

HOSPITALITY

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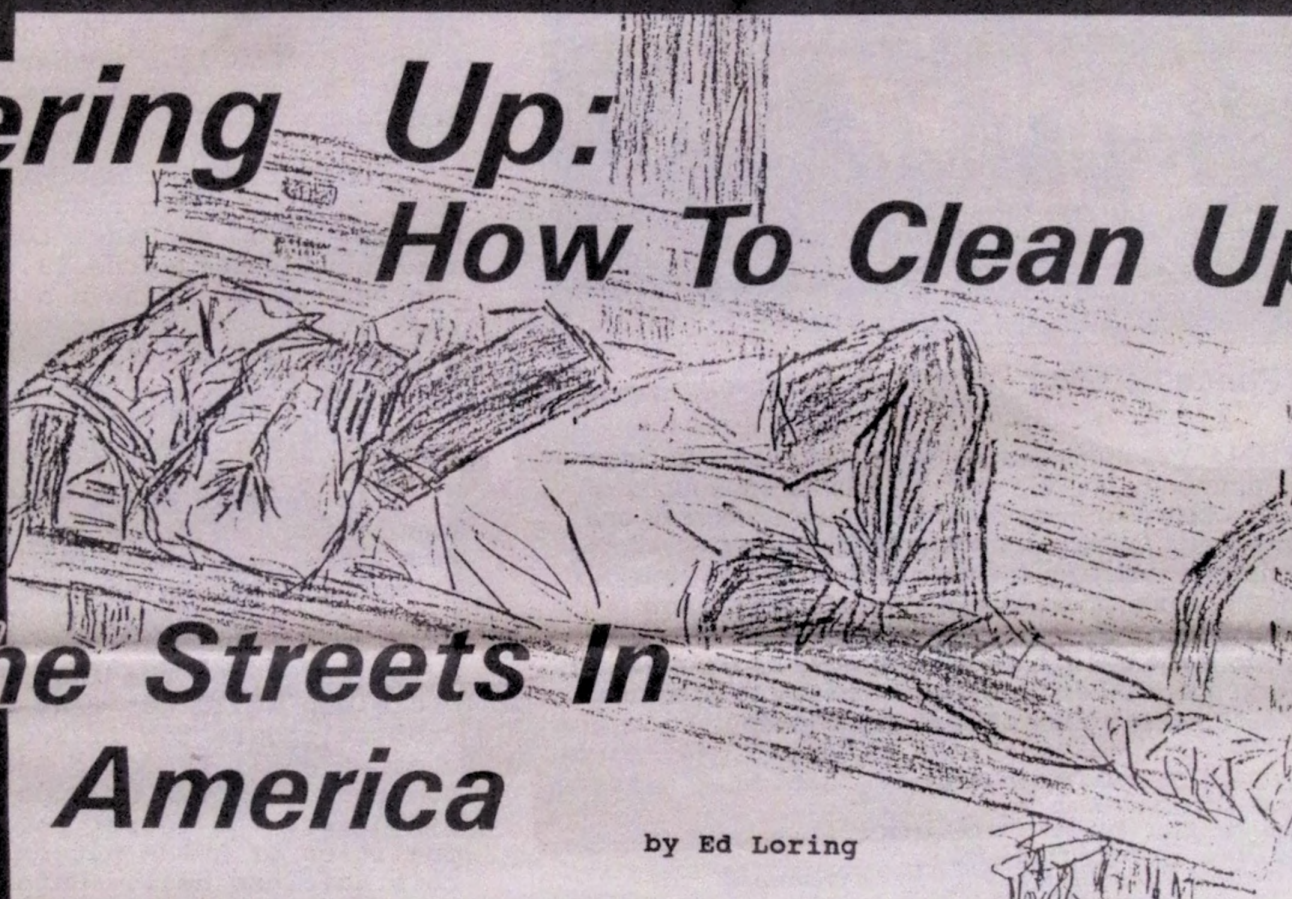
Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.
910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 * 404/874-9652

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

February 1992

Sobering Up: How To Clean Up The Streets In America



by Ed Loring

Editor's note: This article was first published in Atlanta Medicine (Summer 1991, pp. 19-21, edited by Dr. Martin Moran, M.D.) This special issue of the Journal of the Medical Association of Atlanta was on health care and homelessness with the subtitle "A National Disgrace." We thank Dr. Moran for permission to reprint this article.

This article began in April, 1979. Carolyn Johnson and I had completed our first research project on the numbers of people without houses in Atlanta and locating the resources for folk in such a crisis. I shall continue writing this article long after I lay my pen on my desk. For as a response to the findings in the spring of 1979--1200 men and women, boys and girls living on the streets or at the Salvation Army and the Union Mission, eating at St. Luke's Community Kitchen and no free shelter space in the city--I committed my life to the houseless folk of Atlanta. I am deeply thankful to the editor of this magazine and, no doubt, to several of you readers for supporting my life and work and the ministry and mission of The Open Door Community.

Housing is a critical social problem in American society. Everyone accepts that fact today. We continue to debate the numbers and causes of people residing on our streets. Some interpreters suggest a very few thousand. They tend to believe that having no place to live is a breakdown of personal morals such as addiction to alcohol and drugs. Others, like the Task Force for the Homeless, paint the picture on rougher canvas: 15,000 on any given night; 45,000-60,000 different people during a twelve month period. The causes, never unrelated to personal choice and behavior, lie within a political system which executes a public policy eventuating in an increase in the numbers on the streets every 24 hours. This public policy is buttressed, according to the Task Force, by cultural values rooted in individualistic habits of the heart whose social analysis rarely goes beyond blaming the victim for her situation.

Notwithstanding the ongoing debate over numbers and causes we have now reached an American consensus: 1) housing is a critical

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HOSPITALITY



910 Ponce de Leon

HOSPITALITY is published 11 times a year by The Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of The Open Door and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the following:

Murphy Davis--Southern Prison Ministry
Ed Loring--Correspondence
Pat Fons--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator
Murphy Davis--Hardwick Prison Trip
Phillip Williams & Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinators

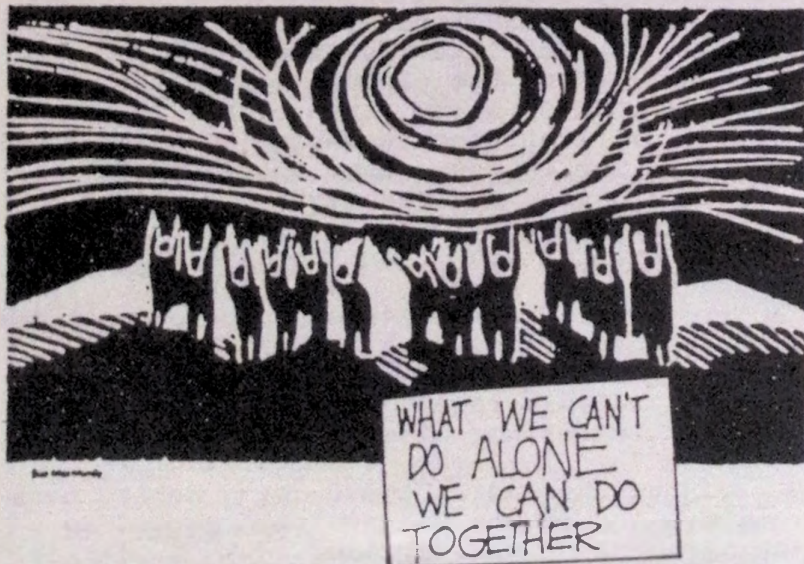
Newspaper:

Editorial Staff--Murphy Davis, Elizabeth Dede, Pat Fons, Ed Loring, Dick Rustay, Gladys Rustay, CM Sherman, and Tim Wyse

Layout--Gladys Rustay

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

Subscriptions or change of address--Tim Wyse



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social problem and 2) folk without housing are in personal crisis.

Martha is a 25-year-old African American woman. She is unmarried, the mother of two little boys. She lives in a shelter two miles from the central business district. Martha, like 40% plus of the homeless, has a job. She works five nights a week from 5:00-9:00pm for a janitorial company which contracts to clean office buildings. Her pay is the minimum wage. She gets no benefits and no vacation. The company's employment policies are based upon part time temporary labor. Full time employment at a living wage for Martha, Timmy, and Odeka is not an option. The bottom rung of the ladder is the top rung. Martha works but wants full time employment. Martha has a bed; she wants a home. Martha is a mother; she wants private space, a yard, and a nearby school for Timmy and Odeka.

Occasionally, Martha goes to the blood bank to pick up an extra \$12.00 selling her plasma. From entrance to departure requires four hours; she earns \$3.00 per hour. She has been known to have a drink in Woodruff Park (bars and restaurants charge too much for her), get feisty, locked-up for a couple of days, fired from her janitorial job, and put out of the shelter for a week. Then Martha; Timmy, and Odeka start over again.

As despair grows among the street population, so grows aggressiveness, hostility, and contempt. Yet there remains an awful, even majestic quality to the endurance and suffering and survival among the urban exiles and nomads. Their pain and grief is beyond the imaginings of those of us who sleep well, eat what we want, and know, from calendars too filled with marginalia, what we shall be doing the day after tomorrow. Though no Anne Frank, Martha symbolizes the secret resources and mystical qualities of human nature to cope and endure this homeless hell. Unfortunately, she, like Anne Frank, is doomed. Martha lives under the shadow of the death sentence of homelessness. The streets may be neither concentration camp nor oven, but Martha's fate is sealed. She shall die from houselessness, hunger and underemployment. Timmy and Odeka, African American males, though no Willie Horton, will, if they survive 18 more years, end up in prison.

The resources in American life to resolve social problems have not been able to end homelessness nor even to slow its development. Like a cancer gone too far, we have not designed a therapy to halt its insidious progress. Our elected leadership has discovered no public policy which can house the 1 to 3 million American citizens living on the streets. The business community has been unable to develop an equitable distribution of work, a living wage, or market incentives to address the death and waste of human life in every urban area of this nation. The communities of faith have failed to mobilize their membership into a cadre of compassion which could inform our politicians and inspire our business leadership. People of faith have done better at confessing sins than "opening their homes to the homeless poor" (Is. 58, Rm.12). Why?

The Democratic Problem

The vast majority of the people in the U.S. are housed and have access to many benefits of living in the most privileged society in history. Not only do we possess material abundance, but the degree of political liberty and economic mobility keep our nation the envy of more than a billion people. Deep are our problems; lofty are our accomplishments. Yet, the political powerlessness among the 2% of our population who are houseless and the 23% who are in poverty is devastating.

In our democratic society public policy reflects the will of the majority represented by Congress, which in turn is checked and balanced by the Supreme Court's interpretation of our rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., between 1964-1966 was able to build a coalition among Blacks and Whites, rich and poor, which established desegregation as the will of Congress and thence public policy. Unusual indeed! No person, party, or movement has ever been able to enlist majority support to house the homeless, feed the hungry, or employ the jobless as public policy. The New Deal moved in this direction during the period that formerly Middle-Class citizens were in shelters, soup kitchen lines, and without work. John Steinbeck's novel, Grapes of Wrath, pictures graphically the limitations of the trickle down theory.

The majority of Americans are well-to-do. We are housed, fed, and working. There is little inclination on the part of the majority to shape public policy so that decent housing, nutritious food, and full time employment is accessible to the poverty-stricken of our nation. Therefore, democratic political structures are not effective means for addressing the interests of homeless people. Housing the homeless as public policy will not be achieved democratically unless the majority of voters are personally threatened by the loss of their housing. Apparently, we will not alter the way things are until the self-interest of the majority is made self-evident by material loss. People without housing, adequate employment, or food will continue to be born, grow, serve their time, and die on the streets of America. Even now, our streets, prisons, hospitals, public libraries, parks and charitable institutions are filling up with poverty-stricken folk. Yet houseless men and women know pain and resentment, suffering and rage, hope and resistance. God is on their side; so too, the implacable forces of fairness. But for now. . . we only stand and wait.

The political problem, then, for the houseless and poor citizens of the U.S. is their minority numerical status. The poor lack the means to change the system through the democratic electoral process. That they can is the terrible and poverty-producing myth of the American System. The Voting Rights Acts, one person--one vote, and the 19th Amendment inviting our sisters into the democratic process are all achievements in the pursuit of justice. But to admonish the poor to organize and vote their way off the streets into houses is illusion. The Anti-Slavery Movement essayed daily between 1830

and 1860 to end slavery through the democratic process. They failed. It was not the will of the majority to set African Americans free. John Brown rode into Harper's Ferry only after every legal means to abolish human bondage had been attempted. What will it require of us to house the homeless?

The Capitalistic Solution

Now for the good news! The absolutely astounding news!! There is no housing shortage in Atlanta. On any given night there are, according to the Homeless Task Force, 15,000 men and women, boys and girls without living space. On the very same night considerably more than 15,000 boarding house rooms, apartments, and houses are on the market in the metropolitan area. In fact, during the fall of 1990 a leading economist from the University of Georgia announced the existence of a "housing glut" across the state. His research revealed that the Georgia economy is threatened by the tremendous number of vacant apartments and houses on the market. The Georgia economy and our quality of life is also threatened by the existence of men and women and children living and dying on our streets.



15,000 people in Atlanta are homeless, and 15,000 plus vacant properties are on the market. So, we have a simple solution to homelessness in Atlanta. Make the vacant housing available to those with no housing! Simple arithmetically; complex economically. If we lived in a feudalistic society (God forbid) the houseless could go to an overlord, make a fealty oath as a serf and move into the vacant housing. In a capitalistic economy it is not the pledge of life and labor but money which provides access to housing. Ah, dear Hamlet, here is the rub. We have a money shortage not a housing shortage in Atlanta. The 15,000 people who live on our streets do not have money to rent or purchase the available housing.

The capitalistic solution is to make more money available in the market place among the poor. We need an equitable sharing of money so that all U.S. citizens will have access to decent housing, nutritious food, adequate medical care, and a joyful quality of life. We do not need a new system of government nor new economic structures.

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Merry Christmas!

by Marc Worthington

At the time of this writing the New Year has just begun, and at the time of your reading, Christmas is probably long past as an event on the calendar. What will February bring? The weather should have turned colder, the requests for warm coats and caps increased, and the deluge of people offering food, clothing, money and time (my head is still reeling) diminished as the new seasonal joys of impending credit card, tax and upward heating bills and resumption of regular work and school hours loom over the volunteers and supporters who make the Open Door's offer of hospitality possible.

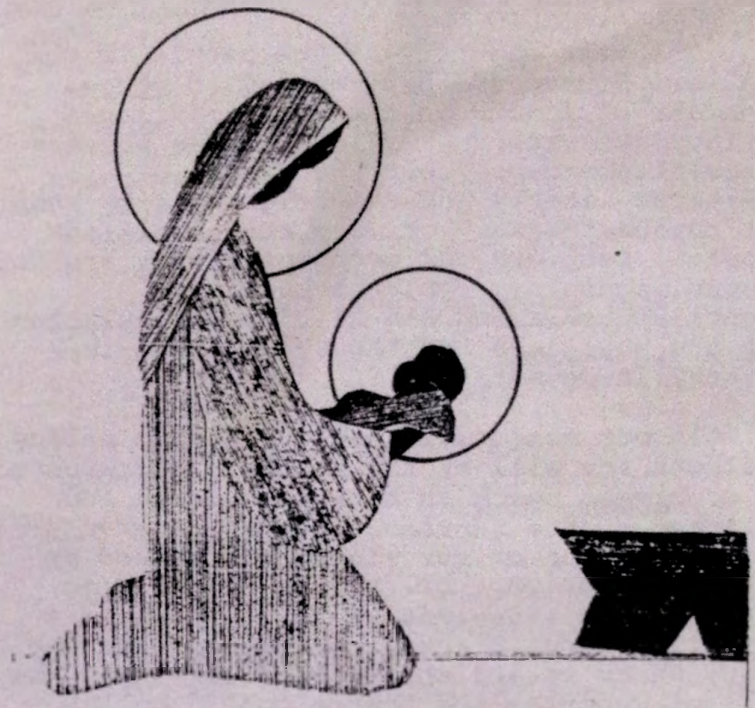
Christmas as a state, business and ecclesiastically approved national holiday may well be past, but I as a believer of the Good News know that I've got some work to do in making its meaning and effect carry beyond, and ask that you join me in some reflections.

"We're glad you are here" was what I was told by one neighborhood resident as he brought in his donations. Volunteers came from nearby, including one whose jogging path crossed our sidewalk; a Buddhist couple brought warm blankets; and a Muslim delivered food. Even the poor themselves who have little to spare saw fit to bring in shoes and other clothing; homeless persons, who rather than passing these items on to friends as a gift or for profit, delivered them to our door.

Those words of "We're glad you are here" which greeted me while I answered the phone and door were of great comfort to a community which knows well the truth of a prophet not being welcome in their own land. It's usually just fine to help **those** people as long as **those** people stay out of **my** neighborhood. So while all the assistance rendered that I witnessed was welcome, that which came from those living in the immediate area most caught my attention.

"I wish they'd just go away" was the sentiment, however, of a letter to the editor in an issue of Creative Loafing a few days later, written by a person who decried how difficult it was to go to the drug store anymore without being panhandled, concluding that the only apparently available solution is to not go to the store.

I can understand the fear, apprehension and irritation of that writer, but I confess I listen more closely to the pain, anguish and fear of our brothers and sisters on the street whose day jobs through the labor pool pay only a minimum wage that cannot procure decent housing, and to complaints of the poor with illnesses who wait for weeks for an appointment at the county hospital, then hours at the clinic, then hours more for a prescription - all for sicknesses that too often could have been prevented were decent food, housing and jobs within reach.



I hear also the voices of the San Francisco population who recently elected a mayor whose campaign platform included the "answer" of shipping the undesirable homeless off to work (or is that concentration?) camps, but I also hear the despair of a single mother for whom neither low wages nor welfare check open the door to a life in a warm house free of drive-by shootings, gangs and drugs that in a flash of an eye can take away her life and those of her children. I think I have **some** sense of what would drive me to drink, or drugs, or TV ad infinitum in such situations. Most of us succumb to depression and hopelessness in less life-threatening scenarios.

"Those" people who bother us also sustain, challenge and threaten us. In strict economic terms, the dishwasher, hotel housekeeper, construction day laborer, alcoholic farm worker and panhandling "bum" who once was in school and did one of many of the above and other jobs, ensure everyone's survival and well-being. Try doing without "them." But in the deeper Christian notion of what it means to be an act of creation, to be human, they are not the other, **they are us in different guises**. I beg the question of who will cast the first stone.

Christmas was in December and is now a glorious birth of God become human, foreshadowing the breaking of God and human being through the suffering of the cross, then forgiven and reconciled through resurrection. For too often we **do not** know what we do. We do not know what we do, or what we say. We know only what we feel, fear and desire, and that passion can bring both death and life, depending on just how much of our other faculties we can or are willing to use to **act**, rather than **react**.

While told we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the branches, there is caution in that salt can lose its flavor, branches can die, and light be extinguished. That is the death of Christmas, and no grinch is needed to steal it away - we can and do accomplish this every day on our own, individually and collectively.

As I offer these thoughts, I know to the very depths of my being that the birth of the Christ child is an ongoing event, that God is through, among and with us, and the message was to all, for all time. The incarnation delivered an offer of hope, and with it a demand for both response and responsibility.

Christ made it clear that His Parent was not the kind of God you have to wind up on the Sabbath, or by extrapolation, Easter, Christmas, or other holy-days. Neither the burden nor the yoke of this seems so light to me much of the time, but I guess I've grown tired of the fires of avoidance and denial enough so that in my spiritual journey I will turn to light and life more frequently than ten years ago, knowing that the cross is there on the road. Not going to the drugstore so as to avoid panhandlers, shipping the homeless off to work camps while more offices and factories lay off workers, building larger and larger prisons - none of these will cure our illnesses. The real answers have not been forged in justice yet, but whatever exact form they take, I know they will not come easy or without discomfort.

The Catholic priest Henri Nouwen speaks of prayer as a transparent way of life, in which one sees or rather tries to see beyond one's own experience-and-expectation shaped view of the moment, to see the Christ in the other, and the other in you - the connection between and within the living branches of a tree. This is not the effusive love of a New Age psychobabble, but a call to action in which concrete steps are required, motored and sustained by a dynamic faith, to make their mark on the lives of all we know we touch, and those we don't know we do, and those we are afraid to, be they prisoner or panhandler, "foreigner" or neighbor.

Somewhere during these past hurried times of holiday preparation I read the story of the early beginnings of one Catholic Worker House of Hospitality. The later-to-be founder is seen offering a pot of soup to homeless persons every day and then hurriedly leaving after delivery of his sacrifice. One day, one of his beneficiaries/victims poured the contents of the pot on top of our hero. When he queried why this was done, he was told that he had never stopped to talk to anyone, and had treated the soup eaters as nothing other than animals.

The one who ate with prostitutes and tax collectors asked and asks this question too and exhorted us to do the hard work of breaking through the veneers and aged and brittle varnishes which color, distort and make difficult the way of the Paraclete.

It was once and will again be said "We are living in desperate times." My Christmas prayer, now almost Lenten, is that we each steer clear of desperation-driven short term reactions to these times. Let us instead remember and honor a God who chose to live and die with us so that by opening a door by words and action we may know the difference between law and justice, truth and deceit, vision and delusion, and hold close the unity of the cross and resurrection, and not shrink from the inevitable pain which accompanies the joy of birth.

Thanks be to our Creator and to all given us to make this life possible. Let us now make life rather than existence possible for everyone. I look forward to greeting many more volunteers and supporters on the phone and at the door who now read these words. God bless us one and all. Merry Christmas.



Holy Week with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship and/or a 24-hour period of solidarity with our friends on the street during Holy Week, April 12-April 18.

Services of Worship:

PALM SUNDAY, April 12	Open Door Community 5:00am.
MONDAY, April 13	Grady Hospital, Butler St. 5:00am.
TUESDAY, April 14	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW 5:00am.
WEDNESDAY, April 15	Trust Company Bank, Park Place 5:00am.
MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 16	Woodruff Park 5:00am.
GOOD FRIDAY, April 17	City Hall, Trinity Ave. SW 5:00am.
HOLY SATURDAY, April 18	City Shelter, Jefferson St., NW 5:00am.
EASTER MORNING, April 19: 13 Butler St. 8:30am WORSHIP OF THE RESURRECTED LORD FOLLOWED BY A HAM AND EGGS BREAKFAST	

910 Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30306 404-876-4657

On Easter Sunday morning we will serve a ham and eggs breakfast to 500 people. Please help us by donating hams for the breakfast.

NEW HOPE HOUSE is looking for additional permanent community members and volunteers.

Service focuses on death row prisoners and a hospitality house for their family and friends.

For more information contact:
New Hope House
PO Box 1213
Griffin, GA 30224

Open Door Community



Folks enjoyed finding pictures of themselves or friends.



Murphy celebrating with long-time Open Door friend Peggy at our ham dinner Friday.



CM enjoys the Blues.



The Blues Band played during the meal for homeless friends and later for us. Here "Sarge" celebrates by dancing.



Saturday Ed entertained by dancing and singing, "Tutti-Frutti" with Bill Fleming's PAND Band. Homeless friend Wolf played the harmonica.



Fun for all ages.

10th Anniversary



Long-time friends Horace Tribble and Charlie Young came to celebrate.



Eulene trips the light fantastic with Ed.



Catherine Morris and Jeff Dietrich, L.A. Catholic Worker friends, relax after sharing their journey with us at worship on Sunday.

All photos in this issue
by Open Door photographers
Eddie Torres, Sue Worthington,
Marc Worthington, and Gladys Rustay.



Murphy's folks came from Greensboro, NC to celebrate.

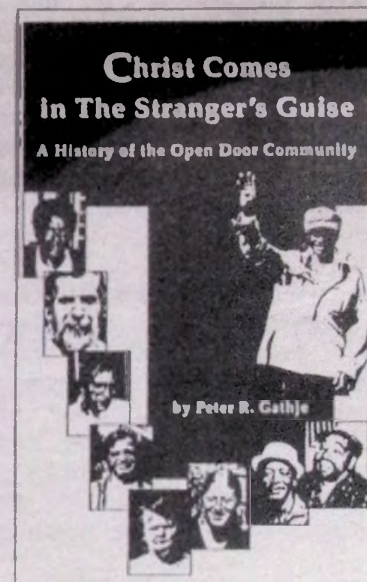


Ed's mother came from Charlotte, NC to party!



Pete Gathje came to autograph his book about our ten years on Ponce. See ad below.

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



Please send a \$10 donation to:

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

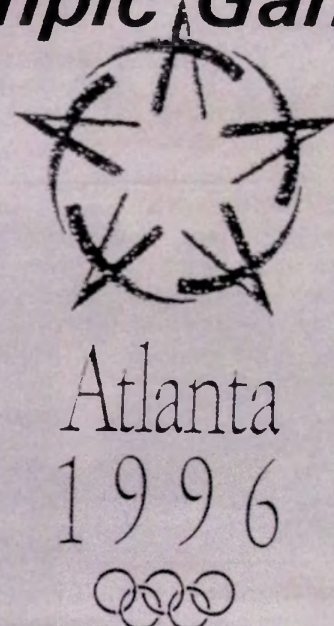
for a copy of our 10th Anniversary Book, or call 404/874-9652.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____, State _____
Zip _____

The Crisis of Accountability In Atlanta Olympic Games

Editor's note: Gene Ferguson is a long-time advocate for the rights of the poor in Atlanta. For 25 years he has worked with Emmaus House. In the Fall of 1991 Gene was appointed to the Atlanta Fulton County Recreation Authority, which gives oversight to the plans for the Olympic stadium. We are grateful for his love and commitment to the people in Atlanta's African American neighborhoods.

by Gene Ferguson



The proposed Olympic stadium brings gentrification to Summerhill, Atlanta's oldest African American neighborhood. Once again, in the name of progress, the homes of poor black Atlantans are being offered up for sacrifice by rich Atlantans with no ties to the neighborhood.

To understand the issue of gentrification in Summerhill, a little history is in order.

Summerhill today is a skeleton neighborhood, where the housing stock of poor and working class African Americans has been torn down for an interstate highway system and the Atlanta-Fulton County Baseball Stadium. Now, a neighborhood organization (Summerhill Neighborhood, Inc.) is being used as window dressing by ACOG to force new destruction on the neighborhood through the Olympic stadium.

The planners and decision makers of Summerhill Neighborhood, Inc., (SNI) can be characterized as partly hostile toward poor African Americans and partly ambivalent. They are not afraid to put in jeopardy their own neighbors. The proposed parking for the new stadium threatens Peoplestown (south) and Mechanicsville (west) with gentrification.

The SNI plan calls for a mixed income strategy: one-third of the homes will be low income; one-third, middle income; one-third, upper. For Summerhill residents, this plan is gentrification at its best. Sixty-six percent of poor African American houses will be trickled out of the neighborhood. Families and individuals living on \$15,000 and less a year will be forced into the situation of having nowhere to live.

The planners' idea is that by diversifying the economic background of Summerhill, the problems which generally plague low income neighborhoods can be reduced. While this sentiment is noble, the poor and working class residents of three neighborhoods will have nowhere to go. They cannot afford to move into upper and middle income neighborhoods, to "diversify" these neighborhoods. And developers are not going to tear down upper and middle class houses and rebuild low income houses for the poor of Summerhill, Mechanicsville and Peoplestown. From this point of view, the gentrification plan embraces both racism and classism.

Anytime the downtown white community decides they want a neighborhood, they put their forces to work. With the Presidential Parkway, these forces ran into a professional

community, with a stable economic base. Other community organizations that would not be hurt by the Parkway joined with them. In Blackburn Park, residents were able to immediately force the Olympic planners to find another site for tennis courts.

But when it comes to poor black communities, it is a different story. The list of projects which have destroyed our homes and neighborhoods is mindboggling: the Atlanta Civic Center, MARTA, the World Congress Center, Lenox Square, the Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, and now the Dome. Somehow the people who prey on the poor can always justify why our neighborhoods are the best place, the most feasible, and the only place for their new projects.

Summerhill's experts and leaders do not live in Summerhill, Peoplestown or Mechanicsville. Yet they are deciding what the neighborhood's goals and objectives should be, and they are devising a strategy to obtain these goals. But what the Olympic Committee and other leaders are calling neighborhood politics is not community based. This is because the basic objectives and action strategies are decided by leaders whose position results from their connection with individuals and groups whose political base is not in these neighborhoods.

As an observer, friend, neighbor and worker in Summerhill, Peoplestown and Mechanicsville neighborhoods for the last 20 years, I know that gentrification is an injustice that will not solve the housing problems that face poor African American communities. And I know Summerhill residents cannot afford the luxury of dreaming with the Olympic committee. Their dream speaks about African Americans in harsh terms.

African Americans in Summerhill must dream of hope and commitment to struggle. There is a need for community-based politics--a politics that begins, not from the top down, but with ordinary people deciding upon their political needs and priorities and then working upwards. In this way we can protect our neighborhoods from gentrification.

(continued from page 3)

Democracy and capitalism already have in place the mechanisms to provide housing, food, and jobs for all citizens.

First is the system which is the barometer of our nation's commitment to and investment in fairness, economic sharing, and the democratic way of life: the graduated income tax. As a nation we have no money shortage. We do have an imbalance between the well-to-do and the poverty-stricken. In this society where there is enough for everyone to have enough, a revision of tax percentages within the given system could redistribute income so that homelessness would be a memory among our citizens. Put the money in the market.

Our second resource is the minimum wage. The bottom line for setting the amount needs to be determined by the market costs for a decent life. How much money does it take to have access to the necessities of life--housing, food, medical care, etc.--plus some surplus for crisis, old age, and leisure?

The good news for the poor is this: we have no housing shortage and the political and economic mechanisms to end homelessness are already in place. A problem we well-to-do folk face, however, is our addiction to poverty. The benefits of poverty which we accrue--a cheap pool of laborers, bodies for medical teaching and research, middle income jobs to take care of the poor--are not worth the costs of prisons, police, violence, crime, fear, and the decay of human values inherent in the innocent suffering and needless death of the poor. Poverty is no more beneficial to our society than the numbing effect of alcohol is to our personal issues.

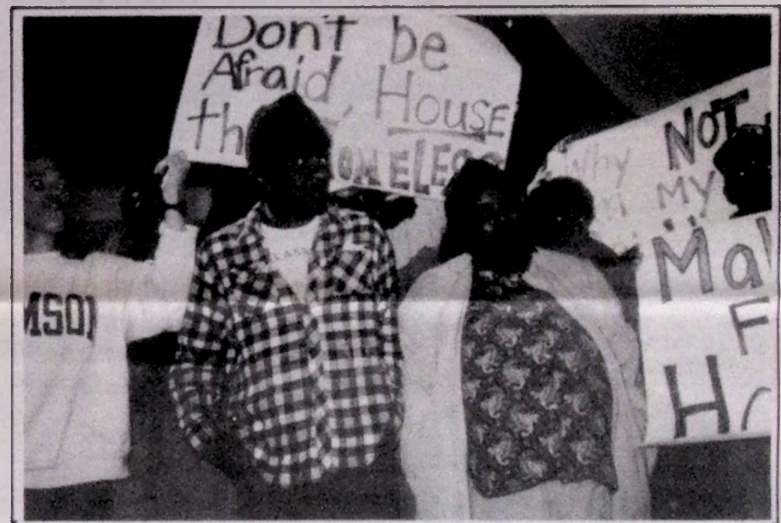
Like an alcoholic family, we are afraid of sobriety and health. The impulse and inclination of drinkers and non-drinkers alike are to quickly point out the reasons why they need to continue drinking, or to deny that they drink at all. (Edwin Meese denied that hunger existed in the U.S. just a few years ago.) Alcohol addiction slowly, almost imperceptibly over the years, destroys the family and kills the drinker. Our addiction to poverty with the concomitant inability to halt its growth or eradicate its presence is destroying the American way of life. Blaming the poor will not heal our addiction. Intervention--the graduated income tax equitably applied and a living minimum wage--will.

The homeless and those like myself who stand with them are failing. We are losing the battle against poverty and its death. How can we as a nation sober up? Clean-up our streets? We need help; we need leadership.

The most respected people in the U.S. are members of the medical profession. You are the healers in this nation. You are the men and women whose public vows have positioned you on the side of the sick, injured, and dying. Would you organize your lives, arrange your priorities, and invest your energies so that the 15,000 homeless people could move into the 15,000 empty housing units?

"Not In MY Neighborhood!"

People for Urban Justice chose the Christmas season to remind City Council that there is still no room in the inn. "Homelessphobia" is promoted by their recent zoning policies.



Robert and Carolyn Abrams were Joseph and Mary seeking shelter.



They were told, "Not in my neighborhood!"



Leap Year Concert

Benefit for Open Door
with Elise Witt and
special guests

New Songs and Stories
Global, Local and Homemade Songs

Saturday, February 29, 8:15pm
Cannon Chapel, Emory University
(727-4449)

Sunday, March 1, 3:00pm
High Museum, Walter Hill Auditorium
(898-9536)

Special Guests

Janet Metzger
vocals

David Marcus
guitar & vocals

Sonnie Houston
Acoustic bass & vocals

Mauricio Amaya
sharango, pan pipes, &
vocals

Tickets \$9 or \$7 advance
(Tickets available at Charis Book Store (Little 5 Points))

Please hold _____ tickets at the at \$7.
_____ Sat, Feb. 29 _____ Sun, Mar. 1
Make checks payable to: E.M. World Records
PO Box 116
Decatur, GA 30031

Name _____

Address _____

total enclosed _____

(I cannot attend but would like to buy _____ tickets at \$7 to benefit
the Open Door Community.)

Georgia Death Penalty Abolitionists

A new organization is growing state-wide in Georgia with
the ultimate goal of abolishing the death penalty. The
group will promote public education on capital
punishment, monitor the death penalty, and assist
individuals facing execution and their families. Georgia
Death Penalty Abolitionists is a culturally diverse
organization of individuals and groups committed to the
affirmation of life and the abolition of the death penalty in
Georgia.

For more information please fill out and mail the
following coupon to:

Moriba Karamoko
G.D.P.A.
PO Box 17852
Atlanta, GA 30316

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Georgia Death Penalty Abolitionists • Box 17852 • Atlanta, GA 30316

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Our Catholic Worker House just
celebrated its 10th year of being open, and I
think you did also, didn't you? We never
thought we could keep the soup kitchen
running this long, and I doubt if we can make
another 10 years as our present full time
workers are pretty well burned out. It would
be very hard to find people willing to face
600-1000 people every day, 7 days a week. At
71 it's beyond my capabilities--even 10 years
ago it was. Maybe at 30 or 40 I could've
done it.

Monthly dollar is again gladly enclosed
with lots of thanks for being in the midst of
the struggle.

In solidarity and love and peace,
Jerry Robinett
Tucson, AZ

Dear Friends,

We bless you and thank you for all the
fine work you do--Atlanta sure needs your
presence!

The only thing I would add is that my
faith in the political process (i.e. elected
reps) was long ago tossed aside for their
inability to keep promises. Civil
disobedience (divine obedience) seems the way
to go. Our elected reps mean well but
they're too caught up in their own stuff to
do anything for us. We must seize the moment
and continue to sit in!

Christ's peace!
Mary Jane Rosati
Altoona, PA

Dear Friends at the Open Door,

Thank you for all the good work you do
in the community.

It's a privilege to be your neighbor and
see all the visible signs of the Christmas
spirit that you live year-round.

Bonnie Bradley
Atlanta, GA

Dear Open Door,

I want to write a few lines to wish
everyone at the Open Door a happy
Thanksgiving. The Open Door makes me think
that maybe there will be a door open for me
some day, somewhere, and a chance at a new
life.

The Open Door has become a symbol of
understanding and hope where there was none
in the past. The Open Door represents hope
for lots of people, so let me thank you for
everyone that you mean so much to.

Yours truly,
Name Withheld
A Friend In Prison

Editor's note: This letter is one written to Ed Loring, discussing the root causes of homelessness. Following the letter is Ed's reply. The dialogue is an important one.

Dear Mr. Loring:

I have been receiving your *Hospitality* newspaper since 1987, when I first came to Charlotte and began working with the homeless. I am now working at the Uptown Shelter, a 188 bed facility (108 emergency beds, 80 transitional) which is the only shelter in Charlotte. Needless to say, we are filled to capacity and there are undoubtedly many more people who are still on the streets.

I work with men who are in our transitional program, helping them to secure good, permanent jobs and permanent housing. To make a long story short, I help to move men who were once homeless into a position where they are stable, independent, and free of "shelterization."

There is one observation I have of your newspaper which strikes me. Rarely, if ever, do I see reference in your paper of what I consider to be the number one root cause of homelessness: chemical dependency. I do not believe that homeless are "victims" of the Reagan-Bush era, insensitive corporate and governmental authorities, or the "oppressive" capitalist economic system. I believe a person is a "victim" insofar as he or she allows himself to be victimized.

I can't begin to tell you about the vast number of homeless people who have been given innumerable chances: jobs, apartments, medical care, counseling, and many other forms of assistance to fix symptoms of what their basic problem is: addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Addiction is a disease. Nobody who is an addict can be blamed for being an addict. But the addict must treat his disease before taking any other steps to straighten out his life. Addicts don't become addicts because society has made it so tough for them that they are "forced" to turn to drugs and alcohol. The use of drugs and alcohol is a choice one makes. Through the 12 Steps, one can--and, provided he has the honesty--will recover from actively using drugs and alcohol; in turn, he will go on to help others to recover as well.

You can give a homeless person all the help and opportunities in the world, but if his main focus in life is getting drunk or high, your efforts are in vain.

I share these thoughts with you for what they're worth: from one who is concerned about the homeless to another.

Sincerely,

Paul Richards
Uptown Shelter
Charlotte, North Carolina

Dear Paul,

Thank you so much for your life of caring and servanthood among our homeless brothers and sisters. Thank you for reading our paper, *Hospitality*, and thank you for your thoughtful letter.

I surely agree that addiction is a terrible problem in our society. Not only is it a problem on the streets but also in the office buildings, homes, schools, universities, aboard airplanes, and trains. Drugs and alcohol are no respecter of persons, nor class, nor race, nor gender.

Nonetheless, as you note in your caring letter, we at The Open Door do not see homeless people as a group primarily addicted to alcohol and drugs. Many are, many are not. Among those homeless folk who are addicted some were before they became homeless, others only as a part of the pattern of their suffering and loss.

We at The Open Door believe that no one chooses to be homeless and poor and rejected unless they are deeply mentally ill. We believe God creates in each person the desire to live joyfully, do good work and to receive and give love. It is the character of God, not social surveys, upon which our faith in the inherent dignity and rights of each person are founded.

Because all else in life proceeds from our having a "place" in the world, community (residence) and self (a body), we believe that it is absolutely necessary that housing precede all remedial programs and even employment itself. Housing precedes sobriety. Housing precedes a healthy body and mind. Housing precedes a job, family, education, faithful Christian discipline; housing precedes life.

Living in a country in which there is no shortage of housing but millions of homeless people, persuades us to see the causes of homelessness among the powerful, within the political and economic structures, and the values of this post-Christian democratic culture in which we all participate.

Nonetheless, I celebrate our partnership as we work together to address the multiplicity of problems and concerns in our cities and society. As we ourselves and those with access to the abundant resources of this land, create just laws and form compassionate hearts, surely a more joyful society, with its security rooted in the practice of justice, will be the legacy of our generation to our children.

Please visit us when you are in Atlanta.

Peace to you,

Ed Loring



WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 1:30 until 6:00pm, and from 7:00 until 8:30pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days. (Both phone and door are not answered during our lunch break from noon until 1:30.) Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are open from 7:00am until noon. Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN--Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon

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

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

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

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

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

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

WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters),
May 1-3.

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



NEEDS

JEANS

Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Quick Grits
Cheese
Mayonnaise
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Coffee
Non-Aerosol Deodorant
SWEATERS
WINTER COATS
75 Cup Coffee Maker
TRUMPET

From 11am til 1:30pm, Monday through Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11:00 or after 1:30, it would be helpful.

Open Door Community Worship

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

Join us!

January 26	Worship at 910 Mary Ruth Weir, preaching
February 2	Worship at 910 Rev. Nelle Williams, preaching
February 9	Worship at 910 Rev. Richard Dalton, preaching
February 16	Worship at 910 Rev. Murphy Davis, preaching
February 23	Worship at 910 Rev. Gerald Durley, preaching

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



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, GA 30306-4212.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____