

# HOSPITALITY

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Providing hospitality to the homeless and to those in prison, through Christ's love.  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

February 1993

## Singing The Lord's Song

by Nellie Williams

*Editor's Note: Nellie Williams is a graduate of Phillips Seminary of the Interdenominational Theological Center and pastor of the Greater Hopewell Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in the Summerhill neighborhood. She has been a volunteer and friend of the Open Door for several years. "Singing the Lord's Song" is a sermon she preached for our community worship in February 1992.*

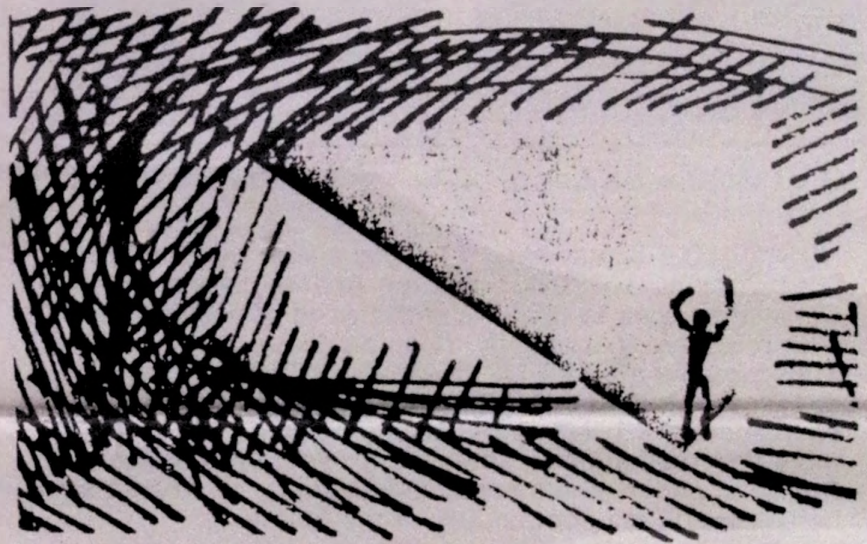
Black history is the story of a race struggling to survive, uprooted from their native land, forced to live in a strange land, beginning as indentured servants in 1620, then slavery, Jim Crowism, lynching, and more recently slavery to the influx of drugs and a welfare system. Blacks have continued to be victims of this strange land that is called the land of the free.

They faced the same question that the Jewish people faced in the Babylonian captivity: "How do we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" The situation was the same in some ways because they were both exiled from their native lands, but the reaction to the situations was different.

Psalms 137 gives us a glimpse into the agony of the Jewish people. If we read the history of the Israelite people as found in historical books such as 2nd Kings and the prophets such as Isaiah, we see the history of the Israelite people as they are carried into captivity. Not all of the Israelites were taken to Babylon; many were dispersed to other surrounding countries. Only the upper class, the king and his family, the lawyers, the businessfolk, were taken to Babylon. They were separated from Jerusalem, which they called Zion, their place of worship, their temple, which was destroyed and was the center of their worship, and taken to a country where there were foreign gods and foreign religious practices. They felt alienated from their God. We can feel their sense of loss and grief as they said, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept." To make it worse, their captors asked them to sing the songs that they had heard and sung in the temple during worship. But they refused. They said, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Many scholars believe that the Babylonian captives were not mistreated, other than being taken away from their homeland and their center of worship. They were allowed to gather together for worship, and they were given land. Many adapted to the new culture and did well.

But blacks were treated differently as we all know. We were brought in chains, sold on the auction block, beaten, raped, humiliated, separated from our families, tribes were mixed up without a common language. And we, too, were asked to sing our song in a strange land.

We are still wrestling with that problem today as we



watch our young boys kill each other. Can we continue to blame our captors? We know that blacks do not own airplanes to bring drugs into this country. We know that there are no reservations about selling drugs to a people who are in poverty. We know that there is no concern that the black mother, who was the stable person during the history of the black people, is now strung out on crack cocaine while she sacrifices her children, leaving them to fend for themselves, one actually letting her young baby starve; one leaving a newborn baby and two other young children in the care of an eight-year-old. 54 million people on food stamps, most blacks, many victims of Reaganomics. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

We can sing the Lord's song because we know who we are. We are a strong nation of black people. We survived circumstances that others could not survive. It was the strong ones who survived the slave ships, the chains, the beatings, the rapes, the lynchings. We are the products of those who survived. We come from a proud black people. We have to remember that, we have to cherish that memory, and we have to learn to love who we are.

Integration was a blessing in some ways, but it was a curse in others. We lost our sense of identity. It was black teachers who told black children that they were somebody and that their dreams could be fulfilled. It was black teachers who understood the loudness of black children. In a black school, they are normal. In a white school, they are unruly. Our black children have turned to drugs and killing each other because they

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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*  
*Ed Loring--Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator; Guest Ministry*  
*Dee Cole Vodicka--Hardwick Prison Trip*  
*Phillip Williams & Dick Rustay--Volunteer Co-ordinators*

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**Layout**--John Cole Vodicka and Gladys Rustay  
**Circulation**--Phillip Williams and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests  
**Subscriptions or change of address**--Gladys Rustay



Artwork and photography contributors this issue:

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 Leo McGuire is a member of the Open Door Community.  
 Gladys Rustay is a partner at the Open Door Community.  
 Virginia Tyler is an artist and friend of the Open Door Community.  
 John Cole Vodicka is an Open Door Resident Volunteer.  
 Mark Harper is a former Open Door Resident Volunteer.

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have lost their sense of identity. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If they can be taught to know who they are they can sing the Lord's song. Judge Clarence Thomas forgot who he was. He forgot the days of growing up in rural Georgia, days of poverty and ignorance, until he faced white America on nationwide TV. Then he had to remember who he was as he accused his captors of lynching an uppity nigger. We have to remember who we are.

Second, we have to remember whose we are. In spite of all our trials and tribulations, we are children of God. It is our God who has brought us this far by faith. Our God has helped us to survive the years of slavery, Jim Crowism, lynching, and God will help us to survive our present crisis. Despite what we are expected to believe, blacks brought their religion with them. It was a deep religion, one that helped us to survive. Isaiah reminded the Israelite people that their God was the only God despite all the gods around them. Those gods were powerless, nothing but wood and metal. He reminded them that their God was the creator and that their God would be victorious. It was the Israelites' survival that encouraged blacks to survive as they listened to their slave masters read them the stories from the Old Testament. They could identify with this people. If God could set them free and let them go back to their Zion, surely God will let us return to our Zion. We have learned that we are God's children and God cares for us. Therefore, we have survived, and



we will survive, and we can sing the Lord's song because we know whose we are.

The Israelites refused to sing, but blacks sang their songs. They saw how their singing could be used to their advantage. They saw how their singing could help them outsmart their masters. To make jests at their masters they would sing, "Heab'n, heab'n, everybody talkin' about heab'n ain't goin' there. Heab'n, heab'n, gonna shout all over God's heab'n." When they called for a meeting they would sing, "Steal away, steal away to Jesus. I ain't got long to stay here." Or "I'm gonna lay down my burden down by the riverside," which is where they would meet. When some failed to show up, they'd sing, "An' I couldn't hear nobody pray, O Lord, way down yonder by myself, and I couldn't hear nobody pray." To spread bad news, "Up above my head, I see trouble in the air. There must be a God somewhere." To spread good news, "Up above my head, I hear music in the air. There must be a God somewhere."

The Israelites could not sing their Lord's song in a strange

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Membership:  
(in formation)

American Civil Liberties  
Union of Georgia

American Friends Service  
Committee (Southeast Regional  
Office)

American Jewish  
Committee (Atlanta  
Chapter)

Atlanta Clergy and  
Laity Concerned

Atlanta Islamic Community

Commissioner Nancy Boxill

Concerned Black Clergy

Councilwoman Sheila Brown

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Wyett Cummings

Rep. Grace Davis

Councilwoman Myrtle Davis

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Battered Women and  
Children

Georgia Death Penalty  
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Justice for Women  
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Metropolitan Atlanta  
Coalition of 100  
Black Women

Patey Morris

National Organization for Women  
(Georgia)

New Hope House  
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Office of African American  
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Human Rights

Southern Christian Leadership  
Conference

Southern Christian Leadership  
Conference Women

Southern Ministry Network

Southern Prison Ministry

Liz Spreggins

Cathy Steinberg

Mabel Thomas

Rep. Henrietta Turnquest

Elise Witt

Women's Policy Group

# Coalition for Justice for Women in Prison

## UPDATE

by John Cole Vodicka

On the bitterly cold, windy night of December 11, over 100 people gathered in front of the Georgia Women's Prison at Hardwick to stand in solidarity with the hundreds of incarcerated women who have been subjected to torturous physical, sexual and medical abuse. (See Jan. 1993 *Hospitality*: "Tantamount To Torture".)

It was perhaps the first time ever that a public demonstration was held at the women's prison, and certainly the first time such a broad-based coalition has formed to confront issues specific to incarcerated women.

The demonstration--a candlelight vigil--was called by The Coalition For Justice For Women In Prison, an association of individuals and organizations formed to fight abuse of women in Georgia's prisons. The Coalition represents a broad-based segment of people, including religious and civil rights groups, elected officials, and women's advocacy projects.

During the past year nearly 200 women prisoners at Hardwick have come forward to tell harrowing stories of assault by guards, rape by prison staff, psychological abuse, medical mistreatment, and staff operated drug and prostitution rings. Prisoners have told of being retaliated against by prison personnel when the women refused to perform sexual acts with employees.

Late last year 14 prison staff, one a former deputy warden, were indicted by a state grand jury on sexual abuse charges, including rape and sodomy. The *New York Times* has called the scandal at Hardwick "one of the worst episodes of its kind in the history of the nation's women's prisons."

"Incarceration does not justify humiliation, abuse, rape and the loss of human dignity," said Bunnie Jackson Ransom of the Metropolitan Atlanta Coalition of 100 Black Women. "We must send a message to the women in prison that we are in solidarity and will fight to end the physical and sexual abuse which appears to be condoned by some of our elected and appointed officials."

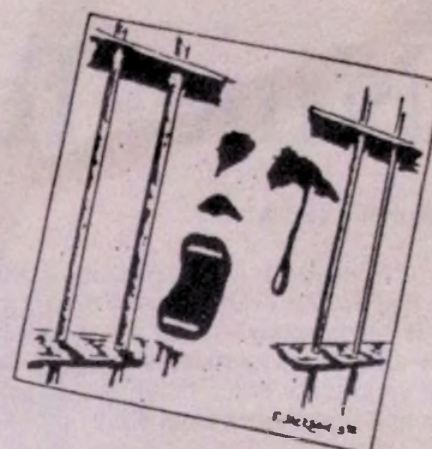
The Coalition For Justice For Women In Prison is demanding a complete investigation of the Georgia Department of Corrections, and the systemic reform of that department. A similar sexual abuse scandal occurred at the women's prison 10 years ago.

"A new day has dawned in Georgia, one in which citizens are uniting to fight for the right of all women to be free from abuse," said Rev. Anne Callison of the Justice For Women Committee of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta. "Doing time to pay for crime does not sanction one's loss of dignity at the hands of the state. Women must be protected from the violence that permeates all levels of our society."

The Coalition For Justice For Women In Prison needs your help and support. For more information on the women's prison scandal and to find out what you can do to help, contact Southern Prison Ministry, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306, 404/874-9652.

*The vigil was wonderful! I was walking back from pill call when you all arrived. Many of the other inmates ran across the field toward the bus. Voices from everywhere were exclaiming, "They're here! Thank you! God bless you!" I stood on the sidewalk, mute, but very moved--tears streaming. It was very moving. The women in here are not used to having people stand up for them. No, quite the opposite, they are used to betrayal and lies. No amount of words on earth could have meant as much as the tangible show of concern and belief in us did.*

--excerpt from a prisoner's letter





# Nine-Ten "Friends"

by Murphy Davis

A visitor to the Open Door a couple of years ago shared later that he was deeply moved by our yard at 910 Ponce. People, he observed, hover around the house--especially at night--like moths attracted to a light. Seeking safe refuge, they draw up as close to the building as possible and huddle there to sleep and find shelter from wind, rain and cold.

Indeed, we often acknowledge the spiritual formation of our corporate and individual lives that comes from stepping over sleeping bodies when we go in and out of our doors. Our theology and our politics are shaped by the fact that we cannot leave our home to take the kids to school, dash off to a meeting, or go for a walk without being reminded of the hell of homelessness; without being reminded that the little we do constitutes gifts of love but not solutions; without being reminded that we live in a city and a nation that has become bored with the problem and reality of homelessness and that plans the shrinkage of safe and hospitable space for the poor.

Just as there will never be enough beds inside our home for those who need to come in from the streets and from prison, so the porches will never give shelter to all who need it.

But still, it was a joy this Fall to employ our carpenter friend, Dennis Hoffarth, to rebuild the stoop over our front steps to provide shelter to twice as many people when it rains. The line in front of our home is an offense, especially when the weather is bad. It is an offense because no child of God should ever have to stand in line in front of somebody's house to eat lunch or breakfast, or to take a shower.

The new stoop is a small thing--just a little more shelter from the rain for a few more people. But we give thanks on every rainy day for a few more folks who didn't get wet.

Bobby Ford lived in our backyard off and on for three years. His addiction to alcohol meant that he lived a hard life as he struggled to dull the pain of homelessness. On Sunday, November 15, 1992, Robert Vernon Ford died of a massive heart attack in our backyard. He was 54 years old. The paramedics worked hard to revive him but finally covered him with a sheet and drove away.



*A backyard memorial service for Bobby Ford*

The following Sunday we gathered in the backyard with many of Bobby's street friends, some neighbors from the apartment building next door, and several members of Druid

Hills Presbyterian Church who had come for our regular worship service. We sang, prayed and remembered Bobby with many stories. James Spruce, a homeless friend, held up a bottle of Listerine (Bobby had been drinking Listerine on the day he died) and said: "This is not what killed Bobby Ford. No," he shouted, "Bobby died of loneliness. He was alone and he had no home. That's what killed Bobby. No bottle killed him. He died of loneliness."

CM mounted a brass plaque on the wooden fence with Bobby's name and the dates of his life. In Loving Memory and with Gratitude. His life among us was something of a miracle. In spite of all the pain and abandonment, Bobby always had a ready smile and dancing eyes.

Later on the same Sunday we gathered at Central Presbyterian Church with friends from around the city to remember, grieve, and celebrate the life of Trudy Green who had died suddenly that week in North Carolina. Though Trudy had moved five years ago with her husband Bill to Montreat, she will forever be part of the history of the Open Door.



JOHN COLE VOOLICKA

*Trudy Green, with husband Bill and daughter Rebecca*

From the time she befriended me as a newcomer to Atlanta twenty-two years ago, Trudy and I got each other into all kinds of things. She put me to work in the Monday night free clinic at Central and took me one Sunday morning after another into the girls section of the Fulton County Juvenile Detention Center. Each week we sang, prayed, talked, laughed, and cried with girls who lived at the margins. And there Trudy taught me some of my favorite songs: "Magic Penny," "Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior," and "Jesus On The Mainline!"

I never was a part of starting work on a project in twenty years but that Trudy was one of the first volunteers: the Hardwick Trip, the Clifton Shelter, the Open Door. Always Trudy was ready to try something new, to roll up her sleeves and pitch in, laughing and singing all the way. She encouraged her daughter Rebecca to come to the Open Door as a Resident Volunteer, and in her 10 months with us, Rebecca met Michael Stoltzfus, the love of her life whom she later married.

It's still unimaginable that Trudy is gone. We thank God for all she gave. But we'll never stop missing her.

Two of our longest-term and most faithful volunteers over the years have been John Barbour and Helen McCrady. John

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came weekly to help run the house, cook and generally fill in the cracks. Helen helped us with administrative work and cooking the Butler St. Breakfast once a week. Somewhere along the way they met in the hall of 910 Ponce, fell in love, and on October 17 they were married. Open Door folks joined in the celebration and cheered them on their way as they moved to Gloucester, Massachusetts to live and work with the Wellspring Community there.



Helen and John (front row, right) with Open Door friends at their wedding

During January, Nine-Ten has bustled with energetic college students. Two groups have come from Warren Wilson College for seven days each to complete their annual service project hours, and we look forward to a third group of students and faculty from Presbyterian College. They will visit the Open Door for four days in preparation for a Spring trip to Honduras. Our household, weary from the Thanksgiving to New Year's bustle, is tremendously helped and energized by the students who come in with enthusiasm and willing hands to help get the work done.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door Community.



JOHN COLE VOOLICKA

Open Door's new porch roof, thanks to Dennis Hoffarth

## Thank You, Morningside!

by Dick Rustay

*The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear. Then my favor will shine on you and your wounds will be quickly healed. (Isaiah 58: 6-8)*

Morningside Presbyterian Church is not far from the Open Door; down Morningside Drive, up Highland Ave., right on Ponce de Leon and you're at the Open Door. For years friends from Morningside Church have made that trip. Once a month they bring a prepared meal to be served at the Open Door Community. Morningside's Witness Committee coordinates and is responsible for members of Morningside cooking different dishes and then carrying the food to the Open Door. Those of us at the Open Door are always grateful to see the food arrive, especially the cook who is responsible for the meal that day!

But it is not only food that Morningside brings. It has become a tradition for the church to come to the Open Door the second Sunday in Advent and sing carols in our front yard. We join in with them and then they bring in huge boxes of gloves, hats, underwear and toiletries that we distribute to our friends on the streets during the Christmas season and afterwards. Many a person has had frozen hands and a cold head warmed by articles given by Morningside Church. Their love and concern shines out by their steadfastness and continual support year after year after year.

Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear...then my favor will shine upon you and your wounds will be quickly healed. THANK YOU, MORNINGSIDES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH for your faithfulness and your concern.





# I Hear Hope Banging At My Back Door

## Part I: Thanksgiving As Introduction

by Ed Loring

Murphy Brinkley lives in my backyard. His feet are twisted because he has not possessed shoes that fit during much of his adult life. He is 60 years old. When it rains, he gets wet. When the temperature falls, he does too. He is waiting for Jesus or Moses or Matubu, the African King of yore to come and set him free from the horror of homelessness. In Murphy Brinkley I hear hope banging at my back door. He hasn't given up. He has not quit. It has not been taken from him. He loves my daughter, Hannah and sends her off to school each morning with kindness and admonitions to "pay attention and study hard." He welcomes me in the midnight hour after I've listened to Luther Houserocker Johnson pick his wild red guitar with his teeth. He laughs and teases, plays and prays in my backyard. Mr. Brinkley was not meant to live this way. No one is. Even our ancestors found caves or hollows in the giant trees. He is dying. Homelessness is death. A quiet non-judicial death penalty that even Bill Clinton would not fly home to Arkansas to watch. I love Murphy Brinkley and he loves me. Someday we shall dance.

I was conceived on June 15, 1939 on Buster's and Mary's third wedding anniversary. Wednesday am: 7:47. Already sultry in the cypress studded low country around Bamberg, South Carolina. The first shift was fast at work in the nearby cotton mills. Lovers lounging could hear the purr of electric looms. The ubiquitous crows cawed continuously over the cotton fields beside and in front of the house on Carlisle Street. After two dawn breaking sets of tennis and a short jazz piece on the trumpet those folk, strangers to me really at the time, who were to be my mom and dad, embraced.

Because my mom was in Bamberg at the time, I was born there, March 18, 1940, while Hitler and Mussolini munched cookies in a train car in the Brenner Pass. Outside our front door cotton mill workers trudged to and from their shanties. By the end of World War II I would know these people by the moniker "Lintheads". African Americans, too, moved across that stretch of street, unpaved and white sand, which lay before my little white home. People were always tramping to and from their work which, for the most part, was bondage. I grew to realize, though, that some white mill workers had ancient automobiles with synthetic rubber tires and filled with womenfolk and hungry children. Likewise, several black families had wagons and mules and they rode to town, filled with family every Saturday for purchase and play. This was the beginning of class analysis for me, but it took twenty-five years for me to realize it.

Paradoxically, or so it seems to me now some fifty years later, in that little town filled with exploitation and oppression, there was space for strongness, peculiarity, idiosyncrasy. I have been nurtured by one such Bamberg anomaly. She was black as the waters of the Edisto River, 5 feet tall. Old as the ancient oaks dressed in gray spanish moss which lined the long drives to the ruined plantations along Highway 301. Wildly she babbled without ceasing and walked the streets and highways selling straw brooms. When she came into our backyard and banged on my back door I was terrified. If I was in the yard playing, I would hide and cringe with fear. If inside I would grab both my mothers legs and refuse to let go. She was witch, Hecate, fear, death. Mary would always buy a broom. And then, to my horror, insist that the little old woman, whose voice echoed the suffering of slaves and the lamentations of love gone awry, stay for breakfast. Mom always fixed her a big breakfast - no matter the time of day: eggs, coffee, grits, toast, bacon and three slices of an orange. Mumbling between mouthfuls she would sit on my back porch banging her fork against the plate and eyeing her treasure of straw brooms. Plate cleaned, she would nod. Cackling and gabbing, her little black body would slowly disappear across the white cotton fields. Her arms loaded with straw. But did she disappear? Years later in the middle of a wintery night I went and walked those dying cotton fields. I then heard, as I do today, the voice of that little old woman, groaning, grieving, moaning for her lost life. I hear her banging on my back porch. Her desire runs deep as the Mississippi River. An egg or a broom sale won't satisfy her today. She is demanding freedom and respect. Ah, I hear hope banging at my back door. Someday Murphy Brinkley and I shall dance. Therefore.....

I want to say to you who hear voices and listen to the cry



JOHN COLE VODICKA

Murphy Brinkley

of the poor; to those of you who act because you must: **THANK YOU.** Dorothy Day, Mitch Snyder, Carlyle Marney, Carol Fennelly, Michael Stoops, Murphy Davis, Jim Wallis, Joyce Hollyday, Dick Rustay, Martin King, Carl Mazza, Tim McDonald, Tom Francis, Rob & Carolyn Johnson, David Hayden, Elizabeth Dede, Jim & Anita Beaty, Bill Bolling, C.M. Sherman, Jerry Robinett, Nibs Stroupe, Houston & Anne Wheeler, Thomas Merton, Phillip Williams, Clarence Jordan, Warren McCleskey, Mike Harank, Al Gypsy Smith, Thony Green, John & Dee Cole Vodicka, Jim and Barb Tamailis, Joe Beasley, Carl Barker, Harriett Tubman, Brian & Ellen Spears, Ralph Dukes, David Billings, Margeny Freeman, Moriba Karamoko, Marcus Gill, Peggy Scherer, Art & Ruth Field, Ed Potts, David & Trudy Bessada, Billy Mitchell, Robert Hayes, Bishop Joseph Coles, Ira Terrell, Rosa Parks, EF 1271104, Jeff Dietrich, Catherine Morris, Tom Brown, Cassy Temple, Curt & Priscilla Teska, Ed and Mary Ruth Weir, Hannah Loring-Davis, Ronald Harley, Dan Berrigan, Roosevelt Greene, Frances Pauley, Tommy Davis, Nelia and Calvin Kimbrough, Fanny Lou Hamer, Don Everand, Albert Love, Willie London, Tyrone Brooks, Sarah Floyd, Frederick Douglass, Fred Taylor, Bruce Bishop, Leo McGuire, Charlie Young, Miles Horton, Kay Gale, Jim Milner, Horace Tribble, Clay Oglesbee, (CWDC?), Mary Eastland, Lewis Sinclair, Ron Chisom, Barbara Majors, Inez Flemming, Andrew Bosier, Phil Berrigan, Elizabeth McAlister, John Bateman, Mark Lomax, Will Coleman, Pete Gathje, Robbie Buller, Chou Ly, Gino Williams, Bob Dylan, Don Beisswenger, John Pickens, Harold Wind, Will Campbell, Colleen Brady, William Lloyd Garrison, Donald West, John Brown, Andrew Harvill, Willie Dee Wimberly, Barry & Esther Burnside, "an' for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe"....

From my back porch where hope is a bangin', from my back yard where courageous men and women live their forgotten lives, from my long hall just beyond the clothes closet and slightly to the right of Malcolm X's picture: I want to say so simply **THANK YOU.** Thank you for who you are (and have

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been) and for what you do (and have done) with your lives. You are those who carry in that frail and raggedy box the most precious of gifts given gladly to girls and boys, women and men. You tote:

Hope  
Care  
Compassion  
Front line living  
Mercy  
Faith  
Love  
Ah, yes, and the greatest of these is love!

YES

Honored are you  
Among  
Shelters and soup kitchens  
And hidden doorways  
and behind the putrid places  
where people put their dumpsters  
under bridges and  
on top of buildings  
where men hide  
where women huddle.

Most often in silence  
sometimes in the ice of hate  
often in the pain, passion and  
heat of human hurt

You  
Are loved, remembered, honored  
Among those who have no honor  
whose dignity is dead  
whose rights are wronged. For

You  
Have listened to the voices  
Heard stomachs rumble  
Watched and felt the violent  
murderous injustice and death  
so benignly  
so professionally  
so coolly called

**HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA**  
in this corpulent  
greedy  
fast lane  
quick buck  
society of ours.

So I thank you on this very day.

Through you and the godawful cries of the crucified poor I hear hope banging at my back door. I thank my beloved friend, Jesus, who has called us to the high and holy privilege of serving the poor on this jagged journey toward justice within the household of hope, the family of faith, the battle for freedom and equality. Thank you!

Ah, I hear hope banging at my back door!

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community.



## I Hear Hope Banging

by Ed Loring

I hear hope BANGING  
at my back door.  
Torn Towels  
Blank Blankets  
Shake  
in mole-hill mountains  
As men move momentarily.  
Hannah hits the handle  
and zoom is a gone gal.

Lumps languish on the basketball court.  
Heads hop in the hedge.  
Gabriel swings his lunch box  
Luke sings his way to Decatur Presbyterian  
Church preschool.  
Dawn. (before congress saved the daylight  
time)

pants pulled pee poop plop  
behind dumpsters  
before trees  
beside cars.  
coffee not  
cig butts  
Ah, at last it is time to wait again.

I hear hope  
BaNgInG  
At my back door.  
Voices  
like sirens screaming  
like Bluejays bickering  
like mamas moaning  
like men mad:  
"Goddamn I'd like to  
sleep in a bed tonight."

Foxes have holes  
Birds have nests  
The Son of Humanity  
Has no place to lay his head.  
Neither does John, Henry,  
Blue, Rock, Willy, Beth, Jane, Kahil, Pete  
Malcolm, Kathy, 102340, EF 124884, Harold.

October 25, 1992



RITA CORBIN

On February 2, 1993, Ed Loring and Murphy Davis will visit students and faculty at the Memphis Theological Seminary to speak about the Open Door Community and visit with students who have lived and worked with us in the past.

Ed and Murphy will be on the Warren Wilson College campus, February 16-18, 1993. They will teach several classes, lead a Reflection Session with the 20 students who lived and worked with us during December and January and meet with students and faculty who are interested in further and future involvements with the Open Door Community.

We are thankful to the institutions and friends who support and share so significantly in our life and ministry.



# Police Harassment

*We thank Joan Sims for sharing with us the letter she wrote to the Atlanta Police Department and the response she received. We thank everyone for continuing to respond to our call to stop police harassment in Atlanta!*

## Stop Police Harassment

This letter is an appeal on behalf of our less fortunate brothers and sisters on the streets of Atlanta. I know some are very trying, but not all of them deserve less than human treatment. How would you like to be treated less than a person? THINK ABOUT IT!

Our church feeds them six days a week so I am not just writing for the sake of writing. But I am writing to lend my voice and express concern about police harassment of the homeless and the Open Door Community.

Joan R. Sims  
Church Secretary  
Butler Street CME Church

Ms. Joan Sims  
Butler Street CME Church  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Ms. Sims:

I am in receipt of your letter where you addressed concerns regarding the Open Door Community.

There have been numerous complaints from citizens around the Open Door Community about public drinking, prostitution and numerous other illegal activities. Officers working in the Ponce de Leon area have been advised by their supervisors to continue to patrol in this area and to make arrests when necessary.

Please do not think that we are targeting the homeless. We are aiming towards keeping Atlanta free from crime. Our primary goal at the Atlanta Police Department is to provide equitable, courteous service to all of our citizens and guests in a professional manner. I appreciate you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Sincerely,  
Julius Derico  
Deputy Chief



Mayor Maynard Jackson  
68 Mitchell Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Atlanta Police Actions

Mayor Jackson:

Throughout the years, my wife and I have always enjoyed visiting Atlanta for meetings, conventions or vacations.

For years we have also been aware of the good work done by the Open Door Community. Consequently when we received the current issue of their paper, "Hospitality," we were quite puzzled at the attached article by Elizabeth Dede concerning police harassment.

The homeless and poor are with us in all big cities. If my memory is correct, this is a subject reported in the media that is often discussed at the meetings attended by the mayors. I cannot believe that anyone thinks this is a problem only in Atlanta. However, possibly these alledged actions by the police are.

With his extensive involvement with the homeless and poor throughout the country, Mr. Carter is being copied to see if he is aware of such police actions in other cities.

Joseph F. Conerton  
Wauwatosa, WI

## JOIN THE OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY

A North American Base Community



SPEND TWELVE 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 30306-4212 \* 404/874-9652 or 876-6977.



# FEAR

by Ed Potts

March 15, 1992

Willie D. Wimberly died in our home.  
He was an African American.  
But he was labeled Black.

November 15, 1992

Bobby Ford died in our backyard.  
He was an African American.  
But he was labeled Black.

I am European American.  
But I am labeled white.

Blackness is no sight.  
Whiteness is blinding light.

Why are the people of this city afraid to do  
what is right?

Why are the people of this state afraid to do  
what is right?

Why are the people of this nation afraid to do  
what is right?

Why are the people of this world afraid to do  
what is right?

If people would do the right thing, their  
lives would not be so miserable.  
The noise and actions of the Open Door, Catholic Worker,  
Sojourners, and others would not bother them.



VIRGINIA TYLER

Ed Potts of the Open Door

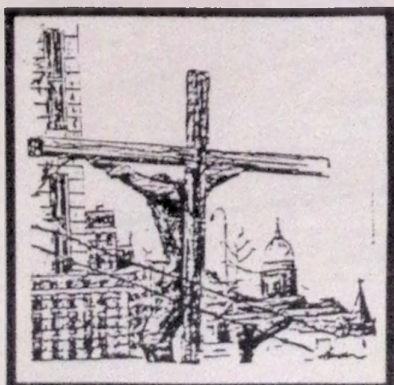
## What Does It Mean To Be Homeless

by Brian Allen

*Editor's note: Brian Allen is a friend of the Open Door Community who lives on the streets of Atlanta. We welcome him for food and clothes and now are happy to welcome him to these pages of Hospitality.*

What does it mean to be homeless? Living without the basics about sums it up, but does not take in the whole subject. Homelessness is not a disease; it is a condition placed on the poor and the weak and the mentally ill by society, the rich, and the upper class. Those who don't fit in and cannot keep up with the fast-paced rat race will be kicked out. It does not matter who you are. Our society's only concerns are money and power. If you get in the way you are history.

The lifestyles of the rich and those in power show the real



MARK HARPER

way of life in the U.S. It's the old saying, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer." What I want to know is where has the quality of life gone and where is the compassion for your fellow human beings? Where's the help thy neighbor in a nation of mostly so-called Christians? Where's the love? From my point of view it has changed hands from people to money!

Money has become the Christian's new love. They know in their Bible it says, "The love of money is the root of all evil." Basically, all the U.S.-based religions know and preach this, but have they learned it yet?

My life has had its ups and downs--mostly downs. I look for help where it is most likely to be, and only get half or just a little of what I need. I started to wonder and to think hard about what this country and its religion is. What is it doing to the people?

This country has set a false standard for its people and the world by claiming to be equal, fair, free, and just. But in fact it is unjust--fair only to the rich, free for those who can pay for it, and just only to those who can afford it.

Most people think that the homeless are no good, a burden to society and basically trouble. But in reality, it's the other way around. Most have lost their homes to the increasing taxes on their home, work, food, cars, and the high and increasing price of living. The rich make the poor pay, and the poor will continue to pay until something is done to equalize the problem.





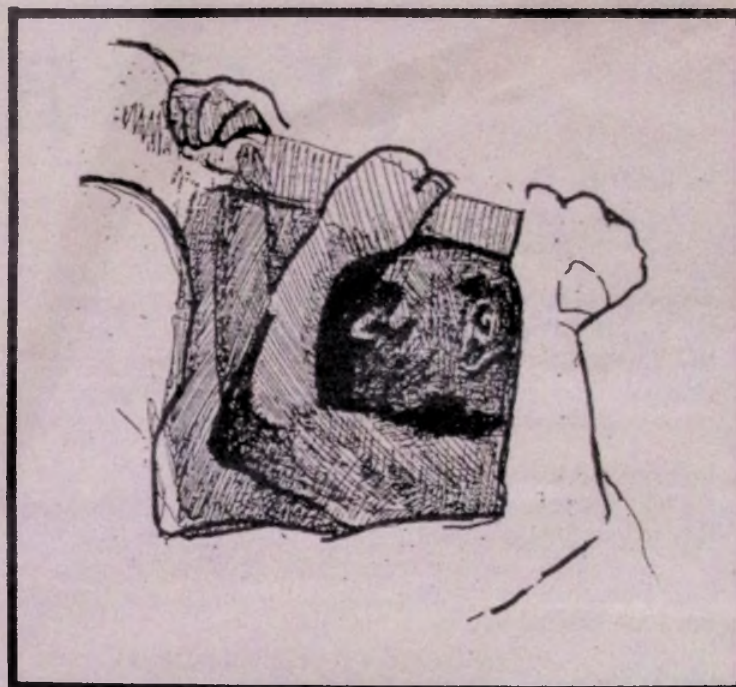
## Singing The Lord's Song

(continued from page 2)

land because they depended on external means of worship--the temple, Zion, the mountains, the festivals. But blacks depended on the religion that was on the inside of them, the God they brought with them and the God that was always there. We developed what was called the invisible church, the church that could not be seen. It had no structure, no definite place. Anywhere that was safe would do. We were able to sing our Lord's song in a strange land because we knew the same God who was in Africa was also in this land. This God would be victorious.

We have learned that the real liberator for us has been Jesus Christ. He brought us not only out of the bondage of chains, out of the darkness of slavery, but also out of the bondage of sin. He has helped us to identify who we are through him. He has helped us to know that we are somebody because we are God's children. We know that he sacrificed his life for us, too. Therefore, we remember him as we celebrate the Lord's supper.

"God of our weary years. God of our silent tears. Thou who has brought us thus far on the way. Thou who has by thy might led us into thy light keep us forever in the path we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee. Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world we forget Thee.



RTA CORBIN

Shadowed beneath thy hand, may we forever stand, true to our God, true to our native land."

## THREE RESOURCES ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMELESS MINISTRIES

### BUILDING ON FAITH

**Models of Church Sponsored Affordable Housing Programs**  
Addresses questions that congregations face when choosing to provide transitional or permanent housing as a ministry. The 67-page handbook highlights a variety of successful housing resources and enlisted community support and provides guidelines for developing similar programs. It includes theological reflection, ten case studies, 30 brief program profiles and a glossary. \$11.50 for congregations and non-profits; \$14 all others.

### MAKING ROOM AT THE INN

**Congregational Investment in Affordable Housing**  
Describes how congregations raise the money and build the team needed to create affordable housing. The 64 page lesson- and case book describes the evolution of a model congregational housing project, with special attention to sources and uses of project funds. It profiles a dozen faith-based housing programs illustrating developmental concepts and congregational roles in specific community settings. \$16.50 for congregations and non-profits; \$19 all others.

### ONE CHURCH-ONE HOME

**Six Models of Church-Based Housing Ministries**  
Responds to the need for concise how-to information on beginning housing programs. The models outlined in this 18 page booklet range from temporary housing on church premises to retooling a homeless family into transitional or ownership. \$2.75 to developing property for low-income rental or ownership.

**PACKAGE OFFER:** Purchase of all 3 publications - \$27 for congregations, non-profits; \$32 all others. All prices include postage.

To order publications, send a check or money order payable to CASH. Mail to The Churches Conference on Shelter and Housing, 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

For information on bulk order prices and member discounts, write The Churches Conference on Shelter and Housing is a non-profit, ecumenical membership organization serving the faith community with practical information, theological rationale, and technical tools needed to support effective housing and homelessness ministries. Annual membership contribution: \$25 individual; \$100 for churches and non-profits. Membership benefits include quarterly newsletter and discounts on publications and workshops. For more information, write or call CASH.

A New Book Available Through CASH!

## HOUSING THE HOMELESS

A "How To" Manual for "One Congregation-One Home"

IF EVERY CONGREGATION in the city established a home, the homeless problem would be addressed" is a challenge lifted up by John Steinbrink, pastor of Luther Place Memorial Church, and carried on by the Churches Conference on Shelter and Housing.

Temple Micah, a reform Jewish congregation in Washington D.C., took that challenge seriously. In 1990 they opened Micah House, Inc., which provides long-term housing to five previously homeless women. They share their efforts in a very readable, useful handbook, *Housing the Homeless—A "How-To" Manual for "One Congregation-One Home."*

Part I explains step by step the process by which Micah House came into being. The chapters include:

- forming a non-profit corporation
- selecting a board of directors and organizing committees
- defining the populations to be served
- finding and furnishing the house
- selecting residents and establishing social-service support
- developing house rules and agreements
- maintaining the property and keeping financial records

Part II is an appendix with sample documents, including:

- articles of incorporation
- application for tax exemption
- budget
- fund-raising letters
- agreements between Micah House and each resident

—21 references in all

Part I is a 10-page narrative available in pamphlet form for \$2. Part I (Narrative) and Part II (Appendix) are available together as a 178-page paperback book for \$7. Prices include postage.

**TO ORDER:** Please send a check or money order for the correct amount specifying "pamphlet (Part I)" or "book (Parts I and II)" to CASH, 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington DC 20001. For more information or to order multiple copies, call CASH at (202) 737-5091.





# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door Friends:

I hope each of you is doing well. I have not visited the Open Door in the past few years, except for meals. When I use to live there, I always had a friend.

I am still homeless. I have been back on the street now for quite sometime.

I was arrested a month ago for sleeping in an abandoned, empty house and bound over to the county jail on a criminal trespassing charge. There is still not enough rooms where homeless people can go during the day or night. If you are lucky enough, you may find someplace to go during the night and hope that you will not end up in jail.

I don't have anyone else to write. Most of my friends are on the street too, so writing them is impossible. But just writing you makes me feel good. At least the Open Door will know that I am still alive and not dead yet.

Well, I don't have much more to say except looks like they are arresting everybody that's on the street these days. I will close for now.

Robert Lee Jackson  
Fulton County Jail  
Atlanta, Georgia

□□□□□□□□

Dear Open Door:

I work the nightshift. I know the importance of a hot cup of coffee. The caffeine wakes me up and gets my blood flowing. I can't imagine being a homeless person and trying to start the day without a cup of hot coffee.

Please buy a big cup of coffee for our homeless friends.

Daniel J. Bednar  
Fort Dodge, Iowa

Dear Friends at Open Door:

Although I sign this note and check, we have the money to send because my husband, Norman, carefully cuts coupons for things we usually use, and puts the amount saved aside so that we can support food projects.

God's blessings on the Open Door and all those you help.

Sally Dixon  
Stewartville, New Jersey

□□□□□□□□

Dear Friends:

Here is a donation towards your church. I must say once again that you all are doing a great job taking people on the Hardwick trip and also feeding and giving people a place to stay. Keep up the good work and may God bless you all.

Demetris Neal  
Atlanta, Georgia

□□□□□□□□

Dear Friends at the Open Door:

I've been thinking about you all lately for several reasons. First of all I received HOSPITALITY and of course read it from front to back right away. I can't say that it is enjoyable reading but it certainly makes the hair stand up on my arms and brings tears to my eyes.

Second reason for thinking about you is because I took a group of students to Miami over fall break to work on their service project and we had the good fortune of being able to work on a Habitat for Humanity site in Holmstead where they are building six low income family houses. One of the men on staff for Habitat was at one time "homeless." He is currently ministering to homeless people in Miami. On Saturdays, he and his wife, along with some other folks, get together and cook up a bunch of food and go into Miami under the highway crossover to serve food and minister to the poor. This little highway village is amazing! There are a bunch of little shelters built out of cardboard boxes and what-not. Each home is laid out on a plot of its own. It is like a little match box town. The city has provided port-o-lets and trash receptacles for the folks living in this area. It amazes me to see how creative human beings can be and how they survive. The man from Habitat (Mike) took us to this site because Marriott supplied us with food for our lunches and we had lots of leftovers. We made sandwiches and took

them to the homeless at this site. Some of the students felt this event was the highlight of the trip. Hopefully it will spur a few of them on to work for the Open Door over the break.

The third reason for thinking about you is my good fortune. Lately, I have been coming upon a lot of good fortune; at least for me it's good fortune. Just when my finances seem to be getting very tight and I wonder how I'm going to make it to the next pay day, something comes up to relieve the tension. This has happened over the last two months or so and today it happened again. I attribute my good fortune to the fact that "the Lord works in strange and mysterious ways." I figured that because I have been sharing some of what little bit of money I have and I have spent many hours of time in service to others, that he has chosen to shine his grace upon me. Therefore, I have decided to share the wealth and send you a little more than the usual contribution to your ministry. I know this cannot relieve the financial tensions in your ministry but every little bit helps, maybe another gallon of milk, another pot of coffee, whatever. I will also be sending you some blue jeans that are in excellent condition. They were given to Jessup who is now 5'10" tall and weighs in at 130 lbs. Maybe when I get my closets cleaned out, I'll have a couple of coats for you too.

Well, I have to get back to Warren Wilson business. Take care of yourselves.

Holly Gage  
Swannanoa, North Carolina

□□□□□□□□

Dear Friends:

I would like for you to send your great paper to my sister because she has become a victim of police harassment in Cincinnati. She feeds her son at Dorothy Day Diner on 13th Street in Cincinnati to be able to save enough food to last through the month. When she parked her car at a meter in front of a super market, the off duty cop at the store gave her a ticket for not having a plate on her front bumper. She can't pay the ticket and will have to go to the county jail and do the time. Shawn, her son, will be separated from his mother while she is in jail. I will close for now.

Sonny Williams  
Cincinnati Welfare Rights Coalition



## Holy Week with the Homeless



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

### Services of Worship:

PALM SUNDAY	Open Door Community 5:00pm
MONDAY	Grady Hospital, Butler St. 9:00pm
TUESDAY	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW 9:00pm
WEDNESDAY	Trust Company Bank, Park Place 9:00pm
MAUNDY THURSDAY	Woodruff Park 9:00pm
GOOD FRIDAY	City Hall, Thirty Ave., SW 9:00pm
HOLY SATURDAY	City Shelter, Jefferson St., NW 9:00pm
EASTER MORNING	23 Butler St. 6:30am
WORSHIP OF THE RESURRECTED LORD FOLLOWED BY A HAM AND EGGS BREAKFAST	



The Open Door Community  
810 Ponce de Leon Ave.  
Atlanta, GA 30308-4212

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



## 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 9:10, 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), April 23, 24, 25.

*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.*

*Join us!*

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January 31  | Worship at 910  |
| February 7  | Worship at 910<br>Moriba Karamoko, preaching          |
| February 14 | Worship at 910  |
| February 21 | Worship at 910  |
| February 28 | Worship at 910<br>Ron & Jackie Spann, leading worship |

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.**

\_\_\_\_ 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 make a six to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please send more information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## NEEDS

### JEANS

Men's Work Shirts

Men's Underwear

Quick Grits

Cheese

Mayonnaise

Multi-Vitamins

MARTA Tokens

Postage Stamps

Men's Large Shoes (12-14)

Coffee

Non-Aerosol Deodorant

Toothbrushes

Toothpaste

Disposable Razors

Shampoo

WINTER COATS

SWEATERS

HATS

GLOVES

*Soup Kitchen Volunteers*

*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.*



LEO MCQUIRE

## HELP!

We need disposable razors, soap, shampoo, non-aerosol deodorant, shaving cream, and other toiletries for our shower ministry.