved to Missouri. I'm pastoring two, yoked churches, and she is writing for the local paper. It's a very different environment than the streets of Atlanta, but the differences only serve to heighten in my mind my memories of the Open Door and its many ministries.

We wish Godspeed as you seek to serve Jesus Christ in word and deed.

Grace and peace to you,

Marvin Lindsay III
Sweet Springs, MO

Dear Ed:

You and the other folks at the Open Door continue in my thoughts and prayers. I read each issue of Hospitality from front to back as soon as it arrives. I love seeing familiar faces and reading stories about familiar people.

My three weeks at the Open Door had a profound effect upon me. I remember talking with Steve Rhodes before going to the Open Door. I was sharing with him some of my fears of being changed forever. Even then, prior to the three weeks' experience, I sensed that maybe something would be required of me that I would not be able to do. If I learned anything from you that month in July, it was the concept of "community."

I do want to share something with you. I had my first experience in jail ministry. Our church visits periodically throughout the year at a local minimum security prison. It was one of the most intense experiences I've had since being at the Open Door! I was a nervous wreck at first, but eventually relaxed. I discovered that most of the men just needed a listening ear. Many of them wanted to tell me how they had changed, and share with me their visions for the future. Several of them really had a heart for the teenager in trouble. Wow! What an experience. There were about ten from our church who went to visit. Several others baked homemade goodies which the men loved!

Ed, thank you so much for your ministry in that particular part of God's world. You and the others there are doing a good thing. I admire you.

Grace and Peace,

Pam Phillips
Dyersburg, TN

Editor's note: Rev. Pam Phillips is Associate Pastor of Dyersburg Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Dyersburg, Tennessee. She recounts above some of her reflections resulting from a visit to the Open Door Community.

WE ARE OPEN...

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00pm, and from 7:00 until 8:30pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days (Both phone and door are not answered during our lunch break from noon until 2:00.). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are open from 7:00am until noon. Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

OUR MINISTRY...

SOUP KITCHEN—Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon
SUNDAY BREAKFAST—Sunday morning at 910,

7:15am

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

SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES—Wednesday,
Thursday, and Friday, 2-4pm (Be sure to call;
schedule varies)

USE OF PHONE—Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon,
2:00pm-5pm

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

WEEKEND RETREATS—Four times each year (for our
household and volunteers/supporters), April 28-30.

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

Open Door Community Needs

JEANS

T-Shirts

Men's Work Shirts

Men's Underwear

Quick Grits

Cheese

Coffee

Multi-Vitamins

MARTA Tokens

Postage Stamps

Men's Large Shoes (12-14)

Non-Aerosol Deodorant

Disposable Razors

Toothbrushes

Vaseline

Socks

Soap

Shampoo

Men's Belts

Washcloths

Sandwiches

Wednesday Soup Kitchen Volunteers*
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers*

* please contact Jeannie Lukkar, Volunteer Coordinator, at 874-2120. From 11am til 1:30pm, Monday through 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 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!

Open Door Community Worship

We gather for worship and Eucharist on Sunday evenings followed by supper together.

Please join us!

April 2 Worship at 910, 5pm

Holy Week

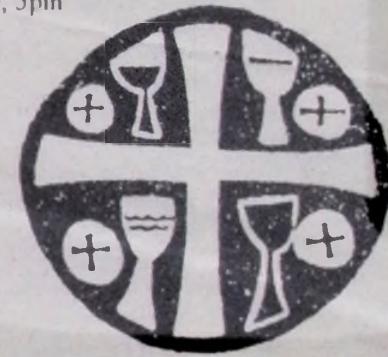
April 9 - 16 See Holy Week Worship Schedule on page 3

April 9 Palm Sunday, Worship at 910
5pm Eucharist

April 16 Easter Morning, Worship at **Municipal Market**,
6:30am

April 23 Worship at 910, 5pm

April 30 Worship at 910, 5pm



If you have found **Hospitality** helpful and would like to know more about the Open Door Community, please fill out, clip and send this coupon to **The Open Door Community * 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE * Atlanta, GA 30306-4212**.

Please ADD to the **Hospitality** mailing list.

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

I'm interested in volunteering. Please give me more information.

I would like to explore a six to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please send more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____ + _____

Phone _____

Moving?

Bulk rate mail is not forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service. Send **Hospitality**, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA, 30306-4212, your new mailing address as soon as you know it. Please enclose the mailing label from your most recent issue. Thank you!