

HOSPITALITY

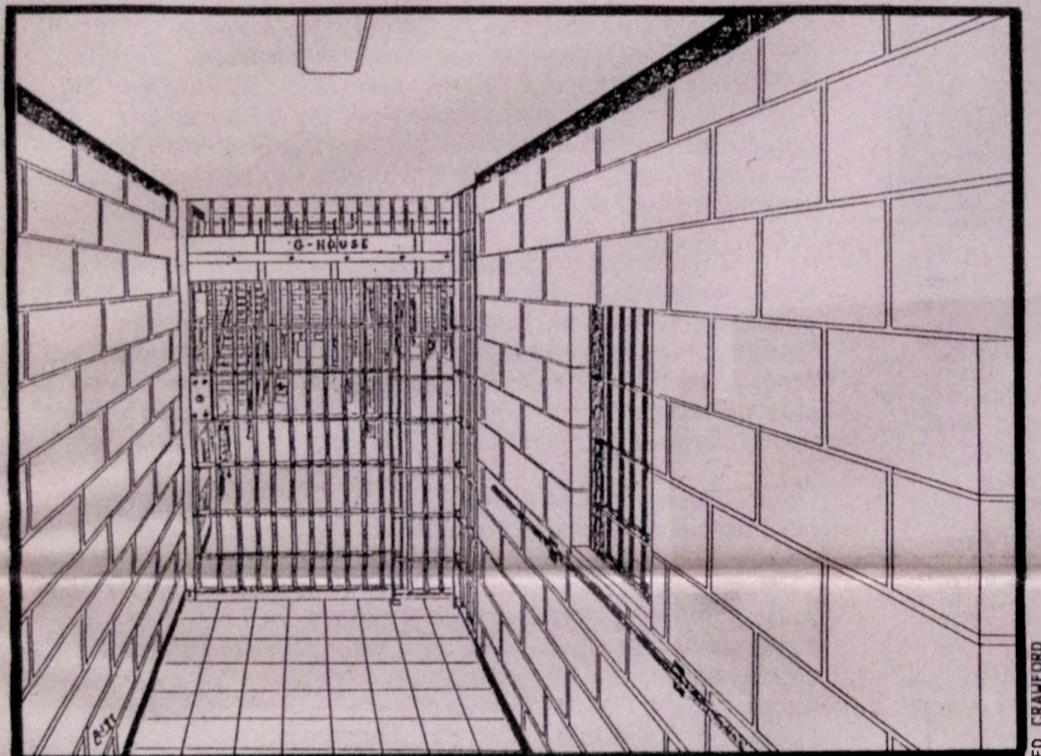
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August 1993



Criminal Justice Policies

by O.J. Keller

Editor's note: O.J. Keller is a friend of the Open Door Community. He is past president of the American Correctional Association, past president of the State Juvenile Delinquency Administrators Association, and a retired member of the U.S. Parole Commission's National Appeals Board. We welcome him to these pages.

For a presumably progressive, inventive people, Americans deal with crime in a surprisingly stupid way. Instead of addressing the roots of crime, we engage in a jail and prison-building binge. By comparison with other nations, we look very bad, indeed. We're like a crazy homeowner. Instead of fixing the rotten roof, we run around trying to put pans under all the leaks.

It is possible that some changes may take place during the Clinton years. Let us hope so. The tremendous expenditure on more incarceration will soon bankrupt many states. Little money will be left for education, health care, road improvement, and other crucial needs.

Recently, the public and its elected representatives have begun to comprehend the waste of tax dollars on more prison construction and the inevitable operations costs. Most important, two events have occurred within the past few months that may signal a dramatic shift in our criminal justice priorities.

The first of these hopeful events was the confirmation of our new Attorney General, Janet Reno. Unlike her predecessors for the last 12 years, Reno does not beat the "law and order

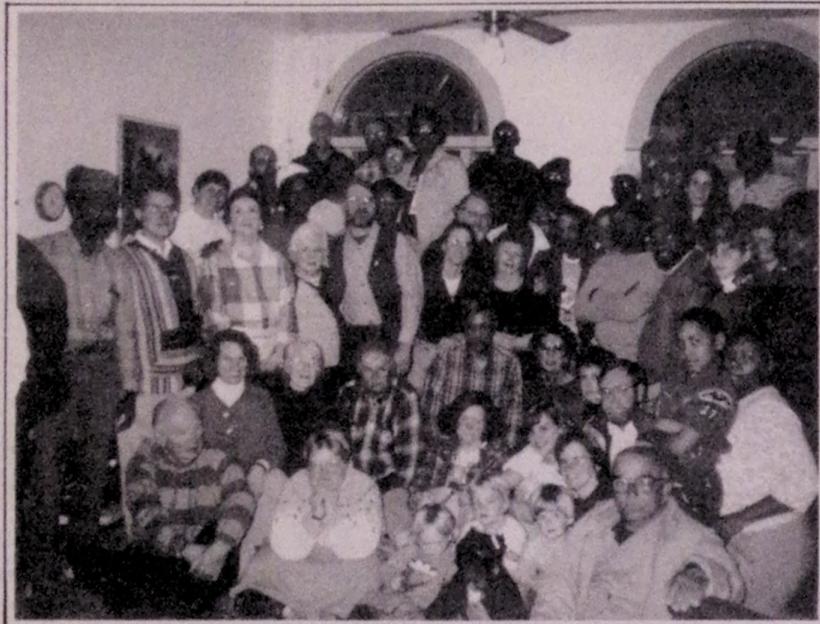
drum." In a May 2 interview in *Parade* magazine, Reno said, "You can't build enough prisons to house all the people who commit crimes. . . . you've got to develop alternate means, because most of the people we send to prison are coming back to the community anyway. . . . Many people are committing crimes because the institutions that raised them as children have totally failed. So you see what you can do to prevent crime in the first place."

That's where Janet Reno differs so profoundly from Attorney Generals William French Smith, Edmund Meese, Richard Thornburgh, and William P. Barr. In Miami, where her sense of fair play resulted in such public trust that she was unopposed in her last election, Reno quickly revealed her distaste for the "hang-up-the-scalps" mentality of so many prosecutors. In the *Parade* interview, she remarked, "I'm a problem solver. And I've said that most prosecutors are more interested in securing convictions than seeking justice."

In Miami, Reno established a drug treatment program for young drug users. It has proven remarkably successful. Reno advocates treatment, rather than punishment, for first-time offenders. She believes in helping wayward children early--before they end up in court. She wants to work with the U.S. Department of Education and the federal Office of Juvenile Justice to reintegrate youthful offenders to their communities. Reno realizes that the deeper young people become enmeshed in the criminal justice system, the harder it is to straighten them out. Crime becomes a way of life. As one astute observer succinctly stated, "Prisons are to crime what greenhouses are to plants."

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HOSPITALITY



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 and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the following:

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Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry
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*A \$5.00 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing **Hospitality**.*



(continued from page 1)

Appreciation for our new Attorney General leads us to the second major event that may cause Americans to rethink their fetish for building more jails and prisons. Ironically, Janet Reno's predecessor, William P. Barr, played a major role in bringing about this event. Barr, a devotee of the "lock-'em-up" philosophy, last summer advocated his intention to build more prisons. In disgust, Kenneth Schoen, head of the Clark Foundation's Criminal Justice component, launched a campaign for a "rational debate about crime." Schoen, the former head of Minnesota's prison system, invited other criminal justice professionals to join him in calling for this debate.

What occurred was unprecedented. Within a few weeks, from all over the country, judges, prosecutors, corrections administrators, and probation and parole authorities responded to Schoen's invitation. It was as if workers with first-hand knowledge all agreed that there has to be a better way to deal with crime than William Barr's simplistic pronouncement.

Right now, less than a year old, the Campaign for an Effective Crime Policy has more than 600 sponsors. They include the governors of Oregon, Minnesota, Washington, and North Dakota, recent past presidents of the American Bar Association, judges from trial courts to state Supreme Courts, law school deans, state legislators, prison wardens, police chiefs, prosecutors, and defense attorneys.

Like Attorney General Reno, the Campaign's sponsors recognize that truly vicious criminals must be confined behind prison walls. But they have first-hand data to support the Campaign's position that many minor offenders spend needless years in prison, while mandatory sentences turn prisons into hideous human warehouses. Overcrowding in jails and prisons invites violence and makes rehabilitation almost impossible.

The number of offenders in state and federal prisons quadrupled between 1970 and 1990. This happened despite a crime rate that varied hardly at all. Joseph Lehman, director of Pennsylvania's prison system, told *USA Today*, "We use prisons as the solution to everything. It doesn't work. My state had a 171% growth in prison population in the 1980's. You can't explain that by our 6% growth in crime rate." Pennsylvania's director of the Commission on Sentencing supports Lehman. "Our policy of confining large numbers of offenders seems to be ineffective in reducing violent crime. Moreover, our policy has resulted in the tremendous growth of property offenders in state prison."

Right now, the prison and jail populations of our country edge toward one million. In 1991 alone, more than \$20 billion was spent to operate America's jails and prisons, at an average cost of roughly \$25,000 per prisoner per year. The USA has the unique distinction of imprisoning a larger percentage of its population than any other nation in the world.

So, we come full circle to our new Attorney General Janet Reno. While the truly "mean and bad people" (her words) do warrant confinement in prison, she recognizes the need for alternative punishments, which would mete out justice without bankrupting the public purse. For non-violent offenders, small community-based correctional centers offer job programs that not only aid offenders toward rehabilitation, but benefit tax-payers through useful community work. And, with young offenders, the emphasis must be on early treatment and the development of self-respect rather than on degrading confinement.

Attorney General Reno will have plenty of support from those who have worked in the various aspects of America's criminal justice system, and who are now sponsors of the Campaign for an Effective Crime Policy. With its headquarters at 918 F Street, NW, in Washington, the Campaign is only too eager to respond to inquiries from the press, politicians, and the public. These sponsors have no illusions that our excessive dependence on jails and prisons makes America any safer. Quite the contrary!

*



The Rent Man

by Ed Loring

The blue man told Barry Burnside and me to leave. "Visiting hours are over," mumbled the laconic death row guard. I hugged Richard Walker goodbye and moved quickly down the long, cold tunnel to the outside world. The free world time was 3:30pm. I was in a bit of a hurry for I was on my way to Dayspring for a two and a half day respite. I wanted to be on the other side of Atlanta to avoid the terrible rush hour traffic that clogs the lanes of I-75 North like pig meat clogs the veins of a 200 pound, 45 year old, 5 feet 10 inch man.

When I came out of the prison I saw two African American women standing beside their car and peering under the opened hood. Clinging to the skirts of one of the women were two little boys ages five and three. As I approached my car the younger woman turned to me and asked if I had any cables. "Our battery went dead while we were in there," she lamented and pointed toward the tons of concertina wire surrounding the entrance to the tunnel.

I said I was not sure but I thought I did. I turned toward the back of our Open Door car to see if our jumper cables were there. Indeed, they were! I opened the back of the station wagon and pulled out the jumper cables. Just before getting ready to drive the car over beside theirs, two fellows pulled up and offered to help the women. So I gave them the jumper cables and they attached them to their cars.

I stood toward the back of their cars and waited while the electrical juice from one battery flowed through the cables to another. The little boys came around and peered at me from time to time. Once the older child came close enough for me to clasp his little hand and ask him his name. Shortly thereafter he turned to his mother and looking at me said, "He is the rent man." With an embarrassed laugh his mother shook her head and said, "No he isn't. He is a friend."

Shortly after that encounter the car's engine turned over and started with a loud burst. The men gave me back my jumper cables and all of us set off on our various ways and directions. Likely, we will never see each other again.

I often think of the little boy's experience of me as the Rent Man on that May afternoon. It is so important for those of us who are white to understand what white racism does to the images that others see in us. Probably this little boy did not know that he was at a prison. He did not know that I considered myself a "good" person. I had come as a minister to visit those in need at the prison. I had come out of the prison in a hurry to move on down the road for my sabbath rest but stopped to help his mother. His startling description grasped me quickly and made me realize that as a white man towering over him at the back of his car, he saw me, as so many African Americans see me and other white men. He saw me as the boss. He saw me as the landlord. He saw me as the oppressor and the one in control. Through the eyes and out of the mouth of this little boy I continue to reflect on how I present myself in the world in which I move. I am very blessed that I often am able to move in a world that is filled with African Americans. I am cursed that by the image that I present through the color of my skin and the history of my gender many people assume that I am the big boss man. I am a racist.

For this little boy who saw me as the Rent Man I want to commit my life to undoing racism. How I long for the day when

he will see me and see only a friend, only the figure of a father, or a brother, or an older man to whom he can turn. How I long for that day. I know that day will not come in my lifetime, but that it is a day for which I pray and struggle. I hope, in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for the coming of the Beloved Community.

I am deeply thankful for this little boy's intrusion into my life. I will fight with my life not to be the Rent Man.

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community.

*

Broken Pieces

by Ed Potts

Wherever; it's
Butler Street breakfast,
our front, or back yard,
Back porch, front stoop,
Soup Kitchen, Shower Line,
or on the streets,
All I see and hear is
Broken pieces, way past fixin'.

Whenever; I am in Woodruff Park,
City Court, City Hall, Welcome House
(What a joke), Ponce Task Force Meetings,
All I see and hear is
Broken pieces, way past fixin'..

I wonder; when the so called Big
People are going to realize their
lies, empty promises, big bucks, and
themselves, are broken pieces,
too far past fixin'!

Ed Potts is a partner at the Open Door.

by Amy Dawn Harwell

while i watched

you quietly bowed your head
head bowed
bowed back
back beaten
beaten down
down town

and offered thanks to the maker
maker thanks
thanks said
said silently
silently suffering
suffering

while i watched

Amy Dawn Harwell is an Emory University student, living and working at the Open Door during the summer.

Death Watch: 1992 In Review

by Douglas Dennis

Albert "The Hangman" Pierrepont, the most prolific official executioner of modern times, died peacefully at age 87, reported the Associated Press. He executed 450 people, including 17 women.

Succeeding his uncle and his father as public hangman, Pierrepont served as Britain's chief executioner from 1946 to 1956. He once hanged 27 war criminals in less than 24 hours, and averaged almost an execution a week for 10 years. He told a Royal Commission that hanging was humane, quick and certain. But after a public outcry about the 1955 execution of a female murderer, Pierrepont gave up his hangman's job.

Britain abolished capital punishment in 1969. The person who campaigned most vigorously against its return was, of all people, Albert Pierrepont. In his 1974 memoirs, he wrote: "The fruit of my experience has this bitter after-taste--that I do not now believe that any one of those hundreds of executions I carried out has in any way acted as a deterrent against future murder. Capital punishment in my view achieved nothing except revenge."

Pierrepont was *the* expert, yet we've learned nothing from him. Executions in this country continue to mount as a record 31 people were executed last year, the highest since 1976 when capital punishment was reinstated. "It's a sad statistic," Leigh Dingerson of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty told AP. "More death row prisoners are exhausting their appeals, and it's also very clear there is a new mood in federal and state courts that's much less tolerant of death row appeals."

1992 saw the US Supreme Court continue to streamline the appeal process, speed-loading the nation's condemned into death chambers. They refused to review an Idaho law that gives death row prisoners only 42 days after sentencing to file an appeal on any grounds, but permits all other prisoners up to five years to find reasons to appeal. The Court had earlier refused to consider the Virginia appeal of Roger Keith Coleman because his lawyers missed a filing deadline by one day. Coleman was executed, sending a clear message that the condemned can prepare to die for their lawyers' mistakes.

And in California, Robert Alton Harris filed a last-ditch appeal contending death by asphyxiation amounted to cruel and unusual punishment. The federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued a reprieve, and he was removed from the gas chamber seconds away from execution. Incensed by the delay, the US Supreme Court stripped the appellate court of authority to consider appeals. In a judicial first, they ordered that no further reprieves be granted to Harris without prior permission. Two hours later, he became the first man to be executed in California in 25 years.

If states that execute people were racehorses, Texas would be Secretariat and Native Dancer rolled into one. Far in the lead with 54 lethal injections, Texas has no competition. Execution, in fact, ranks fourth among causes of death in that state's prisons, according to the *Texas Observer*, right behind cancer, heart failure and HIV/AIDS-related diseases. Louisiana retains a firm grip on third place despite having executed no one this year. Among the 38 states that have the death penalty, the Top Ten are:



1. Texas	54
2. Florida	29
3. Louisiana	20
4. Virginia	17
5. Georgia	15
6. Alabama	10
7. Missouri	7
8. Nevada	5
9. Mississippi	4
10. South Carolina	4

The South remains the most punitive region of the most punitive nation in the industrialized world. Over 87% of America's death sentences have been carried out there. Southerners, long indifferent to moral and spiritual arguments against the death penalty, should recognize a pragmatic one: the price of retribution may be too high for their financially troubled states to bear. A recent study by the *Dallas Morning News* shows that it's cheaper to lock a prisoner up for life than to execute him. "Trials and appeals take 7.5 years and cost taxpayers an average \$2.3 million per case in Texas," mostly on the trial end, the paper reported. "To imprison in a single cell at the highest security level for 40 years costs about \$750,000." A similar study by the *Miami Herald* found that each execution costs Florida taxpayers \$3.1 million.

The election of Bill Clinton presents conflicting signals for the condemned. He's promised to base judicial appointments on individual merit rather than the hitherto required ultra-conservative ideology. On the other hand, as Governor of Arkansas, he refused to intercede in four executions, including that of lobotomized murderer Ricky Rector who left the pie from his last meal in his cell intending to eat it after his execution. Watt Espy, the nation's leading authority on executions, believes Clinton's impact will be in the appointment of hundreds of federal judges across time. There will be no immediate relief from the rush to kill. *

Reprinted from The Angolite, January/February 1993. The Angolite is the award-winning prison magazine published bi-monthly for \$12.00 per year by the Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, LA 70712.

Thomas Dean Stevens
January 1, 1957–June 28, 1993

The day after Tom Stevens was executed by the people of Georgia, I learned Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation. I worked and worked on the mannequin, but no matter how many breaths I forced into its plastic-bag lungs, or how vigorously I pumped on its chest, I couldn't bring it to life. Tom Stevens could not be revived, either.

Tonight I have read exhaustively about his life as told by his siblings, his uncle, his friends, and his doctors. It was a terrible life, and one from which Tom tried to escape several times through suicide. When he was only eight, Tom's mother died after a long and horrible illness with cancer. From then on it seems he knew only terror and abuse at the hands of his stepmother, his alcoholic father, and his stepsister who was left to care for him but was completely unable to do so. The abuse was so bad that it left him brain damaged and impaired, as well as spiritually and emotionally wounded. At the age of 16 Tom became homeless when his father contracted a very serious case of Tuberculosis and was hospitalized for over a year.

It is true that Tom grew up and committed a terrible crime as a young man. But so did we as a society. We didn't care about the little boy whose mom died. We didn't care about the child who was abused and terrorized. We didn't care about the teenager without a father. We didn't care about the young adult who was hopelessly addicted to drugs and alcohol. And finally, when he got into serious trouble, we only knew to kill him. We didn't know to care. On June 28, 1993, in silence, with little protest or objection, we let Tom be killed. We--as a society--didn't care.

Often when people have near-death experiences, they also have profound conversion experiences after they've been resuscitated. Certainly a society, which cares so little for the deeply wounded, hurt, and afflicted like Tom Stevens, is near death. I hope that we will be revived to a conversion--a new life, in which all life is infinitely valued and where the death penalty has no place.

--Elizabeth Dede

Murder In Atlanta

We would like to share some findings about murder in Atlanta, which were compiled by David Osier for Bill Shipp's Georgia (April 19, 1993) and based on a study by University of Georgia sociologist, Dr. Dean Rojek.

"Homicide is an intensely intraracial crime. It's black on black or white on white."

"It's an intensely male phenomenon."

"It is a spontaneous act of rage, frustration, anger."

"You are far more likely to be murdered by your husband, by your lover, by your best friend, than by a stranger on the street."

"It's something that takes place very likely in your house, in your front yard, in the local neighborhood bar."

"There are very few innocent victims. Typically, the victim and the offender are engaged in something."

"At least two-thirds of homicides are related to alcohol."

"Most homicides start as an argument, usually at a Friday night social gathering."

"The final ingredient is a handgun."

"Homicide is not a random event in Atlanta. Homicides typically take place in the black underclass,' Rojek says. 'The people left behind. The people in all those warehouses we have put up for the desperately poor. Atrocious living conditions. Cut off from all social and economic relationships. We have stockpiled these people. You realize that 13% of the city of Atlanta lives in public housing. And that's where a very high percentage of homicides take place. Very few homicides take place in the all-white community, and in the all-black middle- and upper-class community."

"Capital punishment is no deterrent. 'What is that going to do to a guy who's had some beers, hasn't had a job, lives a desperately poor life? And you're going to tell him, *Gee, if you shoot somebody, I'll execute you.*'"

Abolish the death penalty!
House the homeless!

Pay a living wage for good, safe work!
Make housing in healthy and safe conditions a human right!

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A North American Base Community



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AS A RESIDENT VOLUNTEER



Live in a residential Christian community. Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, the 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 or 876-6977.

Frances Pauley

Stories Of Struggle And Triumph

Editor's note: Frances Pauley will be at the Open Door at 5:00pm on September 19 to continue the tradition of telling her Stories of Struggle and Triumph (and to celebrate her 88th birthday). Come join us. We continue here with stories from her years as Director of the Georgia Council on Human Relations and, later, as an employee of the Office of Civil Rights for Health Education and Welfare.

I worked hard over the years, beginning in the '50's, on school desegregation. I never could stand the injustice of separate and unequal, and I really deeply believed from way back in integration. It always just seemed to me that all of us would be better, happier, more productive, and live a greater life if all of us knew as many different kinds of people as we could possibly meet.

I tried to find different ways to work toward school desegregation. For instance, I didn't like the idea of one Black child being picked out and chosen to go to a white school. I thought that, as hard as we knew it would be, there should at least be a group that could suffer together and support each other and not just one person by themselves. So I always worked real hard to try to get up a whole group.



Roy Lee with his graduating class.

It wasn't always possible, though. I remember Roy Lee Hunter, the young man who was the first student to integrate the high school in Unadilla, Dooley County, Georgia. He had a hard time, I mean he had a hard time. When it came time for graduation, the school officials tried to talk him out of coming to the graduation ceremony. When that didn't work, they told him somebody would kill him if he came. Roy Lee said he would be there anyway. So the Rev. Austin Ford and I went down for the occasion. We had notified the FBI and the state police. We picked up Roy Lee at his family's little shack and we walked in together, keeping him in between us all the time. They put him at the very end of the procession and made him walk several feet behind the last person. It was awful, but Roy Lee graduated and nobody killed him.

I remember another real bad case when I was down in Albany. It was very early in the desegregation efforts, and a couple of Black girls had tried to go to the white school. The authorities trumped up some charge and had them arrested. C.B. King, a Black lawyer who was so important in the struggle, worked a lot of legal maneuvers and finally got them out of jail. They ended up in court in Atlanta and C.B. got a special plane to fly them home. So we all gathered at the little airport in Albany, and when the plane landed, we circled it and sang "We Shall

Part VI

Edited by Murphy Davis Transcribed by Elizabeth Dede

Overcome." There we were in the middle of the night in a circle around an airplane, singing "We Shall Overcome." Somehow, you never forget moments like that.

Another story I love to remember is the day in one town that the buses were to be integrated. Everybody was scared and expecting chaos, and all the parents were wondering if somebody was going to get hurt. So on the first day that the Black and white children were going to ride the buses together, some of the mothers went down to the bus stop to wait with the children and at least make sure they got on the bus safely. While they were waiting, one little white fella walked over to a little Black fella and said, "I wish my face was brown like yours." The Black boy looked at him real surprised and said, "Well why in the world do you wish that?" and the white boy said, "Then I wouldn't have to feel so bad when people are mean to you."

I love that story because I know how many times I just hated being white. But I know that I didn't make me white, and I did learn that if our goal is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, we'd better learn to love ourselves!

It makes me think of a little girl in the first grade, I think it was Fort Valley, when the schools were first desegregated. You know how hard it is for a first grader to learn to sit still in school when you're used to playing and running around. Well, this little girl kept wiggling and getting up and couldn't sit still to save herself. Well, finally the white teacher said, "You little n-gg-- you, you sit down." The little girl shot back, "Well you just make me, you white m---- f----!" So the teacher grabbed the little girl, took her down to the principal's office just as fast as she could go and said, "I just want to tell you what this child said in my classroom." So she proceeded to tell the principal, and the principal looked at the little girl and said, "Well, what had she said to you?" The little girl said, "She called me a n-gg--." So the principal turned to the teacher and said, "Well perhaps after this, you'd better call your students by their names."

Here and there, there were those teachers and principals who were really committed to fairness and respect and making education available to all the children.

In 1968, I went to work for the office of Civil Rights that had been set up in the Department of Education in response to the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. It wasn't like other government work because there wasn't a whole lot of paper work. All we had was a law and two or three people who believed in it! They began to look for people who had had experience in civil rights work. Well, hardly anybody who had any experience in civil rights wanted to go to work for the government. I didn't either, really, but I needed the income badly at that point. And the two men who were organizing the division based here in Atlanta were people I knew and had worked with. One was African American and one white. They sat me down between them and practically held my hand to make me fill out the application. It was a good while before I was accepted, because, you see, I was already 62 years old. The government wasn't used to hiring civil servants at 62. So it took them a little while but they hired me because these folks who knew me wanted me to do this job. Leon Panetta was our boss in Washington--it was such a wonderful group of people to work with.

I was assigned to Mississippi on school desegregation. We started out picking places where there were just a few Blacks, and it would really be economically sound for the school district to integrate because they would save double busing, and this and that. And we could get a success story that would help us on the next level. Then finally we headed on down to work on the Mississippi Delta.

We worked day and night as hard as we could until that evil day came and Nixon got elected. Nixon decided to put an end to the Office of Civil Rights, so in about a year my bosses quit. I stuck on a little while longer. I remember one time the Justice Department called a meeting and all the school superintendents came down to Jackson along with a few people the president sent. One of them was John Dean who was to run the meeting. They came in with these so-called desegregation plans that were a joke. They weren't about to desegregate anything. So, since I had the authority to say yes or no, I said I wasn't going to accept them. I said, "No, this simply will not work." So John Dean took me out in the hall and said, "What do you mean? These are good plans. Why don't you say yes?" And he began to almost threaten me. I sure did enjoy it when he went to jail. I want to tell you! I know that might not be a Christian attitude, but it was kind of nice.

I came back, but the Republicans won out because they said they thought I'd do better work if I stayed in the office in Atlanta than if I went out in the field. So it was about that time I quit the office of Civil Rights and began to work in other ways.

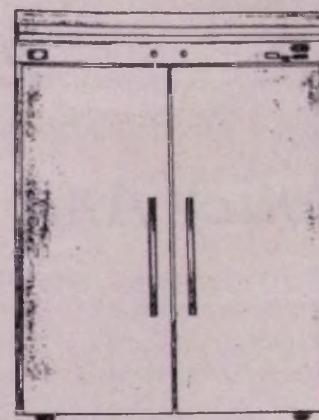
Before I left the work in Mississippi, I had an occasion to go back to the Delta about a year after we had gotten the schools desegregated there, to see how things were going. I remember when I got to one school I drove up and just stood there by the schoolyard for a while. The first thing I knew, the tears were running down my face. I had always really believed in what I was doing, but as I looked out at that schoolyard I felt it was the real proof. Over on one side was the band marching with an African American man directing the band and about 50-50 Black and whites in the band. Over there was another group of kids, Black and white together. And everywhere I looked, it was just beautiful.

I talked with some of the kids. And one little girl came up to me and said, "Before you leave town would you do me a favor? Would you go and talk to Susie's mother?" I said, "Well who is Susie?" She said, "Susie used to go to school with us, but her mother took her out and sent her to the private school. Would you go and talk to Susie's mother and tell her please to let Susie come back to our school? It's so much more fun than it ever was before. We learn their songs, and they learn ours. We all have fun." And then I felt that if what I had believed in could work in the Mississippi Delta, it could work anywhere. I still think it can, though we still have a lot of rough spots to overcome as far as school desegregation is concerned.

I wish we had more interracial groups that were working really hard on some of these old problems. I guess we sort of thought they were solved and left them and went on to other things that seemed to be more pressing. But I don't know. You have to believe or you can't do anything. But along the way you have to have a certain kind of freedom. I don't so much mean political freedom; I'm talking about the freedom that you feel to think and be creative with whatever your problems or issues are. You have to be free to figure out how better you can serve the breakfast or how better you can cook the soup, or do whatever things need to be done. You have to have this freedom to have the creativity to work to carry out whatever we feel is our real mission in life.

*

Thank You, Peachtree Presbyterian Church



for the wonderful new refrigerator!

Dreams Do Come True!



GLADYS RUSTAY

On June 28, twenty volunteers from Jubilee Partners, our sister community in Camer, Georgia, arrived for the day.

For two years we have been trying to get 910 painted. On June 28, twenty volunteers arrived from Jubilee Partners, our sister community, to spend a day. They quickly put up ladders and scaffolding and started working. By day's end they estimated that 20% of the job is done. What a wonderful gift this was. Now we need the other 80% done. Please call if you can donate time. We also need money for the paint.

Please call Elizabeth at 876-6977.

I Hear Hope Banging On My Back Door: Why Homelessness Exists In America

Section B: Part IV, *Public Policy And Cheap Labor*

Ed Loring

Not always. Sometimes, many times, it is despair, not hope, that knocks. Sometimes the push on the door is to get out, not in. The Open Door is often closed, too much, locked. But from the inside going out, all one need do is gently push the panic bar and whew! you are on the other side of the wall. Recently we discarded the back door alarm and in the summer months the side door stands open.

Talbot disappeared one morning after two years of homemaking with us, his family. We were stunned, still are in fact. I keep skipping into the living room and expect to see Talbot coaxing the copying machine, getting the dismal weekly financial report ready for Gladys. But he is not there. AIDS is nibbling his body; fear bites his bowels. He started getting a check which included a heavy duty back pay installment. He walked out. Phyllis, who serves soup with us, saw him in early summer, lumbering down the city streets. "He looked bad, very bad," she reported to us one morning. Some say he is in jail.

Elizabeth and Pamela learned how to dance together in the central office. The administrative load at our home is as heavy as wind is light. Pamela was building life and love with us for the third time; and for several months worked in tandem with Elizabeth writing thank you notes, posting packages, filling out money orders for prisoners, making phone calls. She was a delight and a friend for Elizabeth, and joy flooded our central office. Pamela recently returned home from Grady Hospital pleased and proud that her medication had been reduced 5 mg. Her doctor saw progress, stability and health singing in Pamela's eyes.

Another great gift, Pamela's charisma, were her constant prayer concerns. We have community prayer twice daily; and twice daily Pamela would lift her hand and speak her heart. While Carl was in the hospital having his lower leg amputated, Pamela never failed to "lift up her good friend" in prayer, as we call it in Jay Frasier's words. Always concerned for the homeless and prisoner, for our house and the hungry, Pamela kept teaching us that prayer and its concerns are the center in a family of faith and a household of hope.

Recently, unexpectedly, with few words and no explanation, Pamela leaned against the panic bar, stumbled slightly on the second step and BANG was gone. Now, there is a hole in our hearts. Elizabeth has wept in the black night. Sorrow stamps where once, with Pamela, we danced.

Later, tomorrow maybe, when I take the lunch time garbage to the dumpster, Pony will be banging around the backyard. She will greet me, tease me--"Oh, they finally got you to do a little work around 910, huh?!"--wink, and move back to her spot under the Southern Hackberry tree. She blesses me. I grasp the blessing; and I would do what Jacob did to get it. Hope is there darting around the backyard, banging on the back door. Jesus didn't lead us this far for nothing!



Homelessness is Hell. There is absolutely no excuse for its existence in America. Like DDT we must outlaw it, remove it from our land, and punish people who cause it. Homelessness is a deadly poison, a malignant cancer. We have unhoused citizens of the United States and guests who are lost somewhere within our borders because we will it so. The well-to-do are responsible, for we have the means to end homelessness and outlaw it. In 14 years of living with people condemned to the streets, I have never yet met a single, solitary soul who wanted to be poor, homeless, abused and despised. Yet, the homeless, too, are responsible for this terrible social sin now woven into the very fabric of our national life. The unhoused must raise their voices and present their bodies in a life of protest and resistance to homelessness. This is very difficult but a necessary ingredient to bring us to repentance and a new life of love and reconciliation in the Beloved Community--God's will for us all.

We comforted comforters know why homelessness exists in the U.S.A. In the first place, **Homelessness is public policy**. It is the will of the American people. There is no housing shortage in Atlanta or in our nation. **Homelessness is not a housing issue**. Houston Wheeler in his excellent book Organizing in the Other Atlanta (pp.42-43) reprints an amazing but poignant point by newspaperman Mark Sherman. Its title: "Housing's Cruel Irony: Despite 30,000 Vacant Apartments Metro Atlanta Has 15,000 Homeless." (6/5/91). For every homeless man and woman and boy and girl there are 2 vacant apartments in Atlanta. Public policy--the will of the majority--as expressed and instituted in law, economic policy, social values, and our sin-sick souls is the cause of homelessness. This is the reason that neither Ross Perot, George Bush, nor Bill Clinton had to speak to homelessness in the 1992 Presidential elections.

In the same manner, there is no food shortage in America. **Hunger is not a food issue**. Hunger is not an agricultural problem. Recently my good friend Bill Bolling told me that the Atlanta Community Food Bank needs larger warehouse space for the harvest increases year after year. Why then does the number of hungry children and adults grow month after month? Our unemployment rate has fallen in this city; the Olympic boom is touted world wide. Our downtown churches have the best preachers in a decade. Why hunger? Like homelessness we who eat three meals a day from our own kitchens and in restaurants, want it. **Hunger is public policy**. Hunger is good for the economy and stabilizes our privileges. But why? How?

Rooted beneath our public policies, which institutionalize and guarantee homelessness and hunger, is the need for an abundant supply of cheap labor which can claim no benefits. The minimum wage is a death wage. To pay it is to kill. To support it is to support slavery and death. Housing, food, clothing, and medical care on the paltry penance is impossible. However, with 15,000 homeless and 25,000 hungry and tens of thousands more on the verge of destitution, people will do anything for \$5.00 per

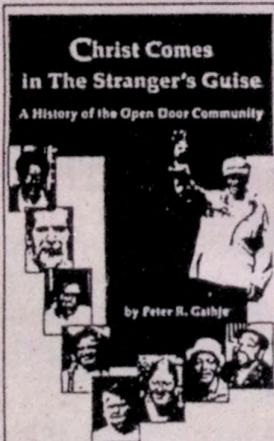
hour. In June, I sat in a labor pool not far from my home. Over a 3 hour period, 300 men went to work at minimum wage while another 150 were jostled and pushed to the back of the room. A primary reason Atlanta was awarded the 1996 Olympics was Andrew Young's continual promise that Atlanta had a tremendous pool of cheap and nondemanding labor (and, of course, weak labor unions). Out of the hell of homelessness men and women become grateful for the nasty jobs at \$5.00 which come through the labor pools. This is slavery!

A docile, dying labor force at death wage levels is not the only reason for our public policies which produce our privileges. We also need the bodies and the blood of our poor sisters and brothers. From plasma banks which suck the blood from broken black, brown, and white blood streams, flow benefits for us: medicine and research. Often when a person does not find a day labor job they turn to the plasma bank and shed their blood--not for remission of sin--but for our benefit. Another demand for the poor flesh of the destitute and oppressed locked outside on our streets and inside in our prisons is medical teaching and research. Emory University Medical School and the Morehouse School of Medicine are dependent on the homeless and poor to flood into the clinics and emergency room all day, every day. On these homeless and poor folk, middle and upper class students, at astronomical tuition fees and accumulating debt in a structure like our Federal Government's deficit system, can "practice" medicine before they perform on us. Likewise, the Georgia Medical College is located in Augusta and prisoners are brought there from all over the state for our young students to learn the skill but not the art of their trade.

The system demands that we keep 10% of our brothers and sisters in bondage to the powers of hunger, homelessness, prison and disease. Disempowered and filled with despair, as sheep without a shepherd, the wolves and lions are devouring them--for our benefit. To change this system we must fight like heaven for the homeless poor and prisoner to receive justice, and most important, we must love one another with a particular love for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger within our gates. *

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community.

*Your donation
will assist us in
feeding the hungry
and
visiting the prisoner.*



Please send a \$10 donation to:

Phillip Williams
Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

for a copy of our 10th Anniversary Book, or call 404/874-9652.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____

Fulfilling The Imperial Hotel Promise

(Paraphrase of John 6: 1-14)

by Houston Wheeler

Jesus went to Woodruff Park in the heart of the Atlanta Central Business District. A large crowd of homeless persons followed him, because they had seen his miracles of feeding the hungry and healing the sick. Jesus sat down on the grass in Woodruff Park with his disciples. The time for the Festival of Shelters was drawing near. Jesus looked around and saw that a large crowd of homeless persons was coming to him, so he asked Phillip of the Open Door Community, "Where can we permanently house all these people?"

Phillip answered, "For everyone to have one unit of permanent housing, it would cost more than \$200 million in financing."

Another one of his disciples, James, said, "There are 10 banks in this Central Business District who have financing and know how to apply for tax credits. But the banks say they can't provide all the financing to house all the homeless in Atlanta because of the high risk."

Jesus told them, "Get People for Urban Justice (PUJ) to make the banks sit down."

So PUJ made the banks sit down. Jesus took the financing of each bank, took the tax credits, took the funds from local governments and foundations, and even sold some bonds. Each of the banks found developers (for-profit and non-profit working together) who then made plans which fixed-up existing housing and constructed new housing units. Each of the 10 banks agreed to reinvest in the community and house the homeless. Each of the 10 banks developed 2,000 units of housing over 10 years which housed 20,000 homeless persons in Atlanta.

When they were all housed, Jesus said to his disciples, "Behold there are housing units left over because everyone has shared and worked together to finance the end of the injustice of being homeless in Atlanta."

See the miracle that Jesus had performed, the people of Atlanta said, "Surely this is the fulfillment of the promise made at the Imperial Hotel!" *

A Pre-Olympic Plan For Housing Homeless Persons In Atlanta



A Position Paper
Developed By
People for Urban Justice

Support People for Urban Justice

Order Your Copy Of

A Pre-Olympic Plan
For Housing Homeless Persons
(32 pages long)

\$1.00 Donation

Send to: People for Urban Justice
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE
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The End Is Near: A Review Of Dale Aukerman's Reckoning With Apocalypse

by Elizabeth Dede

Dale Aukerman is a friend of the Open Door Community and is an activist in the peace and justice community. He is also a gifted writer, having authored the award-winning Darkening Valley: A Biblical Perspective On Nuclear War. His new book, Reckoning With Apocalypse: Terminal Politics And Christian Hope, is now available from the Brethren Peace Fellowship, PO Box 455, New Windsor, MD 21776 for \$20.95, plus \$2 for postage and shipping.

Most readers of Hospitality, those of us who live at the Open Door, and the many people who visit and volunteer at 910 are probably already very much aware of the ways US American society and culture have rejected God's will for the earth and humanity. Pollution, war, homelessness, prison, violence, crime, the death penalty are all signs of our sinfulness and our turning from the love of God our creator and sustainer. Often, though, we are able to convince ourselves that this is just the way things are, always have been, and always will be. The poor you will always have with you, and when has there been a time in human history when some nation wasn't warring with another? However, Aukerman argues for a more urgent view of history and our present time. Without standing on the street corner holding a sign saying, "Repent Ye Sinners! The End Is Near!", and certainly avoiding the pitfall of so many readers of Revelation that specific signs point to the end on a particular day after a certain volcanic eruption, Aukerman does have as his central premise that life, as we know it, is about to end.

To a certain extent, the followers of Jesus have always believed that the second coming was imminent. Jesus said that some of his disciples would still be alive at the time of his return, but here we are 2,000 years later, still waiting, and still wondering. Now, with our nuclear destructive capacity, terrible pollution, the rain forests destroyed, epidemics of diseases such as AIDS for which there is no cure, and the ozone layer disappearing rapidly, our end seems more impending, and whether we see it as doom or glory, it still stares us in the face daily.

In case we were not convinced, Aukerman is very good about giving us statistics throughout the book, which helpfully illustrate our mixed up priorities leading to death and destruction. For instance, US American military spending is \$450 billion per year. If Atlanta could have only 0.5% of that money for one year we would have new housing for every homeless person. Certainly, the end would be set to some more future date if everyone had a home and fewer bombs were built.

Being committed to feminism and an understanding of God as more than male, the Open Door would ask Dale Aukerman to begin to look at his images of God and to question the patriarchy of our systems that have oppressed half of the world's population since the beginning of time. More attention to inclusive language and a less male-dominated view of God could lead us to an understanding that our world needs the nurture and gentleness of women in order to reverse the deadly patterns that have been set throughout history.

If we have this understanding of God as nurturing and gentle, and if we begin to dignify ourselves and others with this same behavior, then we will understand, as Aukerman points out, that it is only God's mercy that has kept us here. If we begin to rely on God's grace, then we, even as a first-world superpower, can begin to let go of our smart bombs and trident submarines. They only signify the end. Our hope is not in them, but in God, who has protected and sustained throughout the ages.

While writing about a subject that is often full of gloom and doom, Aukerman is able to fill us with hope. But it is a hope full of challenges. We must look to our gracious God for strength, and then we must begin the enormous task of change to reverse the destruction that is all around us and to live as people who choose life.

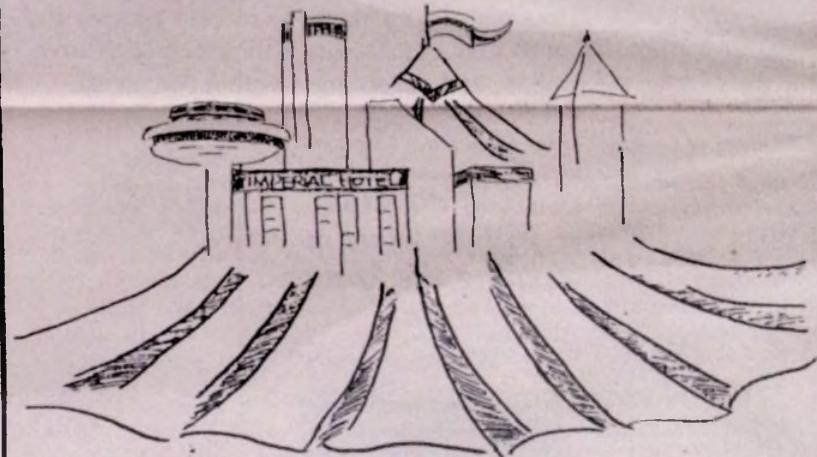
The book ends in triumph, even while raising the most crucial question for our time:

A president, a maverick missile commander, or a malfunctioning computer system might initiate the nuclear fury and in one day become more determinative of the human situation (it would seem) than God's revelation centered in Jesus of Nazareth. What does that mean for the sovereignty of God over the course of history?

The crucifixion of Jesus brings some explication. There most of all, humans were permitted the power and "freedom" to move against God, to crush the inauguration of God's Rule in Jesus, to do away with God who had come so near. That move did not impose the insurgent human will upon God but was taken up by God's incomparably more determinative countermove of atonement and resurrection. What human defiance of God imposed, God in Jesus took freely... for the rescue of all. That countermove remains more determinative of the human future than any possible insurgency, even that of human self-destruction, because God is bringing it toward consummation in the unveiling of the One still hidden. Only the rising of Jesus of Nazareth has more power and momentum than the sway of death that is tightening so perceptibly around our planet. God who remained graciously sovereign when the corpse of the incarnate Son was entombed would be equally omnipotent even in the aftermath of the ultimate war or other terminal madness and near the full revealing of [God's] power. "The Lord is risen indeed!" Death's dominion is at an end. The fullness of God's Rule is breaking in. What God has begun on earth [God] will complete.

Elizabeth Dede is a partner at the Open Door Community. *

"But I, the Lord your God who led you out of Egypt, I will make you live in tents again, as you did when I came to you in the desert." (Hosea 12:9)



FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

Sunday, September 26,
through Friday, October 1.

Worship daily at 5:00pm.
Leafletting at noon.

Please join us in Woodruff Park!

If you want to organize a Festival of Shelters in your community, we have information packets available.

Please contact:

Ed Loring

Festival of Shelters

910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE

Atlanta, GA 30306

404/874-9652

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Friends at Open Door,

Your ministry is a beacon of hope in a disturbing and violent world. Receiving your Hospitality newsletter is always thought provoking and challenging and what an inspiration the series on Frances Pauley has been!

Keep the faith--

Shalom,

Jean Miller
Lee's Summit, MO

Dear Open Door Ministry:

Your paper and its writing never fail to touch my heart and inspire me.

Keep up the good work.

Antoinette Harris
Atlanta, GA

Dear Brother Ed:

For some time now I have received a free copy of Hospitality. Your paper is one of the few I take time to read from front to back. The writings inside Hospitality, besides always being articulate and informing, are so inspiring and, I truly believe, God-directed. Hospitality should be required reading for every student of Christ.

Honestly, I cannot fathom how anyone--Christian, Jew, Muslim--who claims to practice righteousness would not be moved by the simple truth contained in Hospitality. Your (God's) paper is an indictment against one of our most deplorable social ills: homelessness.

As an incarcerated person, although I have a roof over my head, clean clothes to wear and food to eat, I feel especially connected to the homeless: just as they, I, too, am a victim of an uncaring society. When I read your paper and see all the little things you need like a power lawnmower, a vehicle to make prison trips, jeans, men's underwear and work shirts, quick grits, cheese, mayonnaise, multi-vitamins, MARTA tokens, postage stamps, etc., to help those in need, and I think of all that I wasted like the Prodigal Son in riotous living, I feel really guilty not being able to help your (God's) cause now.

I'm very interested in joining the Open Door Community and becoming a resident volunteer upon my release from prison. That is, after I've fulfilled my parole obligations. There are many ways I know I can help at the Open Door. The fact that I am Black, poor, uneducated and have been incarcerated for 16 years makes me bring a lot to the table to offer. I love God and I love people. I have several technical skills under my belt which may also be of some service to your community.

Instead of being paroled back out into that materialistic jungle we call "free society," I wish I could be paroled to your community, at least for the first year, to give me perspective and put me on the right track. It's not about "I" and "me" anymore. It's about pleasing God and walking in God's light. I don't ever want to get caught up in that rat-race again, God have mercy!

Please give my regards to everyone at the Open Door Community.

In God,

H. M.
Georgia State Prison
Reidsville, GA

To the Open Door--

Your work and spirit are hard to believe and inspiring. Thank you for the additional fine effort you make to produce Hospitality by which you minister to the homed.

Surely you are people of Christ.

Ann Darby
Athens, GA

Friends.

At Christmas time I wrote to you, "Going to Cuba and back one time is not going to do it for you or for me. So let us be about the rest of the story, doing what we can where we are to end the disgraceful thirty year embargo on Cuba."

It is time to go to Cuba again, to try to raise the consciousness of our nation, and catch the attention of a new Administration, and stand once more with the people of Cuba as day by day their circumstances grow more difficult.

The Embargo and Cuban Democracy Act wreak a continuous, compounded negative impact on the Cubans. The lack of Vitamin B (or perhaps poor rum) is apparently the cause of a disease that has caused blindness in 26,000 Cubans.

The storm of March 13-14 that dumped tons of snow on us here in the East, battered Cuba, destroying 14,000 homes in Havana, 40,000 nationwide, downing millions of banana trees and severely injuring sugar, citrus, and tobacco crops. Power lines were knocked out. Hospitals lost their medicine stocks and blood banks. Tens of thousands lost their homes. The United Nations estimates damages to the island of over \$1 billion.

If it were any other nation in the world, tons of humanitarian aid would be flowing in hours. It is time to normalize relations with Cuba.

I am writing to make you aware of the Second U.S.-Cuba Friendship sponsored by Pastors for Peace. Joan and I will be driving our little old Honda. The ten routes through the United States will begin July 16. We will cross the border to Mexico July 29 and be in Cuba from July 31 to August 7.

It is not enough for us to know about this. We must tell others. We must tell others who influence United States Government policy--the media, the Congress, the business interests of our nation. Write one more letter. Make one more phone call. Share your concern with others over the summer. Let us have a compounded positive effect on our government.

It is time. It is time to end the embargo. It is time to have normal relations with our neighbors. There is no reason under the sun, except invincible ignorance, for us to treat our Cuban brothers and sisters the way we do. It's time. . . It's time. . . It's time.

Peace,

Joe Heckel
Pittsburgh, PA

Dear Friends,

Several months back, I read John Cole Vodicka's article about the ongoing need for men's shoes. I mentioned the need during worship one Sunday shortly after that, not expecting much response. But as I often do, I underestimated the faithful response of God's people. Shoes came pouring in--many of which should fit especially large and beautiful feet! These are sent with love and hope in the One who will "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79).

Suzy and Christopher and I are well, and getting ready to move back to Princeton for my last year of seminary. Last weekend I participated in a conference at Kirkridge on William Stringfellow--led by Dan Berrigan, Liz McAlister, Jim Wallis, Bill Wylie-Kellermann, and Walter Wink. A real blessing was running into Pete Gathje and feeling the connectedness of the life we shared in Atlanta.

Much love,

Mark Harper
First Presbyterian Church
Ambler, PA

Mark Harper is a good friend of the Open Door and was a resident volunteer in 1986 and 1987.



WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 1:30 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 1:30.) 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, 1:30pm-5pm

SHELTER REQUESTS--Wednesday-Friday, 9am-noon

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), September 10, 11, 12.

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.

NEEDS

JEANS

Men's Work Shirts

Men's Underwear

Quick Grits

Cheese

Mayonnaise

Multi-Vitamins

MARTA Tokens

Postage Stamps

Men's Large Shoes (12-14)

Coffee

Non-Aerosol Deodorant

Toothbrushes

Toothpaste

Disposable Razors

Shampoo

Silverware

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 11:00 or after 1:30, it would be helpful.

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

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, _____ Zip _____ + _____

(Please note: If you have been receiving Hospitality and are not a new subscriber, please send us your name and address with zip + 4. We are trying to update our mailing list and upgrade our mail-out process. Thank you.)

Open Door Community Worship

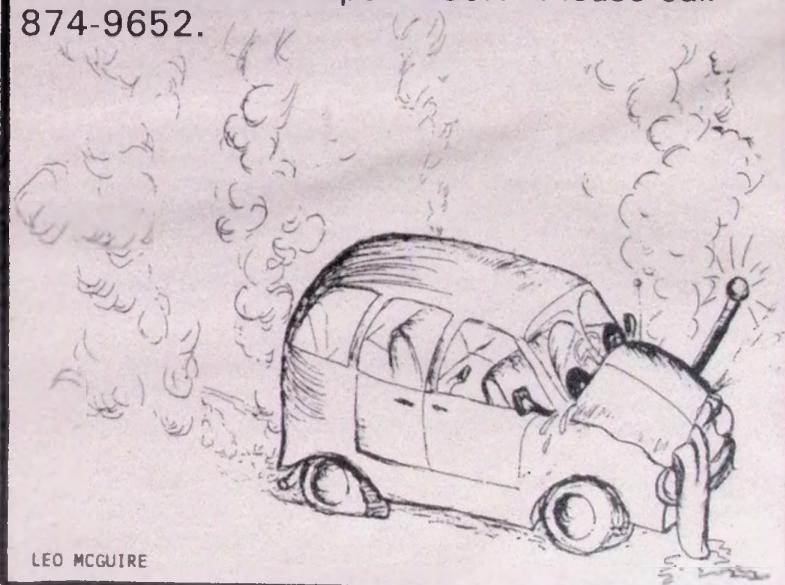
We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5:00pm on Sunday evenings followed by supper together.

Join us!

August 1	Worship at 910 Dick Rustay, preaching
August 8	Worship at 910 Rev. Donald Wester, preaching
August 15	Worship at 910 Rev. Nellie Williams, preaching
August 22	Worship at 910 Rev. Anne Callison A report from Nicaragua
August 29	Worship at 910 Ed Loring, preaching



Our mini van made hundreds of prison trips and other journeys with the community. It had nearly 140,000 miles and finally gave up the ghost. Do you have a reliable station wagon or mini van to donate to the Open Door? Please call 874-9652.



LEO MC GUIRE