

HOSPITALITY

Vol. 9

No. 2

February 1990

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Atlanta, Georgia
Permit No. 1264

Address
Correction
Requested

Providing hospitality to the homeless & to those in prison, through Christ's love.
910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E. Atlanta GA 30306-4212 (404) 874-9652

Standing with Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Ed Loring

Editor's note: The following is the text of Ed Loring's remarks given at the National Celebration of Dr. King's birthday in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1990.

We stand here together today because we remember the God who heard the cry, wail and lament of the slaves down in Egypt land. And in the United States of America,

"Lord, have mercy!" cried those slaves.

"We can't live on \$4.50 an hour!

We won't bend our backs,

break our bodies,

sit in labor

pools like fools

while the rich get richer,

while the homeless get hungrier.

No, Lord, No Lord! We won't live like this!!

Give us our rights!

Give us our dignity!

Give us our freedom!"

"I will change this white-ridden land
to the color of the rainbow,"
said the Lord, God Almighty.

So God gave us Martin King--

A gift from Heaven

to lead us to change

this weary old earth

sin-bound

racist

death-dealing.

So came his mighty voice:
Resonant against hate,
Loud with love,
Strong of sinew,

Raising up the dead and deaf
for justice;
Bringing life and strength.

"Let my people go!

Let my people be who they are
in this land of woe
and greed and terror,"
cried Dr. King.



PeaceWork

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

"Take my children," he warned
25 years ago, "out of the hell
holes called ghettos, or they will
be drugged out of their
hearts and minds;
used for political ends
by whites who lap up
political power like the
dogs lapped the blood of
Jezebel centuries ago."

He saw in 1966 the
inevitable use of
Willie Horton to scare
white America:
to build prisons instead of homes;
to fill our streets with people instead
of affordable bus rides.
And we know what happened
to this teller of the truth,
this lover of the Lord,
this freedom monarch named King.

WHAM

WHAM

WHAM

and the King was dead.

So we gather here today
upon the dusty soil of Georgia
to pay honor and tribute to the King.

But let not our
Voices echo and then
die today.

No. Come forward
that the dream may be our
way of life.

This afternoon there are 2,312 folk on death row
in the U.S. Let us say no to the death penalty!

Why do we kill people
who kill people
to show that killing
people is wrong?

There are over three million homeless people in
America today. Dr. King's birth place and tomb are
here in Atlanta where we host the second largest number
of poor people of any city in the U.S. Our leaders
tell us to build more prisons, to beef up the police
department, and to distrust every stranger.

Dr. King tells us today, "Freedom is never
voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded
by the oppressed." Dr. King tells us we must demand
affordable "Housing Now" or it will not be built. The
oppressor has money for prisons but not for houses.
Let us follow King toward a new housing policy for this
land.

And so we stand today with Dr. King. Marching
toward a land of equality where everyone--rich and
poor, Black and white, young and old--has enough of all
they need.

We stand here today with Mrs. Coretta King and
Congressman John Lewis, with Linda Riggins of Justice
for Janitors, and our good friend James Orange.

We stand because we will not
sit down
until
The dreams and vision,
the freedom and equality,
the peace and justice
of the King legacy have
been firmly rooted upon this
good earth of our God.



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

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry
Director

Ed Loring--Correspondence & Resident Volunteer
Co-ordinator

Carol Schlicksup--Hardwick Prison Trip
Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinator

* * *

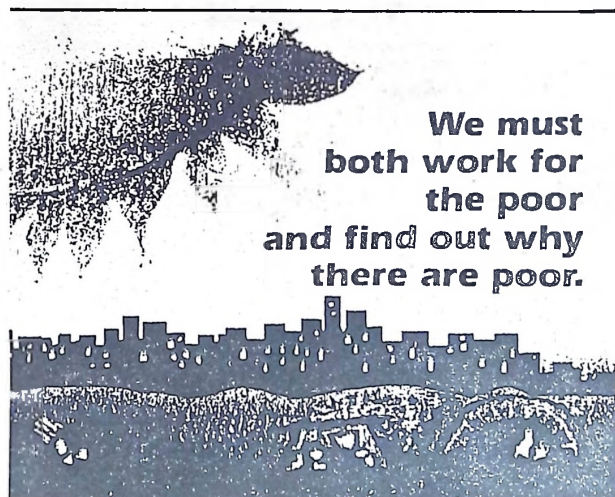
Newspaper:

Editorial Staff--Ruth Allison, Murphy Davis,
Elizabeth Dede, Ed Loring, and
Carol Schlicksup

Layout--Ruth Allison and Bettina Paul

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

Subscriptions or change of address--Willie
London



The Unknown Male

by Elizabeth Dede

Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: the one who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who goes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for her; the sheep hear her voice as she calls her own sheep by name and leads them out. When she has brought them out, she goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know her voice. They will not follow someone else; instead, they will run away from such a person because they do not know his voice."

Jesus told them this parable, but they did not understand what he meant. (John 10:1-6)

I'm not sure I understand what Jesus meant either, but I know a few parables about names.

Four years ago when I first arrived at the Open Door, I was overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed by the violence I saw on the streets. I was overwhelmed by the complications of life in community (something which I foolishly thought would be simple and joyful all the time). I was overwhelmed by the huge numbers of people I met everyday, whose names I couldn't seem to remember from one minute to the next.

But there is one man whom I remember very vividly even though I haven't seen him in almost four years. He had two names, and this exasperated my confused, overwhelmed mind. In the mornings when he came to our house to sign up for a shower and a change of clothes he answered to the name Charles Harris. In the evenings when he came to our house to get a ticket for the Druid Hills night shelter he answered to the name Levi Thomas.

One very cold evening in early February four years ago, Levi Thomas came for a ticket to the night shelter, except that he forgot he was Levi Thomas. I had worked in the clothes closet that morning and came to know him as Charles Harris, so as I called the names on the shelter list and got to Levi Thomas, I did not know him, and he did not know himself and didn't answer to that name, which left a blank space on the list. I filled the space with a new person, said, "That's all the space I have. I'm sorry," and turned to go inside the house.

All of the sudden I was confronted with a very loud and angry Charles Harris. Calling me and my mother all sorts of names, he yelled, "Hey! My name's on that list! Why'd you skip over it?" Scared, embarrassed, and ashamed I looked over the list and calmly said, "Charles Harris, your name's not on this list."

"That's because my name is Levi Thomas!" he bellowed. "This morning when you came through the clothes closet it was Charles Harris, and you didn't answer when I called 'Levi Thomas' this evening, so how was I supposed to know your name?" I almost pleaded.

"Well, will you at least give me a blanket?" he sneered. Having recently been through a very uncomfortable, unpleasant, painful Weekly Ministries Meeting in which we discussed our "Blanket Policy", I said, "No, I'm sorry, Charles (or should I have called him Levi? Perhaps I did.), I cannot give you a blanket." From the meeting, if not from life's experience (back in those early days of my life in

community) I understood that at times when we gave out blankets, it resulted in violence. If a person fell asleep with a blanket outside in our backyard and another cold person came along, there might be a fight for the warmth of a blanket.

Now, I was angry with Charles because he had lied to me about his name, but I did not want for him to come to physical harm. Besides that, I was on house duty, and I certainly did not want to break up a fight in the middle of the night, or have to call an ambulance for Charles Harris (or Levi Thomas, for that matter).

Not long after that evening Charles Harris quit coming through our shower line, and Levi Thomas stopped lining up for a ticket to the Druid Hills night shelter. It's been many years since I saw him. I never did know his name.

* * *

In the middle of December of this past year we received a bill from Grady Hospital. This is not unusual. Most of our friends on the streets have been to Grady at one time or another for treatment. And a couple hundred people who have no other permanent address use 910 Ponce de Leon as their mailing address, so we often get bills from Grady Hospital.

But this particular bill was astonishingly striking because it was addressed to "Unknown Male". I had never met Unknown. As far as I knew, Mr. Male's name was not on our mail list, so I didn't feel that I was tampering with the mail when I opened Unknown Male's bill.

Sure enough--there it was--Patient Name: Unknown Male. For the service rendered he owed Grady Hospital \$126.10, and his hospital number is 1181108-5. Mr. Unknown Male was told to record that number on his check. "Do not send cash," the bill stated. On December 30, 1989, Unknown Male's account was due to be sent to a collection agency because I'm sure he didn't make his payment on the bill. I never knew Unknown Male.

However, I suspect that Unknown Male is very much like Charles Harris or Levi Thomas. He probably lines up for a shower in the morning and waits for a space in the shelter at night. And I don't know his name.

So when I remember Jesus' parable of the good shepherd, I seek forgiveness for being a thief and a robber. And I am thankful for Jesus, who knows our names and came in order that we all might have life--life in all its fullness.

GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL 80 BUTLER STREET S.E. ATLANTA, GA 30335			
DATE	BALANCE FORWARD	126.10	
BALANCE DUE IN 15 DAYS		126.10	
STATEMENT DATE 12/15/89	PATIENT NAME UNKNOWN MALE		
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS BILL PLEASE CALL 504-5015			
PAYMENT ON YOUR ACCT IS DUE WITHIN 15 DAYS. IF YOUR ACCT WILL BE SENT TO A COLLECTION AGENCY.		BILLING ADDRESS UNKNOWN MALE 910 PONCE DE LEON AV NE ATL 3130306	
		P1	HOSPITAL NUMBER 1181108-5

The Invasion : A Bitter Drink

In the early hours of December 20, North American troops invaded the territory of the Republic of Panama, causing the death of around 2,000 innocent Panamanians and violating every principle of national sovereignty.

General Noriega, foreseeing the possibility of a North American action, had prepared for almost two years through the creation of "Dignity Battalions," whose principle strategy for resisting an attack would be a massive popular insurrection. To arm the battalions, enormous arsenals of arms and military supplies were stockpiled in various parts of the country. While hospitals lacked medicines because of "North American aggression," the country was filled with thousands of automatic weapons, even in the very storerooms of the hospitals.

Faced with the military supremacy of the U.S. Southern Command, the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) did not have the capacity to resist. In a few hours the PDF headquarters where the General was presumed to be were left completely destroyed. Its location in the heavily populated neighborhood of El Chorrillo rendered 10,000 people homeless. In the afternoon of the same day the great majority of the bases were taken. In the interior of the country, the defense forces surrendered without offering much resistance. Other bases were abandoned by the troops and soldiers changed into civilian clothes and dispersed among the population, leaving the capital city with no public force to maintain order.

The only ones who resisted were the "Dignity Battalions" who, with arms in hand, set in motion a sinister plan to destroy the entire productive capacity of the country, both industrial and commercial, in order to create, through an unsustainable situation for the invader, a scorched earth strategy. Members of the battalions systematically opened the stores to loot them and then urged others to complete the job. They not only wiped out the shopping center, but factories, government offices and even small family stores as well. Behind the battalions came multitudes of people who took advantage of the chaos and looted everything in sight. Only after two days of complete anarchy in the city did the Southern Command begin "Operation Cleanup," through which it began to directly fight what remained of the Dignity Battalions.

At the time of the invasion, Noriega's regime was so debilitated internally that well-coordinated resistance to the invaders was impossible. Earlier, under the banner of national liberation, General Noriega had won the support of a minority in the country and was able to organize some expressions of international solidarity. But for many Panamanians Noriega's nationalist rhetoric was nothing more than an attempt to protect himself. Ideologically Noriega was neither nationalist nor socialist nor anti-imperialist. During his years in power he had made himself the

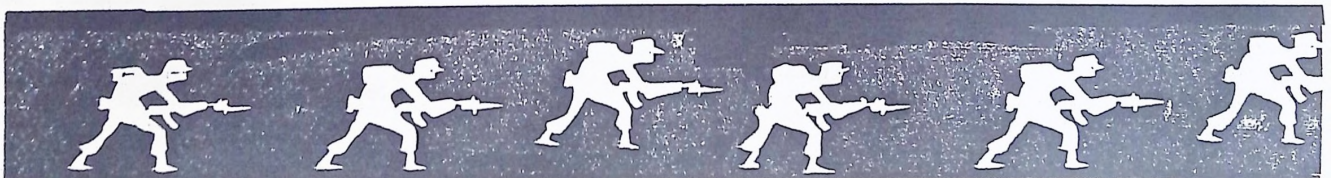
richest man in the country, with his wealth in Panama and abroad estimated at \$500 million.

The new administration of Endara, Arias Calderon and Ford, which won the May 7 elections according to national and international observers, was sworn in the same night as the invasion on a North American military base in order to constitute a "democratic government of national reconstruction and reconciliation." For the moment, the new government no doubt has the support of the Panamanian people. However it has before it the highly difficult task of making itself credible before the international community, since it assumed power under the shield of the Southern Command. Domestically, the opposition did not have power to mobilize the people in an insurrection against the Noriega regime. The terror of Noriega's paramilitary groups and the lack of organization at the base level left it immobilized. The big question now is what the new government's social policy will be. Many of its members are business people or professionals.

What has happened in Panama shows again the inefficiency of international bodies. The invasion was condemned throughout Latin America and by many countries in the rest of the world, while at the same time they expressed serious reservations about the Noriega regime. After the annulment of the May 7 elections, the mediation of the OAS in the Panamanian conflict was requested. This body subsequently produced a resolution calling for a transfer of power through dialogue between the conflicting parties. But the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries made effective action impossible. Hence it is crucial to distinguish between respect for the self-determination of peoples and the principle of non-intervention in another nation. The governments which do not respect the self-determination of their own people easily hid behind the shield of non-intervention. In Panama, an overwhelming majority of the people had expressed their disapproval for the regime in power. However that same regime annulled the elections in order to keep itself in power while the governments of Latin America remained powerless to undertake concrete measures to correct the situation.

The North American invasion of Panama is a serious reversal for a negotiated solution to the conflicts in Central America. Once again the argument that military force is capable of resolving conflicts has been reinforced. Once again we have observed the imperial attitude with which the U.S. can impose its solutions. However, the blame must be shared by General Noriega himself and his loyal followers. The Panamanian people must also seriously question itself. For many years we have not completely assumed our responsibility in the political situation that reigned in the country, leaving others to solve our problems. Now we are faced with the urgent task of building an independent popular movement which has a clear vision of its participation in the national reality.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The North American invasion has left a profound wound on Panama. Despite the general relief at the fall of General Noriega, the country is in mourning for the many dead and wounded as a result of the fighting. The week of the invasion--only a few days before Christmas--was a week of terror, destruction, pillage, vandalism and fear. In their "professional work," the North American army has demonstrated how much more it values a North American life than a Panamanian life. Twenty-three soldiers died in the fighting, while it is calculated that 2,000 Panamanians lost their lives. Under any circumstances, it has been a bitter pill to swallow.

At Servicio Paz y Justicia, we reject the invasion as a means of resolving the Panamanian crisis. Its high social cost and the mortgage it carries with it disqualify it as a path to liberation. Like so many times in our history, the Panamanian people is once



again an onlooker to its own destiny. An effective Latin American solidarity with the people of Panama--and not against the Noriega regime, as has been the case--and a growing popular mobilization against the despicable dictatorship would have been a slower path, but a more authentic way to achieve the change which would truly benefit the Panamanian people.

For the popular movement, the important task remains of strengthening itself under authentic leadership. The constant manipulation of popular interests during the authoritarian regime made the emergence of an independent popular movement more difficult. The work of Servicio Paz y Justicia is not subject to a regime, nor is it prescribed by ideological schemes, which often hide lies. We will continue serving the base-level groups so that they may participate in an effective manner in determining their own future. True democracy is only achieved with the conscious and active participation of the people themselves. Nor can we forget that the struggle for respect for human rights cannot be reduced to political and civil rights, but also includes social and economic rights. This is the challenge which lies before us.

Nicolasa Terreros
National Coordinator
SERPAJ/Panama
(Service for Peace and Justice) ☐

Solidarity

poems by Carol Schlicksup

They ring the house with their
presence of wine and urine
and I feel solidarity.

They come to be washed, clothed
and fed and I cease to be afraid.

I feel stilled and focused--
in touch with all that's unfinished
inside of me. . .

You are here, so easy to find
among we whose reality
shouts for redemption.

Walking the Line

The people stand slumped in
anticipation of the dole,
daring anyone to expect more of
them than this obeisant stance.

As we approach to oversee their reception
of our gift, my stomach knots.
I'm overwhelmed by the burden
of my whiteness!

Do we dare expect politeness?



Community

So profoundly wounded.
Each with her scar and her hope,
Each with his tear and his past,
Our loneliness collides!
Can we realize the truth of being one?
All we have in common is weakness. . . ☐

His Name is Ralph

by Murphy Davis

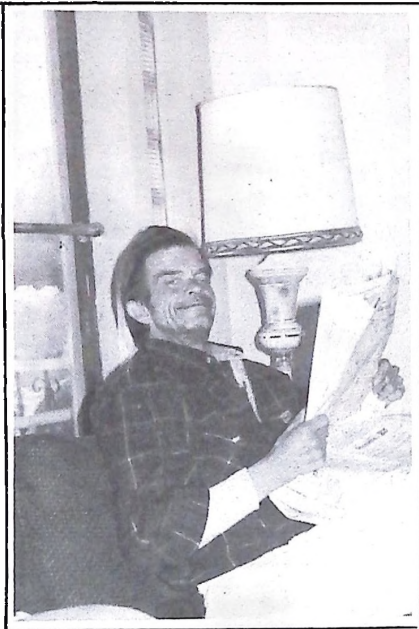
I was speaking to a group of friends at Roswell Presbyterian Church not long ago when someone said, "Tell us one of your Open Door success stories." My mind immediately went to my friend and brother Ralph Dukes, and I gave them a thumbnail sketch of Ralph's life in our community.

It was fun to do that, and I reflected as I drove home on the gift of Ralph's life among us.

When we first met him we knew him only by his street name, "Deadeye." He had lost an eye in a fight in the early 70's and the cruel frankness of street life bestowed the name. He was one of our first guests when we opened the Clifton night shelter in 1979. Back in those days we brought folks in at widely varying levels of sobriety. Ralph was a regular around Ray Lee's Blue Lantern Lounge on Ponce de Leon and his level of sobriety was usually pretty low. But Ralph was a peaceful person and we liked him from the start. When we began to require sobriety in the shelter we didn't see him again for a while.

But then we moved into Ralph's stomping grounds--Ponce de Leon. We saw him often but not often sober.

One day in March '83, all of us who were partners were away from the house. We returned to find that Mary Himburg, one of our first Resident Volunteers, had brought Ralph in to live in the house. "You invited WHO in?" I remember bellowing. One by one, each of us assured her, "He'll be drunk and out of here in less than a week."



It embarrasses me to remember it now: we--who so loudly proclaim that no one is beyond hope! Though I always liked Ralph I really didn't think there was much chance of his laying aside the bottle. But that was nearly seven years ago. Now Ralph himself is a partner in the community and he has never touched a drop of alcohol since the day he came through the door. When he left the streets he left the cruel street name behind. His name is Ralph.



Ralph Edwin Dukes, Jr. was born in Decatur five days before Pearl Harbor, December 2, 1941. He lived with his parents and brother in the farm home of his grandparents. Much of East Lake, McCoy Park and Oakhurst Park was his granddaddy's cow pasture. His daddy was a butcher who as Ralph said, "worked to drink." He drank himself into a peaceful stupor every evening. When Ralph was in the 10th grade at Decatur High School, his daddy disappeared and was not heard from until a letter came three years later from Texas with the news of his death. They learned that he had been sent by the court to an alcohol rehabilitation hospital in San Antonio. He successfully completed the program and remained to work in the hospital. By the time of his death he had become the superintendent of the hospital.

But the legacy of alcoholism had been passed on. Ralph graduated from Decatur High in 1960 and went to work for his uncle, Henry Erwin, who owned a metal fabricating plant in Tucker. He learned to weld and worked there until 1969 when he went back to Decatur High to teach welding and electronics. This was Ralph's favorite job and he would have loved to stay, but the budget was cut and his job eliminated.

From then on there was fierce competition between Ralph's work and his drinking habits. "I didn't take my first drink," he said, "til I was 21. But then I tried to make up for lost time." He held a series of welding jobs and remembers sitting in his Clarkston apartment one night and saying to himself, "Ralph, you got a choice: You gonna either drink liquor or you gonna work." The liquor won out and Ralph began to live on the streets. For eight years he lived on Ponce de Leon (literally on Ponce). He survived by collecting cans, panhandling, and cleaning up Ray Lee's Blue Lantern Lounge and the Ponce Pub. "Just like my daddy," he says, "I worked to drink."

He almost made it out once before. One night he met Steve Duke, a guitarist, at Ray Lee's and Steve said to him, "Look why don't you get yourself straightened out?" Steve helped him get into Rockdale House. For eight months he was sober, helped cook for the house, and went to AA meetings. But at the end, Ponce drew him back like a big, bad magnet. He got off the bus and immediately ran into a couple of his drinking buddies. "Before I knew it I was at the Druid liquor store buying me a half pint. Eight months of sobriety and just like that, it was over. Back on the treadmill to oblivion."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

Eight years on the streets took their toll. Ralph wanted to quit drinking, but he couldn't do it on the streets. "But once I got a roof over my head and a bed that was mine for as long as I needed it, I could do it. As they say in AA, I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I'm thankful I came out of it in one piece. The piece is a little frayed, but it's one piece."

Ralph Dukes left the streets and became a sober hard-working member of the Open Door family. When we celebrated his birthday that first year he stood up and said, "I thank you for celebrating my birthday. I don't remember any of my birthdays for the last 20 years because I've been drunk. If Mary Himburg hadn't brought me in here I might be dead. Thank you."

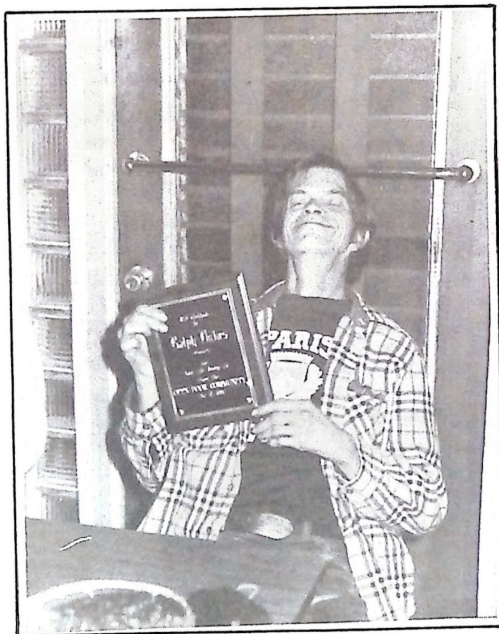
Ralph is up every morning at 4:00. He makes pot after pot of coffee for the house and the Butler Street Breakfast. Then he walks to the corner to pick up the morning papers and is back before most of us are up. By mid-morning he's setting up the dining room for the soup kitchen. His afternoons and many evenings are spent in the clothes closet sorting and sizing hundreds of pairs of pants and socks, shirts and underwear to refresh those who come in for showers. In between, he reads five to six books a week. (He misses his buddy Frank McGuire whose bookstore was Ralph's favorite haunt.)

After eight years outside on Ponce, Ralph has spent most of the last seven inside. "I stay put," he says. "I need time to do all the things I have to do. If you're not busy doing something, you can expect a ton of trouble."

Ralph became a partner last year and says this has changed his life. "Yes, it's different. I try to be more meticulous--more careful--about everything I do. In order to be a leader you have to set an example. The thing I try to say (non-verbally) is 'Hey--it's here. You can get it too if you want it.'"

"But you know, you've got to be a special breed of cat to do this work. You've got to dig down somewhere and find out there's somebody besides you in this world. Some's just not as fortunate and we've got to do something to help 'em."

"Besides," says Ralph with his sideways grin, "I enjoy doing it."



Cayte and Walt

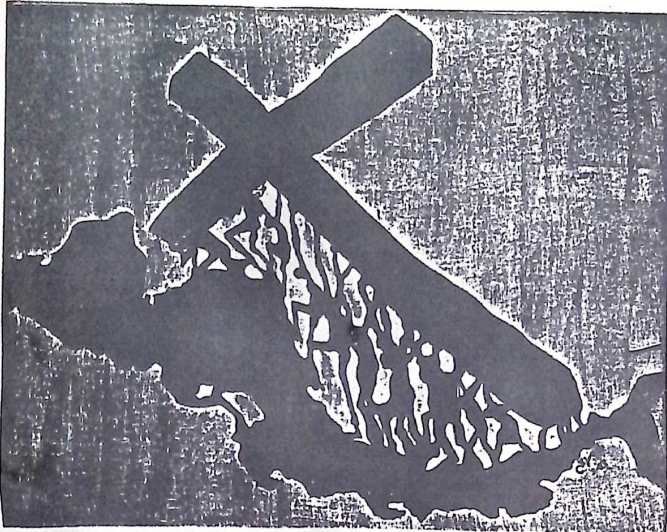
by Ruth Allison

Walt Lowe and his goddaughter, Cayte Schissel, are a most welcome sight every Tuesday afternoon when they walk down the long hallway to our kitchen where they help fix dinner for the house. Somehow, our Tuesday dinners seem to be full of surprises, but we know that Walt and Cayte will be gracious (and unflappable!) cooks, no matter what. If a dozen extra folks show up half an hour before dinner is to be on the table, or the main course was accidentally left in the freezer, Walt and Cayte will manage everything beautifully.

Walt has been coming almost the entire time 910 has been open. When he first moved to Atlanta to teach Systematic Theology at Emory University, Walt was drawn to the simplicity and directness of serving in a shelter and became a volunteer at the Clifton Shelter. When The Open Door Community began at 910 Ponce de Leon, Walt continued to volunteer, and soon became the "Tuesday night regular."

Cayte began coming with Walt a year and a half ago, when she was in the second grade. We all looked forward to Tuesday evenings when Cayte would brighten up the house, helping in the kitchen and setting the tables. We really missed her last Fall, when her afternoons were taken up with soccer. Cayte and the Morningside Stars went on to become first in their league, and when soccer season was over, Cayte returned full of enthusiasm for cutting up cheese, being chief can-opener, and putting food on the table. She says two other things she likes to do a lot are playing the violin and playing with Ali at the Open Door. Two things she does not like at all are school and cutting up onions!

Walt and Cayte are much-loved members of our extended family. Walt says one of his chief pleasures at the Open Door is being close enough to watch our community grow. We look forward to many more years with Walt and Cayte!



Nicaragua

Editor's note: The following piece is the statement issued by the Ecumenical Committee of U.S. Church Personnel in Nicaragua in response to the attack and assassination of church workers that occurred on January 1, 1990.

We, the Ecumenical Committee of U.S. Church Personnel in Nicaragua, denounce the contra ambush of the church vehicle, killing two Sisters of St. Agnes, Sister Teresa Rosales (Nicaraguan) and Sister Maureen Courtney (U.S. citizen), and wounding Sister Francisca Colomer (Nicaraguan) and Bishop Paul Schmitz (U.S. citizen) on the first day of the United Nations' Year of Peace and Respect for International Law.

The religious were traveling between Siuna and Rosita to attend a meeting of pastoral agents in Puerto Cabezas when a U.S. made and supplied RPG-7 missile hit their vehicle, instantly killing U.S. citizen Sister Maureen and leaving Sister Francisca with shrapnel wounds in her face. This was followed by automatic weapon fire which ended the life of Miskito Sister Teresa and shattered the left forearm of the Bishop. Their crime was proclaiming the Gospel by their lives among the Miskito people.

Two campesinos from the town closest to the ambush site, Jaime Arauz and Ronald Dolores Mairena, had been kidnapped just a few hours before by the contra band belonging to Jorge Salazar III Command under the command of Evaristo "Ruben" Aguinaga. They testified that while the band of contras attacked the vehicle of the religious they were able to escape. Consistent with other attacks of this nature of which we have first-hand knowledge because we live here, there leaves no room for doubt that the forces responsible for the attack were the U.S. created, organized, sponsored, and funded contras.

During this United Nations' Year of Peace and Respect of International Law violence is one of many tactics currently used by the U.S. to interfere with or discredit the democratic process in Central America. In Nicaragua it is the U.S.-backed contras, already condemned by the International Court of the Hague and ordered demobilized by the Central American presidents. In El Salvador it is the U.S.-funded war with the rejection of a negotiated solution and the bombing of

the civilian population. In Panama it is the U.S. military itself in a bloody takeover of the country leaving thousands of civilians dead in the supposed search for one man.

With the rest of the world moving toward peaceful democratic solutions to conflict, we as U.S. citizens committed to building the Reign of God abhor the consistent choice of a violent response to the conflicts in Central America.

--We condemn the massacres of these religious as well as other Nicaraguans, especially during this electoral period.

--We condemn the continued violations of international law by our government.

--We demand that the U.S. government immediately cut off all funding for the contras and channel these monies for their immediate demobilization by the United Nations.

--We are proud to be working in a country which continues to implement the Central American Peace Accords.

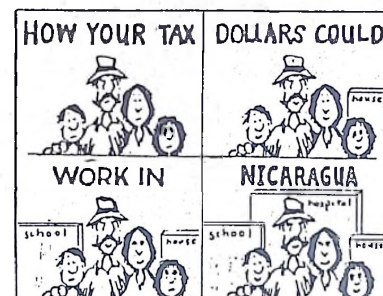
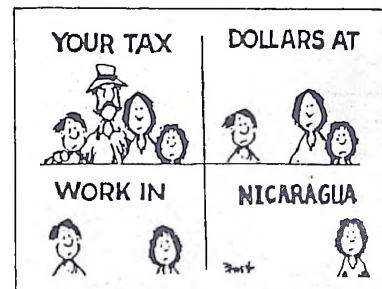
--We are proud of the Nicaraguan Government's respect for international law and their use of international organizations.

--We are grateful for Sisters Teresa and Maureen's service in favor of peace among the Miskito people in a conflictive region.

--We are especially challenged by the witness of Maureen, who showed us as U.S. citizens how to live, and if necessary even to die, while working with the Nicaraguan people to bring peace with justice to our world.

"The Lord God will raise up for you prophets from among your own people to whom you shall listen."

--Deuteronomy 18:15



SATOBSAT

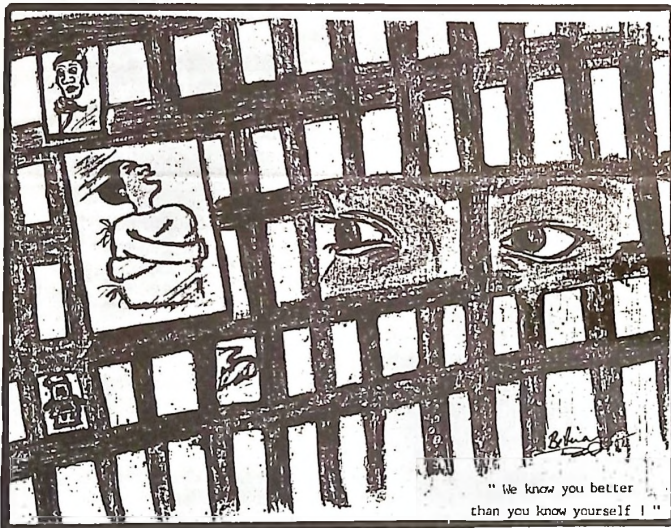
Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired

By Jack Alderman

Editor's note: Jack Alderman is a friend on death row in Jackson, Georgia.

This night found me in a desperate attempt to escape the darkness of my prison;
The every effort appeared doomed to failure as I tried to master the intricate internal mechanism;
Worn keys brutally inserted into rusted locks that held fast the secrets of my sanity;
Doors bolted and windows curtained to protect the strangers of an often maligned vanity.

The world beckoned but the barriers impeded necessitating further acts of deceit;
They will not let me be who I am and I refuse to accept surrender or consider defeat;
Mammoth walls constructed to safeguard an identity now crumbled in decay;
In the courtyard of the soul can be seen the gallows with dead dreams on display.



"We know you better
than you know yourself!"

Across weakened thresholds and behind busted panes a spirit anxiously paces;
In the cemetery memories are exhumed though the names are seldom accompanied by faces;
My enemy has made me my enemy in spite of a determined crusade to prevent;
Killed in the line of duty, buried in a concrete coffin: the death a planned accident.

I would go crazy, I think, were I not afraid of becoming lost en route;
A simple destination with complex directions--ideally suited for a fool, no doubt;
Whatever, wherever, whenever, whenever--just free me from this castle of pain;
Execute me at sunrise if you must; but do not force me to defend, or ask me to explain.

To tunnel beneath requires more strength and patience than is currently in supply;
To soar above would solve the problem, unfortunately I've not learned to fly;
In the end, as in the beginning, I am again confined to this one-man cell.
Even at night, even at quiet, I have found that aloneness can be hell.



Becoming Real

Editor's note: Because of continuing litigation in the death penalty case referred to in this piece, the author wishes to remain anonymous.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It is a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

--The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams

I wasn't sure why I was driving to that small Georgia town. I had never met you. We had exchanged letters for a while, but even those had stopped coming over the past few months. Your lawyer had called and told me you needed someone--anyone--a caring presence in the courtroom. I followed my instincts and decided to go.

Not knowing quite what my purpose would be, I put on a Sunday spring dress. It was so out of character for me that it made the day feel like Easter--but in a strange, solitary way, as if it were a secret observance known only to me.

I remember arriving at the courtroom, feeling vaguely expectant and a little lost. I got out of my car and wandered into the first entrance I could find. It led me up some back stairs. Near the top of the stairs, my eyes suddenly caught the eyes of--who was it? For some reason I had the impression he was a delivery boy, so young, and in a white uniform, and his eyes turned towards me--deep, serious, sad, very direct grey-blue eyes. We exchanged a glance of simple curiosity, not unlike two animals passing in a clearing might gaze at each other briefly and then move on.

It was a guard who interrupted the moment, hustling me down the forbidden back stairs and directing me to the appropriate entrance. It was only as I walked out into the bright sunlight that all the details of the image of that young man became clear and fell into place. There were bars in front of him and chains on his ankles and wrists. Why hadn't I noticed?

I walked up the front stairs and entered the courtroom. No one else was there except some lawyers and clerks. I didn't know where to sit, but I sat anyway, and looked around the high-ceilinged room at the rich wood paneling and carved molding. The seat

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Courtesy Amnesty International USA

was hard and there was no place to put my arms, so I felt suddenly very prim.

After a while, the judge entered the courtroom, took his place up high behind the formidable solidity of his perch, and brought the proceedings to order. Following some opening statements, he ordered the defendant brought into the courtroom. I watched the young man I had seen earlier shuffle in with a guard on each arm. It was you--walking stiffly because of the way the chains restricted your movement--and I found myself thinking of a home movie my father had taken of me as a toddler one Easter Sunday in the park. I would squat, pick a flower, rise unsteadily, and take a few tenuous, short, flat-footed steps before squatting to pick another to add to my bouquet. The image of that little girl toddling uncertainly melded with that of you making your way across the room in cramped, childlike steps--head bowed, hands clasped before you in shame--trying to minimize the degrading clanking of your chains.

I listened numbly as the lawyers began to toss their arguments back and forth. The D.A.--speaking for a wounded, outraged community--depicted you as a vicious, depraved killer, not a person, a killer. It would be ridiculous, according to the D.A., to waste the court's time considering the fate of this inhuman monster. You had shown no mercy to your victim, the argument went, so the court should show none to you.

Your lawyer, soft-spoken and a bit out of his element (he had never tried a criminal case in a small town in rural Georgia) stepped forward. He cited your youth and lack of a serious criminal record as grounds for consideration of a life sentence instead of the death penalty.

Quietly, your lawyer questioned you, asking for an account of the details of the incident. Quietly, but forthrightly, you recounted--for the first time--the events of that day and the night that preceded it. You were just a boy, I thought, so young and so gentle to have bloodied your hands in this vile episode and to find yourself exposing such a brutal moment to a roomful of imposing strangers.

What did they know about you? They only knew that you committed this heinous act. Is that all there was to know? What did I know about you?

I knew you were frightened as you took a long look at yourself and the spiraling self-destruction that led you to the act of murder. You were doing all right until you had to talk about the murder itself. It was then that you had to ask for water. Your eyes and nose got red and moist, but you didn't break down. You pushed ahead. The microphone magnified the dryness in your mouth as your tongue stuck to the roof of it. It picked up the small quaver in your voice and sent every slight move you made, every sniffing back of the child's tears you did not want to show, crackling through the taut atmosphere in the courtroom.

I couldn't help but wonder whether or not you were the same kid that had written me all those letters about the beach and your father's farm, about playing the guitar and listening to Bruce Springsteen; who wrote poems and songs full of that mixture of vulnerability and invincibility that led to your hopelessly transparent claim that this was all a mix-up, that you had been framed, that somehow this mess would be straightened out and this nightmare would just go away.

I heard echoes of that boy's voice in this, your first confession, but there was a new resonance to it now, for the one speaking was no longer a cocky kid, but a young man. You had finally come to terms with yourself and your situation, and had begun to understand the sanctity of human life. It was clear you understood the tragedy of the loss of a human life. Could you also understand the tragedy of losing your own life?

The judge brought the proceedings to a close. Your appeal was denied. After once again being told that (in the estimation of the court) you were not fit to live, you were abruptly hustled away. Our only contact had been that brief exchange on the back stairs and a few questioning looks across the courtroom. Yet as I stepped outside, I again marveled at the Easternness of the day. Overwhelmed and oppressed by the smell of murder, execution, death--I felt the spark of a new beginning. A new life for you. Even if it leads to a tragic end in the electric chair, at least now you will have lived.

Before you weren't living. You were a whirling dervish being catapulted through life. But you turned a corner that day. You joined the rest of us at the altar.

And you opened the door to friendship because, like the Velveteen Rabbit, you finally became Real. ☐

Johnny Westbrook - Death Row - Jackson GA



MOVING?

WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SIMPLY PRINT YOUR COMPLETE OLD AND NEW ADDRESSES ON A CARD AND ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR MAILING LABEL. IT TAKES LONGER TO MAKE THE CORRECT CHANGE WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION. WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING.

THE DEATH PENALTY IS EASY TO ACCEPT ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DENY THE FACTS.

Number of people executed in the United States this century: more than 7,000
 Number of people sentenced to death and later proved innocent: 139
 Of the 139, number who received a reprieve within 72 hours before scheduled execution: 22
 Of the 139, number actually executed: 23
 Number of people now on death row: 2,186
 At the rate of 23 errors per 7,000 executions, number of people now on death row who are likely to be proven innocent posthumously: 7
 In a 1988 study of 14 juveniles on death row, number who had serious head injuries as children: 14
 Number who were physically abused: 12
 Number of juveniles now on death row: 30
 Number of mentally retarded persons executed since 1984: 5
 Percentage of death row inmates who are black: 39.8
 Percentage of U.S. population that is black: 12.1
 Percentage of death row inmates who are white: 51.8
 Percentage of U.S. population that is white: 77.5
 Average cost of a case resulting in execution, counting appeals, in Florida: \$3.2 million
 Estimated cost of life imprisonment for 40 years in Florida: \$516,000
 Amount California taxpayers could save each year if the death penalty were abolished: \$91 million
 Number of persons on death row in California: 226
 Number who can afford private counsel for an appeal: 2

Mother Jones magazine, 9/89

IMPORTANT LABOR POOL MEETING!

COMING IN MARCH

Time and location to be announced

LUNCH WILL BE SERVED
AFTER PLANNING SESSION

HELP US STOP EXPLOITATION BY LABOR POOLS!

* SALVADORAN COFFEE *

Much of the coffee we drink in this country is harvested from the sweat of our brothers and sisters in El Salvador for the benefit of international corporations and the rich of that country. Specifically, these brands include: Folgers, Maxwell House, Hills Brothers, M.J.B., and Chase & Sanborn.

Please, with us, send a message to the Salvadoran poor that we will not support this abuse. Boycott the above-mentioned products as a sign of our solidarity and an attempt to force a change in the lives of this troubled nation.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

A True Story
by Herbert Hardwood



Imagine that you are the floor in the Open Door dining room, walked over by 513 feet every day. This goes on day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year for more than eight years. People track mud on you, and then they have the nerve to mop you with disinfectant cleaner! Just the other day a pot of hot coffee got spilled on me. And once, a ten-gallon pot of very hot soup got set down on top of me and burned a hole right through. All of this takes its toll: I'm full of scratches, gouges, rotten places, and seams that are pulling apart. In short, I'm worn out!

A floor specialist tells us that it will cost \$1200 to get a long-lasting, sturdy, easy-to-clean floor. Please help us rejuvenate the Open Door dining room floor.

WE ARE OPEN. . .

Open Door Schedule

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 & 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--Monday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon

SUNDAY BREAKFAST--Sunday morning at 910, 7:15am

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

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

USE OF PHONE--Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon, 1:30pm-5pm.

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

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household & volunteers/supporters), April 27-29.

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

CHEESE	BATH POWDER
MAYONNAISE	**MEN'S WORK PANTS**
MULTI-VITAMINS	MEN'S WORK SHIRTS
MARTA TOKENS	MEN'S UNDERWEAR
POSTAGE STAMPS	COATS, HATS, AND GLOVES
MEN'S LARGE SHOES	MEN'S OUTDOOR COATS
COFFEE	MEN'S SWEATERS
NON-AEROSOL DEODORANT	KITCHEN STOOL
HAMS AND TURKEYS	DRAPERIES
DISPOSABLE RAZORS	LONG UNDERWEAR
SHAMPOO	GRITS
FOOT POWDER	30-CUP COFFEE MAKER

From 11am - 1pm Monday- Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11:00 or after 1:00, it would be helpful. Thanks.

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

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Open Door Community Worship

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

Join us!



February 4	Worship at 910
February 11	Worship at 910 Jack Crain, Preaching
February 18	Worship at 910 Rev. Lonnie Oliver and New Life Presbyterian Church Singers
February 25	Worship at 910 Rev. Nellie Williams, Preaching
March 4	Worship at 910
March 11	Worship at 910 5:00 Eucharist 5:30 Keith Jennings on Racial Justice and Human Rights
March 18	Worship at 910 Rev. Clinton Marsh, Preaching
March 25	Worship at 910 5:00 Eucharist 5:30 Songs of the Labor Movement

Four times each year the Community has a weekend retreat outside the city. This replaces our evening worship at 910 Ponce de Leon Ave.