

# HOSPITALITY

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

August 1994

## Atlanta's Greatest Sinkhole: *Underground Atlanta*

by Ed Loring

Although the Bible is clear and concrete in its assessment of the consequences when a foundation is built on sand: "The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall it was!" (Matthew 6:27, TEV), Atlanta continues to rely on dirt not rock. Last year two people of color were sucked to their drowning deaths as the rain poured and the earth opened her mouth and gulped them down. Other sinkholes have appeared throughout the city. Some are reported in the press; others are not. People are afraid. With or without the 1996 Olympics, Atlanta, below the pretentious towers of Portman's purposes, is coming undone as the earth moans and the pipes groan and the buttresses shiver. Unlike California and its nature-driven earthquakes, we, slowly, forgetfully, decay from within. But the flood waters gather strength. However, the greatest sinkhole in the city is Underground Atlanta.

### Underground Atlanta: The Sad Statistic

Underground Atlanta is failing. Is dying. Underground Atlanta is sucking the life out of the center of our city. We are drowning in the filth of this sinkhole.

But as the interpreters of the American way of life tell us, we are a society filled with addictions, and a fundamental symptom (Greek: to fall together) of our corruption manifests itself in our denial. In mid-June the Atlanta Constitution published an article reinforcing our denial: "Underground's Toughest Times May Be Over" (AJC, 6/18/94). Why? Because Bob Grahamslaw, General Manager, Joe Martin, President, Herman Russell, Joint Venturer, and Paul B. Kelman, Central Atlanta Progress, tell us so. Said Mr. Kelman, "Between now and the Olympics, business ought to be mighty good for downtown Atlanta and Underground." The hopes of these leading business voices are based on three possibilities: 1) Georgia State students will begin to come to Underground more often; 2) in a few years the Atlanta Federal Center will open and many of the 8,000 will eat lunch at Underground; and 3) Atlanta may, someday, build housing for the rich downtown!



The article did not mention (because it could not tell the truth—the nature of addiction/denial) that Underground Atlanta is 28 million dollars in the hole, that tenants cannot pay rent, that racist and sexist policies keep Underground lawyers pleading for mercy day and night, and that the plans for a dome over Underground, to isolate the visitor from a touch of public life, have collapsed.

Underground Atlanta could have been a happy place. A place for all people to work and play, think and feel, celebrate and grieve together in the heart of our city. But Atlanta has heart trouble. The central city is suffering cardiac arrest. Justice, righteousness, and honesty are being tortured. Since the nights that Mayor Rev. Andrew Young, Daniel Sweat, Joseph Martin (Biblical names all) and their "secret weapon" (to quote Rev. Young) Shirley Franklin wrote the recipe for their foul brew, Underground has been doomed. Yet...

"Today is the day that the Lord is making." Let us repent, reconsider, redesign, and redo Underground Atlanta for the sake of life, love, and justice.

### Five Points At Five Points

I would like to make five points concerning the growing death at Underground Atlanta including proposals that might give that gasping hole some life. First of all it needs to be acknowledged to the citizens of Atlanta that Underground represents "taxation without representation," which was one of the fundamental arguments in support of the American Revolution. It was because of taxation without representation that the New England clergy, in part, supported the use of violence and rebellion against the authorities that they took to be ordained by God. When it became clear to Mr. Sweat and Mr. Martin and Ms. Franklin and Mayor Andrew Young that the citizens of Atlanta would not pass the referendum to guarantee payment of the bonds if Underground Atlanta failed, they took their needs to the state legislature. There was some loophole through which they could jump and dance that enabled the state legislature to grant the offering of the bonds. This obligated the citizens of Atlanta to back those bonds with tax monies without an opportunity to vote. The leaders of this city

### Atlantans Confess Their Sins

The people say, "Now we know why God does not save us from those who oppress us. We hope for light to walk by, but there is only darkness, and we grope about like blind people. We stumble at noon, as if it were night, as if we were in the dark world of the dead. We are frightened and distressed. We long for God to save us from oppression and wrong but nothing happens."

"Lord, our crimes against you are many. Our sins accuse us. We are well aware of them all. We have rebelled against you, rejected you, and refused to follow you. We have oppressed others and turned away from you. Our thoughts are false, our words are lies. Justice is driven away, and right cannot come near. Truth stumbles in the public square, and honesty finds no place there. There is so little honesty that anyone who stops doing evil finds themselves the victim of crime" (Isaiah 59:9-15, TEV).

(continued on page 2)



# 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, please contact any of the following:*

**Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry**  
**Ed Loring--Correspondence**  
**Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry**  
**Murphy Davis and Elizabeth Dede--Hardwick Prison Trip**  
**Phillip Williams and Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinators**

## Newspaper

**Editorial Staff--Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Ed Loring, and Gladys Rustay**

**Layout--Gladys Rustay and Elizabeth Dede**

**Copy Editor--Elizabeth Dede**

**Circulation--Phillip Williams and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests**

**Subscriptions or change of address--Gladys Rustay**

(A \$5 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing Hospitality.)

(Underground, continued from page 1)

and Underground Atlanta need to come before the public and to confess that terrible deceit. What would become of democracy and the American way of life if in fact we had taxation without representation?

Second, there need to be reparations. Approximately \$10 million were stolen from poor people to build Underground Atlanta. This was block grant money, hard to come by in the Reagan years, that could have gone into housing for the homeless and services for those deranged and hurt who wander our streets with nothing to do and nowhere to go. Instead this money was used to build a playpen for the rich. One needs neither to be a Jew nor a Christian to know the fundamental values of Western culture. When a community steals from the poor, and deprives the hungry of their bread, and the lonely wanderer and stranger within our gates their shelter, then the forces of love and justice which lie deep in the roots of the human heart will arise to destroy those injustices. We as a city cannot steal from the poor without paying a much higher price. Reparations of that \$10 million to the homeless poor and hungry of this city must be made for Underground Atlanta not to fold and dry up and blow away.

Third the city of Atlanta owes to the citizens of Atlanta, the Al Smith Park. This was promised to the Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless by Ms. Shirley Franklin, as a representative of the mayor's office. Once she got what she wanted she withdrew her support and the Al Smith Park became a forgotten place. The reason the Al Smith Park is so important has to do with space for the homeless poor in the city of Atlanta. When Underground Atlanta was built it took over Plaza Park. Plaza Park was a place that older homeless African American men could sit and rest throughout the day undisturbed. When we went to the city asking for a replacement park it was guaranteed that such a park would be built. It was guaranteed that such a park would be named for Al Smith, a homeless hero. It was promised that there would be a continual place where homeless people could go unharassed. That has not taken place. Where is

Shirley Franklin today? What is the value of her promises this afternoon? When will the city give back the space that it has promised to the poor—the Al Smith Park? Underground Atlanta cannot have a restaurant that will succeed on the former Plaza Park until it gives what it has promised to give. Why do you think that restaurant after restaurant and play place after play place fails? Underground Atlanta will continue to be a sinkhole until the Al Smith Park is established.

Fourth, Underground Atlanta must retrain its police force and teach them how to welcome all people to Underground Atlanta. Presently the police and security guards try to fend off poor people and most particularly African American poor people. They make a class distinction; they make a distinction based on outward appearance; they make a distinction that denies the fundamental vision of American democratic institutions which are committed to equality and freedom. Someone must teach those police people how to welcome folk, how to be courteous to people, how to look after those in greatest need, how to treat men and women who are poor and needy with the same respect that they do the rich and powerful. The word police comes from the Greek word polis. The police are those who are guardians of the city. Until the Underground security can begin to protect and to help we will see Underground Atlanta contributing to a growing hostility and meanness on the streets. The sinkhole will grow deeper if the security forces cannot learn kindness and love and gentleness and welcome.

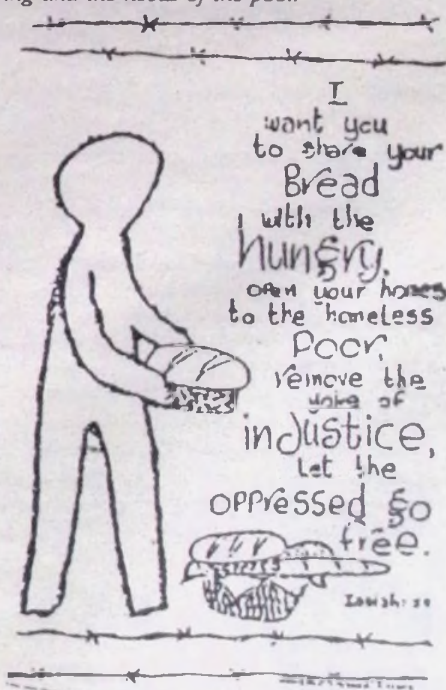
Finally, the Underground Festival, Inc., including Joe Martin and Bob Grahamslaw along with Paul B. Kelman of Central Atlanta Progress and Herman Russell, must become advocates for the poor. We know that those invested in the system which causes poverty and suffering suggest that homeless people really do not need housing and that the true origins of homelessness are mental illness and drug abuse. However, the fact remains that human beings need shelter and housing. Human beings need rights and respect. There is in the center of this city a vacancy and vacuum in regards to the advocacy for the poor. We are tripling the size of our city jail and at this very moment people are working on that construction job. We found millions of dollars to build a jail but not one voice was raised from the business and the political community for housing for the homeless. Until there is a turn around in the hearts and minds of the business leadership, and business leaders are as concerned for human life as they are for profits, Underground Atlanta will continue to fail. We must have housing just as we must meet the basic needs for all of us.

Certainly entertainment is a basic need and it is good to have a place in the center of the city where we may go and eat and drink and sing and shop. But likewise we must have housing and hospitals and good schools for us all. Needless to say, advocacy for the poor would include the demolition of labor pools and a raise of the minimum wage to a living wage.

## The Beginning Is Near

So we call for a new Underground Atlanta! A new covenant among us, binding our hearts and our economic resources together. Let us build in the center of our city upon rock hewed foundations the Beloved Community. Let us rebuild Underground. A place for all people based upon truth. Based upon reparations to the poor. Based upon advocacy and leadership among our well-to-do business people for the least of those who live among us.

*Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community. On June 15, 1989, Ed, along with Ty Brown, Tim Wyse, Pete Stinner, Steve Clemens, and Elizabeth Dede, was arrested and spent time in jail for disrupting the opening celebrations of Underground Atlanta. We feel that the \$142 million spent to develop Underground, and the millions spent to subsidize it since its opening, would have been better spent on housing and the needs of the poor.*







## In Los Angeles

by Peter Stiehler

*Editor's note: Peter Stiehler, a member of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, shared this report of their Festival of Shelters held in 1993. For an information packet on how to develop a Festival of Shelters in your community, please write to Ed Loring, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.*

This year at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker we celebrated the Hebrew Festival of Sukkot (Shelters). We left our home to sleep and live outside in the garden dining area at our soup kitchen on Los Angeles' Skid Row. We were following the command God gave the Israelites in the desert: "You shall dwell in booths (shelters), that your descendants may realize that, when I led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt, I made them dwell in booths" (Leviticus 23:42-43). By leaving our comfortable home and living in these temporary dwellings, we wanted to show our solidarity with our friends on Skid Row, who frequently live in such shelters all year round. However, these structures we have created are more than the dwellings in which we live, they are also the social structures we have created.

In reflecting on the structures of society through scripture study we were moved to action, condemning governmental and church policies that are deadly to the poor and oppressed of our society. Taking to the streets of downtown Los Angeles in an act of public liturgy, we named the places of darkness with their policies of death towards the outcasts of society and there proclaimed the liberating Word of God.

Beginning at the County Board of Supervisors and County Courthouse we condemned the recent reductions in County relief checks which have led to increased homelessness in Los Angeles. Processing on to City Hall, we denounced the city's daily convoy of demolition vehicles that destroy the shelters of the homeless sending them on their daily Exodus. At the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Viviana's we asked the Church to assume a more active role in responding to the needs of the poor and homeless. Further on at the Ronald Reagan State Office Building, we rebuked the state for its policies of oppressing and persecuting the resident alien. Finally, we processed through the heart of Skid Row to our garden dining area where we concluded our pilgrimage through the desert of the city. There in our garden we built our sukkah to dwell in during the Festival of Shelters.

In building our sukkah we used wooden pallets and cardboard to mirror the material used by our friends living on the street. Palm fronds and fruit branches were used to remind us of the Hebrew roots of our

traditions. Besides this sukkah, other people simply placed a piece of cardboard on the ground and wrapped themselves in a blanket. We felt this was in the spirit of the remembrance of the Hebrews' homelessness in the desert, because for many of our friends this is all the shelter they ever have.

Sleeping at our dining garden allowed us to throw open the gates of our garden for the duration of the Festival allowing people from the street to sleep with us in the garden. This was our way of observing the tradition of *ushpizin* in which the poor and outcast of society are invited into our shelter. We were also able to provide cold water around the clock to our homeless friends during the hottest weather of the year.

Being faithful to the spirit of returning to the "wilderness" in acknowledgement that all our prosperity comes from God alone, we tried to spend as much time at our Skid Row garden as possible. Besides our normal serving days at the garden, we also spent a day of reflection there with our regular bible study focused on the Festival and the justice it calls us to enmesh. We ended our day of reflection with a liturgy in the garden using the readings from our procession through the wilderness of downtown and using cardboard as our altar cloth.

We concluded our celebration of the Festival of Shelters with a Thanksgiving meal. It seemed odd having a turkey dinner in September, but we recalled that this is a celebration of God's blessings upon us. At the meal we recounted the many blessings of the week, from the deepened relationships with our friends on the street to the joy of spending extra time in our beautiful garden. In all this we realized that we are offered life and a blessing if we choose to follow the Way of God.

What we attempted to do in our inaugural celebration of the Festival of Shelters was, in some small way, to share in the daily experience of our homeless friends: to know the discomforts of sleeping on cardboard and not getting enough sleep because a crack addict stumbles into the garden during the middle of the night; to know the rootlessness of not having a permanent abode because everyday you must relocate your cardboard Sukkah. Finally, we wanted to speak out against the policies of death fostered by the structures of society. In all our actions we strove to remember our Hebrew roots while applying them to the realities of society today. In this spirit, we remembered Moses' final words to the Israelites:

*Take to heart all the warnings which I have now given you and which you must impress on your children, that you may carry out carefully every word of this law. For this is no trivial matter for you; rather, it means your very life, since it is by this means that you are to enjoy a long life in the land which you will cross the Jordan to occupy (Deuteronomy 32:46,47).*



The sukkah in the garden at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.



## In Memory Of Al Boone

October 26, 1926 - May 25, 1994

by Mary Wall

*Editor's note: Mary Wall is a friend of the Open Door Community and a member and volunteer at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. She writes here about Al Boone, a formerly homeless person, who volunteered at St. Luke's and once lived with us at the Open Door.*

Al Boone is someone who will always be remembered by those of us who worked with him in the community kitchen of St. Luke's and those passing through the parish hall of the church. You could always count on Al being there preparing the bread for those who would be lining up to partake of the meal to be served—the homeless! Al was constant and he was dependable. He was rarely absent and only then on the rare occasions when he was ill.

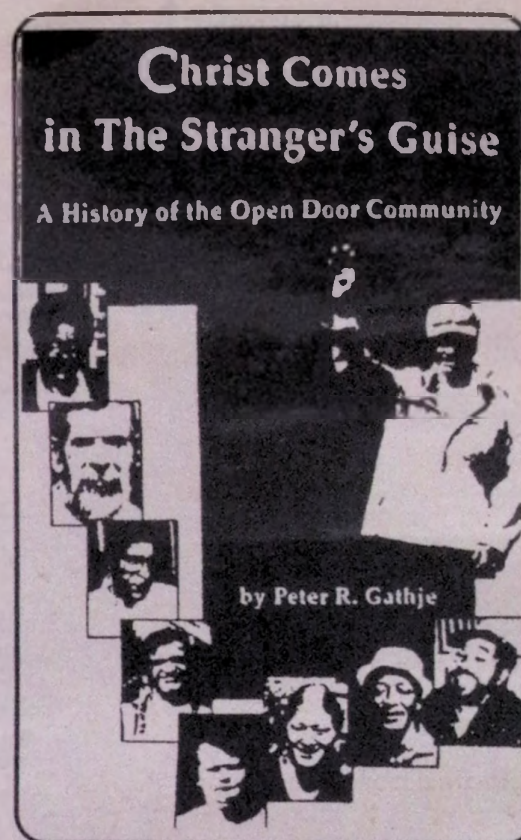
He made the community kitchen and what he did there his life!

He was always cheerful and complimentary, noticing the colors we women wore. He told me his favorite color was red and was always so glad when I wore red. Al died May 25, 1994, and his funeral was May 27, 1994. So many of the people who worked with him in the community kitchen attended his funeral. We all loved Al and wanted to be there for him. I wore a red jacket in his honor. I knew that he would approve.

Clyde Corbin, who was in charge of the community kitchen, and Carol Jean Miller, who was the director, gave Al a beautiful funeral. These two took such good care of him always, especially during the last days of his illness, easing his pain, giving him love and support at the hospital and the Sisters of Mercy hospice. Al Boone's funeral was held at St. Luke's with all the dignity and beauty of that service, and the eulogy given by Rev. Carol Jean Miller reflected Al's life.

We will all miss Al, but we are glad that he was spared finding that the community kitchen will not be as Al knew it and that his service would no longer be needed. This fact alone would have broken his heart!

We thank God he was spared this last hurt and that he is now with his heavenly parent.



Copies of the Open Door Community's history, Christ Comes in the Stranger's Guise, by Peter Gathje, are still available. A donation will help us to feed the hungry and visit the prisoner. To request a copy, please contact Phillip Williams at the Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212.

NEIRAD CRAIGHEAD



## Thank You To Our Donors

The Open Door Community carries out its life and ministries entirely out of donations from individuals, churches, and community groups. We neither solicit nor accept government money, but beg for gifts given out of love.

In the past six months, we have received gifts of money, food, clothing, and other resources from 2,345 individuals and 132 churches.

We are grateful for you—our many friends who help and support us in our work among our homeless and imprisoned friends. Our needs continue through these lean summer months while giving is down.

Thank you for your help in the past. Please continue to remember us and help us.



## Please

Here I stand  
(I can do no other)  
pittiful ragged broke  
alone.

I hold my tattered hat in my finger-bent  
hand.

Can't you spare a  
little lump of silver?  
A tiny crumb of green?

Your eyes spit snot  
on my cheeks. I turn  
to carry your load another  
mile while you yank  
my single shirt to shreds.

I scream.  
You cannot hear me.

I fall.  
You do not feel me.

I starve.  
Your bloated belly has left the table  
empty.

—Ed Loring  
April, 1994



Carl's Hand



Troubled Woman

I looked into her sunken eyes  
staring back at me.  
A numb surprise of shivering  
this frozen absentee.  
No pleasantry of soup to heat  
no hunger greater could defeat  
her struggle with the heartless streets  
this struggle to be free.  
I alone in aching Pain  
could never understand a plea  
hidden in those sunken eyes  
staring back at me.  
Her hands chapped from winter's cold  
her clothes tattered, ripped and old  
this body bent, bought and sold  
a lifetime tragedy.  
I no longer sought to know  
the answers that could be  
blatant in those sunken eyes  
staring back at me.  
She sat alone gently sighing  
I turned away to hide my crying  
from this woman slowly dying  
to me a mystery.  
It struck me strange to understand  
when I began to see  
myself inside her sunken eyes  
staring back at me.

—Jordan Miller  
April, 1994

Editor's note: Jordan Miller is a student at Warren Wilson College, who spent a week at the Open Door Community and shared this poem with us as a reflection on his experience.





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April 4, 1994

Mr. Adama Dieng  
Secretary General  
International Commission of Jurists  
Rte. Chene 109  
1224 Chene-Bougeries  
Geneva  
SWITZERLAND

RE: Need for a Mission to Investigate  
Racial Discrimination in the Death Penalty

Dear Mr. Dieng:

Georgia carried out on March 31, 1994, the execution of William Henry Hance, an African American sentenced to death in that state's infamous Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, despite shocking evidence of racial discrimination in the process that led to imposition of his sentence. Because of the failure of the courts of Georgia and the United States even to have a hearing on important issues of racial discrimination and Hance's mental disabilities before allowing the execution to take place, there is an urgent need for a Commission of Experts to examine the discriminatory infliction of the death penalty in Georgia. Accordingly, I urge the Commission to appoint a Mission of Experts and to send it to Columbus, Georgia, in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit, as well as to other jurisdictions in the United States where there are serious human rights issues regarding infliction of the death penalty in a racially discriminatory manner and upon the mentally disabled.

The execution of William Henry Hance was the eighteenth in Georgia under its current death penalty law. Twelve of the eighteen have been African Americans. Six were sentenced to death by all-white juries. Although African Americans are the victims of 65 percent of the homicides that occur in Georgia, the victims have been white in 16 of the 18 cases in which executions have been carried out. This is the same pattern of racial discrimination that was seen in the infliction of the death penalty in Georgia before 1972, when its practices were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court for racial discrimination and other reasons (*Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238 (1972)). Georgia passed a new death penalty law in 1973 which was supposed to prevent such discrimination, but it has become apparent that the new law is a complete failure.

Hance was the fourth person executed who had been sentenced to death in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit. He is the third African American executed from that circuit. His was the second execution of a person from that circuit with serious mental impairments. In 1986, Georgia executed Jerome Bowden, a mentally retarded African American who had been sentenced to death by an all-white jury in the Chattahoochee Circuit.

Every step of the process leading to the imposition of the death penalty on Hance was infected by racial prejudice.

The decision to seek the death penalty for Hance was made by a single white man, the elected District Attorney, as it has been in all cases in the Chattahoochee Circuit. In the Hance case, that person was Bill Smith. Smith obtained the death penalty in eight cases during his tenure as district attorney. In seven of those cases the victims were white. In Hance, the two victims were African American. In cases involving white victims of crime, Smith often met with the victim's family and discussed whether to seek the death penalty. For example, in one case involving the death of the daughter of a prominent white contractor, Smith contacted the contractor and asked him if he wanted to seek the death penalty. When the contractor replied in the affirmative, Smith said that was all he needed to know. He obtained the death penalty and was rewarded with a contribution of \$5,000 from the contractor when he ran for judge in the next election.

Smith did not contact the victims in the Hance case, however. The victims were African American. In sworn testimony, Mr. Smith said about Brenda Gail Faison, one of the victims in the Hance case, "there was really no family to talk with." In fact, the files from the investigation of the case contained the telephone numbers and addresses for members of Ms. Faison's family, including her parents. Had Smith contacted the family he would have found that it opposed the death penalty for William Henry Hance. But, unlike the contractor, the opinions of African American families were never solicited or considered. Only the families of white victims were consulted by Smith with regard to whether to seek the death penalty.

During the jury selection at both of Hance's trials, the prosecutor systematically used his peremptory jury strikes to exclude African Americans from participating as jurors. As a result, at both trials the jury was made up of eleven white persons and one African American, even though the community is 34 percent African American. At Hance's first trial, the prosecutor made a lynch-mob type appeal for the death penalty, which U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Frank Johnson characterized as a "dramatic appeal to gut emotion" that "has no place in a courtroom." These words from a federal court had no impact on Smith. After the reversal, he called a press conference, insisted that he had done nothing wrong and announced that he would seek the death penalty again against Hance.

At Hance's second trial, Smith used seven of eight jury strikes against African Americans, leaving a jury of eleven white citizens and one African American citizen. In ten capital cases involving African American defendants tried in the circuit between 1973 and 1990, death was imposed nine times. Six of the ten black defendants were tried by all-white juries. Prosecutors in the Chattahoochee Circuit use 85 percent of their jury strikes in capital cases against African Americans even though African Americans make up 34 percent of the population. During the second Hance trial, jurors were segregated by race while sequestered at the hotel during trial. Some of the jurors who participated have described the racial tension that was present during the jury deliberations and the statements of one juror who stated at the hotel: "the nigger admitted it and he should fry." The one African American juror refused to vote for a death sentence, but a verdict was announced nonetheless.

What is particularly disturbing about this most recent execution is the complete indifference of the courts of the state of Georgia and the United States to the shocking racial discrimination that occurred at all stages of the process which led to imposition of the death penalty on William Henry Hance. Neither the state courts nor the federal courts even had a hearing to take evidence on the racial discrimination before Hance was executed.



This indifference to racial discrimination in the infliction of the death penalty is the result of the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *McCleskey v. Kemp* (*McCleskey v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 279 (1987)), which allowed Georgia to carry out death sentences despite a pattern of racial disparities in the decisions of prosecutors to seek the death penalty and in its imposition. The Georgia Supreme Court recently upheld the denial of a hearing on racial discrimination in a capital prosecution against an African American accused of the murder of a white person in another judicial circuit with a long history of racial discrimination (*Jones v. State*, 1994 WESTLAW 53851 (GA. Feb. 21, 1994)). And of course both the federal and state courts refused to stay the Hance execution and conduct hearings on the racial discrimination that led to his death sentence. Because of the refusal of the courts of Georgia and the United States to examine the persistent and pronounced racial discrimination that occurs in these cases, I urge the International Commission of Jurists to examine the practices in the use of the death penalty in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and in Georgia.

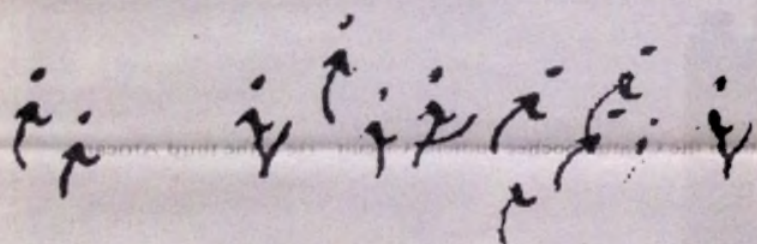
If I can provide any further information or be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Stephen B. Bright  
J. Skelly Wright Fellow  
and  
Director, Southern Center  
for Human Rights, Atlanta

cc: Jon Ebersole  
World Conference on Religion & Peace  
Program on Humanitarian Assistance

*Editor's note: The International Commission of Jurists has responded positively to Steve Bright's invitation. They are currently making arrangements to send a delegation to Georgia to investigate the Hance execution and the infliction of the death penalty on the mentally disabled and in a racially discriminatory manner. We are grateful for the work of Steve Bright and many other attorneys and activists who, in season and out, continue to expose the death penalty as the instrument of torture, discrimination and political terrorism that it is. May the truth set us free.*



## JOURNEY OF HOPE

Two Weeks of Action Against the Death Penalty  
October 1-16, 1994

Sponsored by Murder Victims Families For Reconciliation

The Journey of Hope in Georgia is a two-week public education tour of eight major cities and their surrounding towns. This event is led by Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation (MVFR). A core group of MVFR members and other interested people from around the country (and world) will spend time in each area at churches, rallies, classrooms, radio and television shows, and other interviews. They will describe the experience of losing a loved one through murder and their eventual recognition, unique to each one, of how hatred and a desire for revenge is destructive. They share their struggles to let go of their vindictive feelings in order to move on and up to a healthier, more humane way of responding to the offender and dealing with their grief.

On Sunday, October 2, events in Atlanta will begin with a Justice Journey. We will walk through the city, stopping at places that are significant in the struggle for justice and the abolition of the death penalty. Please join us.

For more information, contact Courtney Siceloff at 223-6003.

### Two Strikes and You're Out—A Real Loser

Americans are feeling overwhelmed by crime. Our crime rate exceeds that of every other industrialized country, and the fear of violence is infiltrating the fabric of our daily lives, especially in our cities. The situation cries out for substantial, gutsy action. But instead, political leaders have offered up the same old, discredited, election-driven, quick-fix proposals that sound appealing, but won't make us safer or reduce crime.

The latest political snake oil is known as "Two Strikes and You're Out." It means mandatory life imprisonment without parole after two felony convictions. In Georgia, it also includes longer mandatory minimum incarceration periods for a conviction of any violent felony before eligibility for parole. In spite of its catchy baseball metaphor, this idea is a loser.

The constitutional amendment required to enact Georgia's latest gimmick in the "war on crime," will be on the November general election ballot. "Two Strikes and You're Out" really represents:

- No impact on crime
- No deterrent to criminals
- An increase in violence
- A further backlog in our courts
- Huge expense
- The loss of judicial discretion
- Removal of discretion from the Board of Pardons and Paroles
- Disproportionate impact on minority and poor offenders
- Elimination of the fundamental concept that the punishment should fit the crime

The United States has the dubious distinction of leading the industrialized world in per capita prison population, with more than one million men and women behind bars. The typical prisoner is male, minority, young and uneducated. More than 40 percent of all prisoners are illiterate; one-third were unemployed when arrested. Large numbers of prisoners are substance abusers and the majority suffered abuse as a child, neither of which are appropriately addressed by our society. These facts tell us something important about the link between crime and lack of opportunity, between crime and lack of hope. Only when we begin to deal with the conditions that cause so many of our young people to turn to crime and violence will we begin to realize a less crime-ridden society.



# What Martin Luther King DID Say About Ghetto Violence

by H. Bruce Franklin

*Editor's note: H. Bruce Franklin is the John Cotton Dana Professor of English and American Studies at Rutgers University and the author or editor of 16 books on culture and history, including Prison Literature in America: The Victim As Criminal And Artist. We reprint this piece from The Fortune News, February, 1994.*

Preaching to Black ministers assembled in Memphis on November 13, 1993, President Clinton told them—and the nation—what Martin Luther King “would say” about ghetto violence if he were now to return 25 years after being assassinated. Like a ventriloquist, the President put these words into the mouth of Dr. King: “I did not live and die to see young people destroy their own lives with drugs and then build fortunes destroying the lives of others. . . I did not fight for the right of Black people to murder other Black people with reckless abandonment.” Dr. King’s gospel, according to the President, seems to be that the main causes of ghetto violence are the inhabitants of the ghetto.

If President Clinton believes this is what Martin Luther King would have said on this subject, he must not remember what he *did* say:

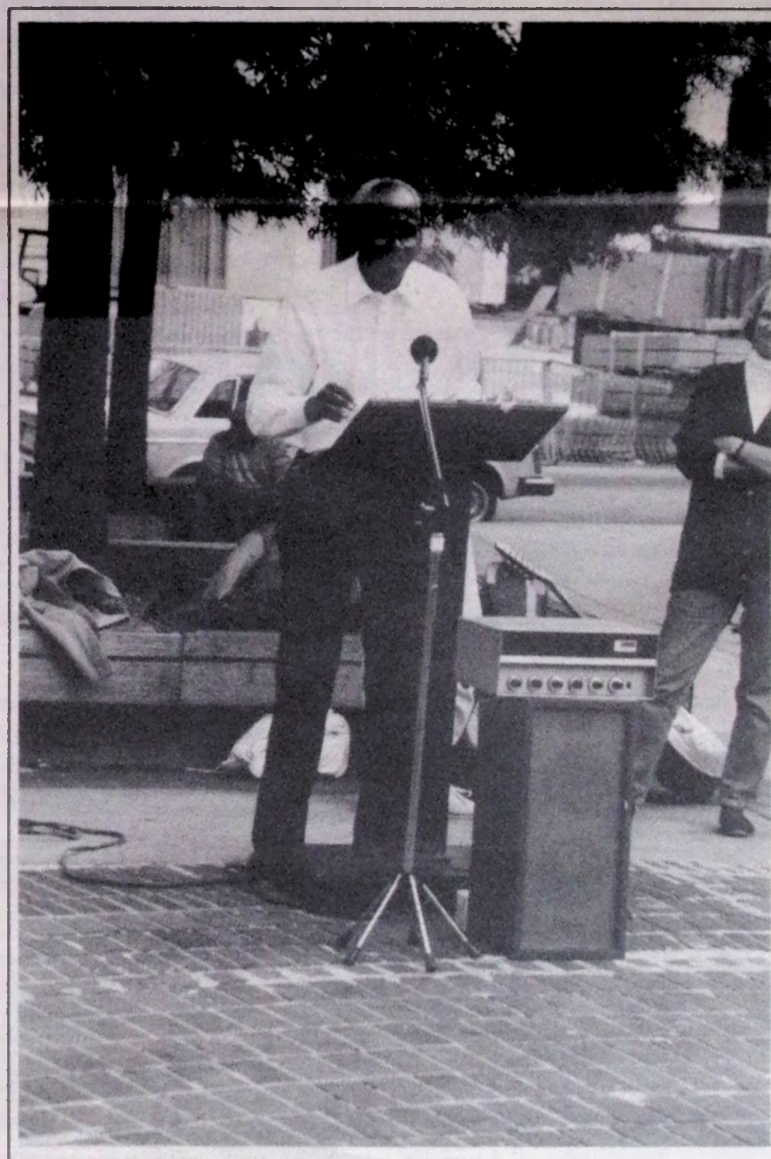
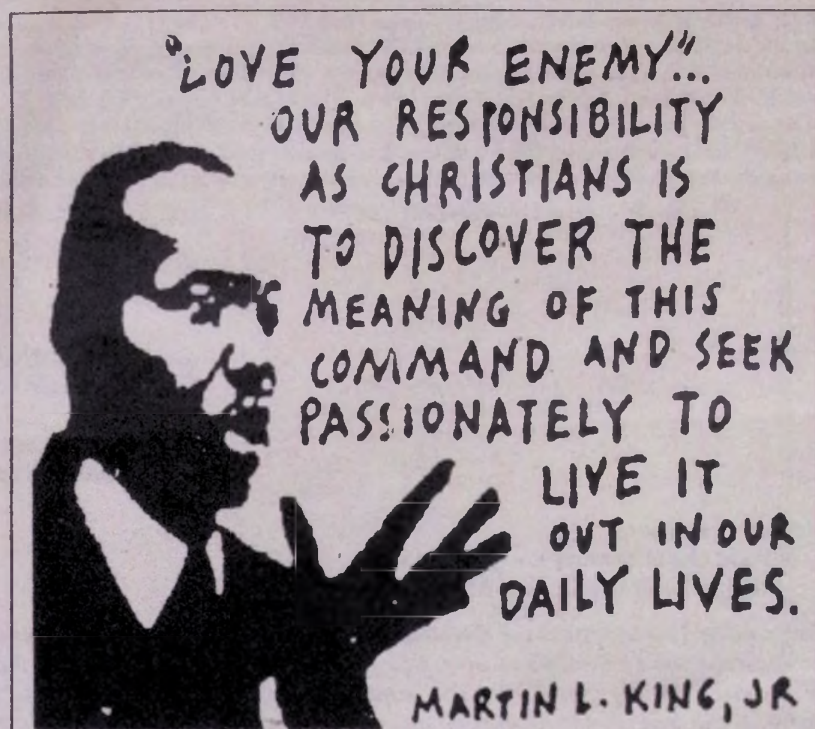
*As I have talked among the desperate, rejected and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. . . They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government.*

In the 26 years since Dr. King spoke these words in his great April 4, 1967 sermon about U.S. militarism and imperialism, his analysis of the interrelations between U.S. global policies and the most severe domestic problems has become more and more telling. President Clinton’s rhetorical stance assumed that Dr. King would be surprised by what he would see if he returned today. But in fact King predicted these conditions as consequences of “American life and policy,” for “racism, materialism, and militarism” will continue to grow so long as “machines and computers, profit and property rights are considered more important than people.” The fundamental cause of ghetto violence, according to Dr. King’s actual, rather than fantasized words, is that our nation is on the “wrong side of a world revolution,” fighting globally to protect “the immense profits of overseas investment” gained through the emiseration of poor and working people abroad and at home.

Martin Luther King decried the alliance between our nation and the “landed gentry” of Latin America, which has led to an intercontinental “pattern of suppression.” He pointed unwaveringly at the “glaring contrast of poverty and wealth,” most visible to its victims throughout the Third World, including the ghettos and barrios of the United States. He castigated the global warfare waged by America against the revolutionary aspirations of peoples of color. “The need to maintain social stability for our investments accounts for the counterrevolutionary action of American forces,” and for “American helicopters” and “American napalm and green beret forces being used against people in Latin America and Asia who ‘are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression.’” At the very core of all this, embodying the nation’s deepest sickness, Dr. King saw America’s war against Vietnam: “If America’s soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read ‘Vietnam.’”

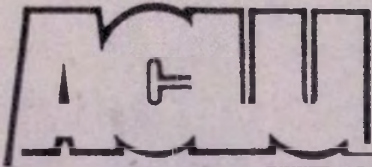
In the quarter century since Dr. King’s murder, the United States has devastated Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia far more savagely than in the years before his death; helped a terrorist junta overthrow the legally elected government of Chile; invaded and occupied Grenada; bombed Libya; sacked Panama to replace one former U.S. stooge with a more compliant replacement; organized the overthrow of a Nicaraguan government committed to ending the exploitation King denounced; armed, trained, and financed a terrorist regime in El Salvador; slaughtered at least one hundred thousand people in Iraq to punish a dictator armed by Washington; killed hundreds of civilians in Somalia; covertly financed a drug-running military cabal in Haiti; and worked remorselessly to annihilate Latin America’s most successful health and education system in Cuba.

President Clinton’s main theme, enunciated in his opening sentence, was “the great crisis of the spirit that is gripping America today.” When he was alive and could not be used as a ventriloquist’s dummy, Martin Luther King eloquently named and predicted this crisis: “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military offense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death.” For him, the violence in the ghetto is the direct product of our nation’s betrayal of its “promise of hope for the poor” and a clear manifestation of “a society gone mad on war.”

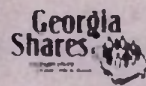


Our friend Joe Beasley is always ready to help us in political actions and other times of need. Pictured here, he is speaking at the Festival of Shelters in September, 1993. In June, Joe came to the Open Door Community to share his personal stories of struggle and triumph over racism. We thank God for Joe Beasley.





AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION OF GEORGIA, INC.  
142 Mitchell Street • Suite 301 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • (404) 523-6201



June 14, 1994

Hon. William Campbell, Mayor  
City of Atlanta  
68 Mitchell Street, S.W.  
Suite 2400  
Atlanta, Georgia 30335

Hon. Marvin Arrington, Chairperson  
Atlanta City Council  
(for distribution to all members)  
55 Trinity Avenue, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30335

Re: Atlanta City Code § 17-1007  
"Remaining in a Parking Lot"

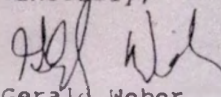
Dear Mayor and City Council:

Today, the ACLU represented Phillip Williams who was arrested for leaning against a tree in a parking lot. His crime? -- "remaining in a parking lot." The ACLU filed the enclosed challenge to that ordinance arguing that the law is unconstitutionally vague and overbroad, unreasonable and interferes with citizens' right to travel. When the case was heard before Municipal Court Judge Johnson, City Solicitor Greg Young asked that the charges be dismissed and further indicated that it is the policy of the City to drop charges under this ordinance. The charges were dropped, but Mr. Williams still spent a day in jail for leaning against a tree.

As explained in the brief, the Atlanta ordinance is patently unconstitutional. Moreover, there is no question but that the ordinance has been used in a discriminatory way -- as a broom to sweep homeless citizens off the streets. We intend to file a civil rights action challenging this ordinance if action is not taken to repeal the ordinance by July 15.

Please contact us as soon as possible if you are willing to comply with our request. It is the just and decent thing to do.

Sincerely,

  
Gerald Weber  
Legal Director

BRUCE BISHOP



Phillip Williams

## Say NO To The Vagrant Free Zone!

On Monday, June 13, 1994, Phillip Williams, a Partner on the Leadership Team at the Open Door Community and a member of People for Urban Justice, challenged Atlanta's Vagrant Free Zone laws by submitting himself to arrest on the charge of unlawfully remaining in a parking lot.

While Phillip acknowledged that he was doing nothing wrong, he allowed himself to be taken to jail in protest against the Parking Lot Ordinance, a law which gives the police the authority to remove anyone from a parking lot without contacting the owner of the parking lot. The ordinance is used against homeless people, and primarily African American men, and is clearly an oppressive tool to sweep the streets of human beings who are viewed as worthless.

Phillip was ridiculed by the police, who asked him if he was stupid and told him that they would just take him to the 8th floor of Grady, where psychiatric patients are treated. In fact, Phillip Williams is one of the more wise citizens of the city of Atlanta and is a champion of Civil Rights.

After Phillip spent the day and night in jail, he was taken to Municipal Court, where charges against him were dropped. However, the American Civil Liberties Union, with attorneys Brian Spears, Robert McGlasson, and Gerald Weber, intends to file a civil rights action challenging the ordinance.

We look forward to the day when all people will receive justice and everyone will be free to walk, dance, work, and play in the city of Atlanta.

## 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, 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 30308-4212  
404/874-9852; 874-7964 (FAX)



*"When you have all you want to eat and have built good houses to live in and when your cattle and sheep, your silver and gold, and all your other possessions have increased, be sure that you do not become proud and forget the Lord your God who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves" (Deuteronomy 8).*

***Please join us in Woodruff Park***

***Sunday, September 25,  
through Friday, September 30.***

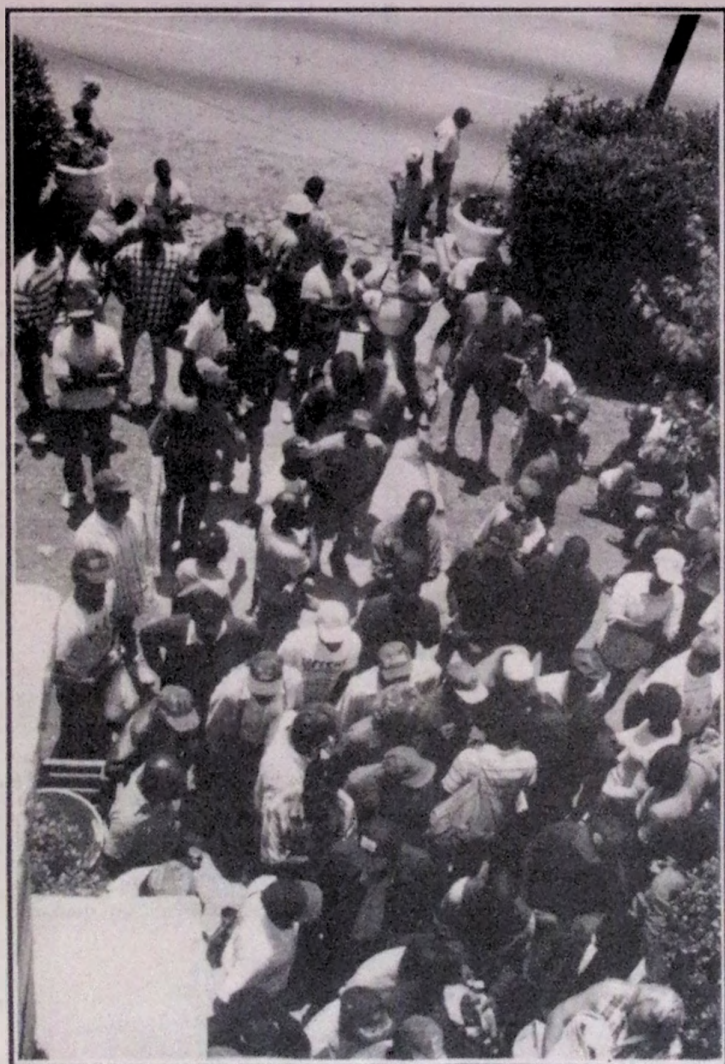
***Worship daily at 5:00pm.***

***Leafletting at noon.***



BARRY BURNSIDE

***In Downtown Atlanta***



CHRIS BUEHLER

*On Memorial Day we served a wonderful picnic lunch to over 700 hungry, homeless friends. We thank you for your donations that made this possible.*

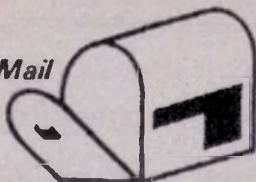
*Some of the large crowd of folk is pictured at left.*

*On Labor Day we expect to serve another big group of hungry people. Can you help again with donations of food and money? We hope to serve ham. If you can give us help for this meal, please contact Elizabeth at 874-9652.*

*We thank you and our homeless friends thank you, too.*



## Grace and Peaces of Mail



Dear Friends:

Just to let you know that by the grace of God, I am home—a 3-room apartment in the housing project. I am thankful to God, and I think of all of you often, so I send this card for our love that we have shared together, as we were all in Christ together, with undying love. I send love to each of you. God bless each of you.

Love,

William Matthews  
Jacksonville, AL

Editor's note: William Matthews was a member of the Open Door household in the early 1980's. Some of his paintings continue to hang on our walls.

Greetings!

I just received the June issue of *Hospitality* and wanted to say thanks. And to mention the May issue briefly.

Reading it, I was struck by the article on the first page that dealt with state employees who stand up for what they hold to be right. The man that wrote the piece was a very strong Christian and human being. Killing is wrong no matter who does it, and I do not say this simply because I am on death row, but because it is the truth, and that will never change.

Keep up the good work.

Your friend,

D. G.  
Huntsville, TX

Dear Ed,

After several conversations with my son about the homeless, and after reading your article, "Housing Precedes Life," I am trying to rethink my own responsibility in this area. No, I have no vision of giving up my suburban situation and moving downtown to live in solidarity with the homeless. Thank God for you!

I am deeply impressed with the thrust of your article. If, indeed, housing precedes life, health, sobriety, employment, then it is very important to prevent people from becoming homeless (and, of course, to rescue the already homeless from their plight).

This first area, prevention, is one that I become involved in, and I involve the congregation of which I am pastor. We get calls from people about to be evicted from rented houses or apartments. Often, they are only \$75 to \$100 away from having enough to pay their rent. Of course, I check the situation out with their landlord. As you well know, there are con persons out there.

Just last week, a man called the church. A quiet-spoken, sincere-sounding man. He lost his construction job some time ago, and was now about to be evicted from his small rented house. He and his family live in the downtown Marietta area, about 10 miles from us. He found us in the yellow pages. With his permission, I called his landlady and got her assurance that I could buy him a month's rent with a certain amount of money. The following Sunday, we took a special offering for him. Over and over he said, "I just don't know how to thank you."

If this month of time allows him to find a job, he and his family won't have to join the ranks of the homeless. If "Housing Precedes Life," he has another shot at life.

In His Love,

Ray Barfield, Pastor  
Grace Community Presbyterian Church  
Marietta, GA

Dear Friends,

You are friends to me, though I have never met you in person. I meet you through *Hospitality* and am profoundly enriched thereby. Of all the publications that come across my desk and into my home, none is as encompassing as *Hospitality*. So I am bereft by not having received any issues this year.

Thank you, each and every one, for enlarging my heart, sharpening my mind, and reforming my faith and life in the image of the Christ.

*Hospitality* is the tangible link which enables me to participate in and share your ministry with others: after reading and beginning to ponder each issue, I copy and file for future use, give my family time to read it, then put it on my church's bulletin board and in the library.

Peace and blessings,

Karen W. Rice  
Stephens, GA

Dear Friends,

This is to let you know that we are still thinking of you and your good self-sacrificing work.

We are always well-informed by *Hospitality*, which we read with interest. I particularly liked the series "Stories of Struggle and Triumph" by Frances Pauley. She is a wonderful and very humorous person! I wish her to live long enough to love her enemies, which in my opinion she already does.

In Germany we get similar increasing problems with homeless people due to the world-wide recession. Unemployment increases immensely and people get poorer.

We wish you always sufficient money to help the poorest.

Yours sincerely,

Margot and Manfred Gerstner  
Pforzheim, Germany

Dear Open Door,

I've been keeping up with the events in Atlanta regarding 1996 as well as the recent executions. You all are ever in my prayers. I know God will continue to bless your endeavors to remove the scales from Atlanta's eyes.

Love,

Will Smith  
Brooklyn, NY

Editor's note: Will Smith volunteered with the Open Door when he was a student at Columbia Seminary.

Dear Open Door:

Thank you for your hospitality while I was here with you. As always being here provokes me to think about many things and to feel in deeper ways. The journey from the head to the heart was enabled. At Butler St. this morning a man greeted me, "Hello there, brother." I responded, "Hello, my brother." These folk were all my brothers and sisters. The reality of our connection to one another was deepened again. I am grateful to be among you... and to recover the way in which you express proximity to the poor and also confront the principalities who deceive us for self aggrandizement and power. Blessings on you.

Don Beisswenger  
Nashville, TN

Editor's note: Don Beisswenger is a long-time friend and a Presbyterian minister on the faculty of Vanderbilt Divinity School. Each year he spends several weeks of his vacation with us.

To Ed Loring and Murphy Davis:

I just finished reading the July issue of *Hospitality*, "Hating Our Children" and "The Abolition of Slavery as a Root Cause of Homelessness." You two people have been a blessing to my life. Your insights give me such hope in white America. Truth has no color, and you two speak it loud and clear.

Love,

Sandy Francis  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Friends,

I was watching the news tonight and their big story was about how they finally were able to tear down a homeless community located under a bridge in Dallas. All the policemen and the mayor and city officials were so happy that they got rid of this "problem" before the World Cup Soccer tournament begins in two days. Some of the homeless people were interviewed and were saying that it was the safest place for them to sleep because they were together for protection and they had built small shelters from old crates and boxes. They then said that they had no safe place to go once their shelters were torn down, but no one else seemed to care because they didn't want to present a bad image to all of the people coming in for the World Cup.

The next news story was about how the city "desperately" needed to build a new stadium/arena that was going to cost over \$200 million. Nothing was said about spending money to build shelters for those people, but they were really concerned about getting a new \$200 million arena.

I'm thankful that there are people like you out there. I hope that those homeless in Dallas have someone like you to go to.

Thanks for all that you do.

Love,

Tom Neely  
Paris, TX

Editor's note: Tom Neely is a student of art at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma.



### 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), August 26-28.

*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 Worship

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

*Please join us!*

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| August 7  | Worship at 910<br>Nibs Stroupe, preaching      |
| August 14 | Worship at 910<br>Karen Barfield, preaching    |
| August 21 | Worship at 910                                 |
| August 28 | Retreat at Dayspring Farm<br>No Worship at 910 |



### Open Door Community 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  
Vaseline  
Disposable Razors  
Shampoo  
Silverware  
Socks  
Washcloths  
Sandwiches  
Porch/Yard Furniture  
Rugs/Carpet  
Chests of Drawers  
3 Pottery Communion Chalice  
Single Bed Frames, Box Springs, Mattresses  
Shrubs for Backyard Plantings  
T-Shirts

*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!*

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