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Proclamation of Justice



CHARLOTTE B. TEAGLE, USED WITH PERMISSION, THE ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION

People for Urban Justice and friends release yellow balloons in the atrium of City Hall to celebrate the coming of public toilets. Each balloon reads "Pee for Free with Dignity."

by Houston Wheeler, Michael Galovic and Murphy Davis

People for Urban Justice presented a Proclamation of Justice to the Atlanta City Council on November 21, 1994 applauding the Councilmembers, Council President Marvin Arrington, and Mayor Bill Campbell for their leadership in responding to the critical need of public toilets.

The City of Atlanta has agreed to install 25 toilets in key locations in downtown Atlanta. This marks the first major progress in a long and arduous campaign to bring public toilets to Atlanta. Below is a brief summary of that campaign, and details on the recent events:

Chronology of Campaign for Public Toilets

- 1982 - The Open Door Community and friends initiate campaign for public toilets.
- 1983 - Public forum at City Hall called by the Christian Council of Metro Atlanta, Rev. Joanna Adams, President. Debate on public toilets between Dan Sweat, President of Central Atlanta Progress, Rev. Ed Loring of the Open Door Community, and Captain Ken Burnett, Commander of Zone 5 (Central Business District).
 - Ed Loring: "We need public toilets to accommodate homeless people in at least five pressure points around the downtown area."
 - Captain Burnett: "I agree with Ed Loring. Police officers feel foolish arresting people for doing something they have to do."
 - Dan Sweat: "We will have public toilets in Atlanta over my dead body."
- Campaign is joined by a group of senior citizens who articulate public toilets as a particular need for older persons in downtown.
- December: 24-hour fast and vigil for public toilets in front of City Hall. Clergy and lay persons provide leadership, reflection and singing.
- 1984 - Atlanta City Council votes to contract for one "experimental" portable toilet to be placed in Plaza Park. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is asked to pay for it. After six months the one toilet—suffering from overuse—is declared "a failure" and removed.

- 1984 - Advocates and attorneys from the Atlanta Advocates for the homeless write letters and attend meetings advocating for the repair of toilets and rebuilding of the City's Day Labor Center on Edgewood Avenue at Coca Cola Place. \$150,000 of Federal funds earmarked for the project held up by the City for months thereby delaying construction.
- June: After many months of meetings, letters and phone calls, Federal Funds for the Day Labor Center are still held up. Fifteen Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless demonstrators take a toilet into the office of Mayor Andrew Young. Three are arrested for refusing to leave (Rev. Ed Loring, Dick Stewart of the Wycliff Bible translators and Rev. Will Coleman, theology student). Contract for the construction of the Day Labor Center signed later that very day.
- 1986 - Water Fountain in Woodruff Park ordered installed by the Mayor's office in response to discussions about public toilets.
- 1987 - Rev. Paul Eckell, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, preaches a sermon advocating for public toilets.
- 1992 - Clergy and members of Central Presbyterian Church join in advocating for public toilets.
- 1993 - Atlanta City Council with the leadership of Council President, Marvin Arrington, vote to issue a request for proposal to install public toilets in downtown Atlanta.

(Continued on page 2)

HOSPITALITY

MICHAEL SCHUBERT



910 Ponce de Leon

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

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

(Proclamation, continued from page 1)

- 1994 - City of Atlanta contracts with Wall City Design, Inc. to install 25 toilets in key locations in downtown Atlanta. A committee chaired by the Rev. Ted Wardlaw, Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, is working with Council President Marvin Arrington to select the sites as well as the process of making free tokens available to homeless persons.
- People for Urban Justice present a Proclamation of Justice, (see inset on page 2), to the Atlanta City Council on November 21, 1994, applauding the Councilmembers, Council President Marvin Arrington, and Mayor Bill Campbell for their leadership in responding to the critical need of public toilets and rendering the downtown area of Atlanta a more welcoming space.
- A press conference held at City Hall features speakers from People for Urban Justice, the Open Door Community, the Task Force for the Homeless, ACT-UP, and religious leaders actively involved in the campaign for public toilets. Speakers stress that while the placing of public toilets is a partial victory for homeless men, women and children, the need for affordable housing is the most important justice issue for homeless people in Atlanta.

"PEE FOR FREE WITH DIGNITY"

With the Olympics coming to our city in 1996 the City of Atlanta decided to take a proactive approach to the need for public toilets. However, while this action satisfies some needs, the need for affordable housing for homeless people continues.

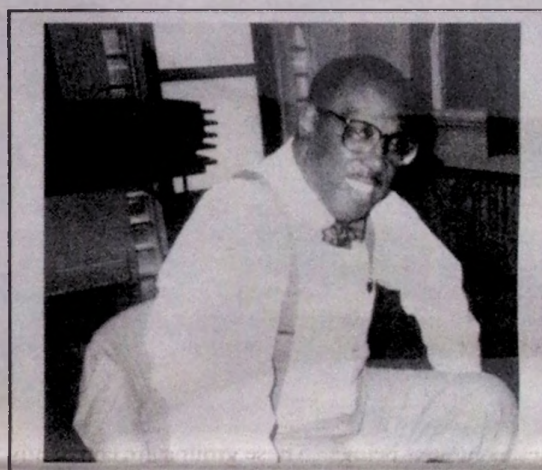
The process to develop affordable housing for homeless people in Atlanta is indeed a slow one, but People for Urban Justice keeps chipping away at the hardness of the pharaohs' hearts. The Corporation for Supportive Housing

recently announced the following plans for additional units in the near future:

- Antioch Baptist Church North will develop 40 units adjacent to its church on Kennedy Street, NW to serve those who suffer from substance abuse.
- Project Interconnections will develop 40 units to serve those who are mentally ill; similar to their O'Hearn House project located on William Holmes Borders Drive, NE in the Auburn Avenue area.
- Progressive Redevelopment will redevelop 115 units in the old Imperial Hotel; this will be a mixed income project; Mercy Mobile (St. Joseph's Hospital Mercy Care Services) will provide social services to homeless residents. Who says taking over vacant buildings doesn't bring change?

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. frequently spoke about his vision of an Atlanta that might become a "Beloved Community" where economics would be judged by compassion. This victory of obtaining public toilets is a definite merging of various self-interests across the city, in which the economics of providing public toilets becomes merged with the need of homeless persons to "pee for free with dignity." Who knows, the next thing we know we may figure out a way to merge the various self-interests to also develop housing for homeless persons on a large scale. Believe me, it will happen, and when it does happen Atlanta will become a "Beloved Community."

Houston Wheeler is a minister in the United Church of Christ. Michael Galovic is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door.



GLADYS RUSTAY

Atlanta City Council President, Marvin Arrington, takes a moment to smile for the camera at the Open Door.

People for Urban Justice and the Open Door Community recently welcomed Marvin Arrington and his assistant, Pamela Jones, to the Open Door for an informal visit. We had a good chance to get to know one another and discuss some of the key points of our concerns about homeless people in Atlanta. While we did not discuss specifics, Mr. Arrington did share his need, as a diabetic, to have restrooms available to the public. We appreciate Mr. Arrington's honesty and cordial presence to our Community, and we look forward to continuing the dialogue.

PROCLAMATION OF JUSTICE

WHEREAS there are thousands of homeless men, women and children in the City of Atlanta who need a place to use toilet facilities on a daily basis;

WHEREAS the Atlanta City Council and Mayor recognized this need by adopting a resolution in September of 1993 requesting the Mayor to issue a Request for Proposal to provide public toilets within the City of Atlanta;

AND WHEREAS the City of Atlanta has entered into an agreement with Wall City Design, Inc. to install 25 sidewalk public toilets;

BE IT RESOLVED that People for Urban Justice applauds this agreement as a victory for homeless men, women and children who have a right to access public toilet facilities on a daily basis;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that People for Urban Justice especially applauds and recognizes the leadership of the Atlanta City Council, Council President Marvin Arrington, and Mayor Bill Campbell for responding to the critical need of public toilets and for rendering the downtown area of Atlanta a more welcoming space.

PEOPLE FOR URBAN JUSTICE PROCLAIMS THAT THE CITY OF ATLANTA BY ITS ACTIONS HAS USHERED IN A MEASURE OF JUSTICE.

NOVEMBER 21, 1994

A Tale Of Two Cities

Last month we reported an action by advocates for the homeless, against groundbreaking ceremonies for renovations at Atlanta's Woodruff Park (see January 1995 Hospitality, "Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters"). The park has been a friendly place for the homeless to spend their daytime hours. The park's renovations and subsequent closing were abruptly announced a few days before the groundbreaking ceremony. The following is a letter to the Atlanta Journal Constitution by Atlanta City Council President, Marvin Arrington, which serves as a response to our action. (The letter was not published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution.)

- Michael Galovic

On Monday, October 17, 1994, I was both proud and saddened about the events of the day. There was a press conference attended by the Mayor and business community leaders to announce the total renovation of Woodruff Park, which I agree would be in the best interest of this great city. I support the renovation and rehabilitation of the park because I think it would take us into the 21st Century as being one of the greatest cities in the world. However, I was saddened by the demonstration put forth by the homeless and some of those who shouted that we did not care about the have-nots in this community.

My whole political life has been donated to the have-nots and dedicated to the poor and disadvantaged, but I think the recent demonstration highlights some of the social problems that we have in this city, and we need to develop a comprehensive plan to deal with those problems so that people will know that we do care.

When I make reference to the "other population", I am talking about the poor, the frail elderly, the unemployed, the functionally illiterate, the homeless, the babies having babies, the people to whom life has offered very little to enable them to exercise their special and unique qualities as human beings. These groups are constantly victims of or victimized by social inequity, social injustice and societal inconsistencies. To be forced to live in the face of any single one of these obstacles does cruel and unusual harm to the human personality; but to be forced to function in the face of all three almost assuredly guarantees destruction.

I have made it a point to regularly travel this city from every geographic vantage point, and I have seen desperate men standing on the corners idling their lives away. I have seen mothers and children seeking shelter at the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA in numbers in excess of capacity. I have seen the statistics of birth rate and babies having babies, and I have seen statistics of the devastating consequences both to the young mothers and to their children. I have seen the numbers of dilapidated and run-down housing structures in the city when people are in desperate need of low-cost housing. I have seen dope being sold with impunity on street corners. I have seen the anguish and pain on the face of children who have no safe place, nowhere to cry with love.

Yes, our great city, whether implicitly or explicitly, whether through inactivity or just simple non-caring, has wrongly assigned the status of "disposable" to far too many of our brothers and sisters. We all know that if we allow the least among us to be assigned this status, then the greatest among us are equally at risk.

This time next year I do not want to have to write about these same problems. I don't want to be the purveyor of a requiem for the dispossessed and the disenfranchised. Let us convey to the citizens of this city that we have cared enough and dared enough to do something constructively. Let us declare an all-out war from every corporate office, from every church, from every school, from every single quarter of this city which bears upon the quality of life. Let us all seek to provide hope to those persons in populations at greatest risk.

In years to come, we should be able to say that the number of teenage pregnancies in Atlanta has measurably dropped; the number of functionally illiterate is fewer; a greater number of homeless persons housed; a greater number of unemployed employed persons finding work; etc. In my view, there is no question about capacity, the only question is will. No longer can we participate in the promotion of a city which forces far too many of its citizens to negate life in order to live.

Never again should we have to stand announcing a major project that is beneficial to this city and have our homeless population shout us down because they do not feel that we care enough.

Yours for Atlanta,

Marvin S. Arrington
President
Atlanta City Council

We at the Open Door Community are appreciative of Mr. Arrington's acknowledgment of the other Atlanta—the Atlanta of the homeless and other marginalized citizens, both of whom have a legitimate voice and represent a significant part of the city. While it is significant and important that politicians of Mr. Arrington's status make public statements as such, equally important is the need for politicians and citizens to make concrete responses to concerns of advocates for the homeless. Here are the next questions:

- Where are homeless people to go now that Woodruff Park is closed?
- What will we do about this situation that shows that we have "cared enough and dared enough to do something constructively?"
- How are we going to prevent clandestine meetings to take place which exclude advocates for the homeless?
- Or, simpler yet, do we see any danger or injustice in meetings held in secret to decide the fate of public space and property?
- What will those who celebrate the coming of the Olympics do about the displacement of low-income people for Olympic renovations?

Our struggle continues.

- Michael Galovic

- Please Pardon Our Glitch -

*Did you receive your January Hospitality?
Did you receive multiple copies?*

Our computer played tricks on us and we missed it. Some of you have let us know and we appreciate it. Please bear with us and if you missed the January issue, (or the December calendar), we will be happy to send it to you.

Thank you for your patience.

History as Teacher: Reconstruction Today,

Part 5

by Nibs Stroupe

Editor's note: We continue here with the fifth of a 10-part series on Reconstruction. Nibs Stroupe, pastor at Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA, is active in the Civil Rights Movement and author of While We Run This Race: Countering The Power Of Racism. It will be available from Orbis Press in March, 1995.

"One feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body...."

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self... He would not Africanize America for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach the Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon...."

It was this dilemma in which African-American people were placed after Reconstruction. They found themselves being stripped of the rights that they had gained; and, worst of all, they found themselves being blamed for the loss. It was a crushing blow on two levels. On one level, African-Americans were being returned to the status of slaves and second class citizens. They had tasted freedom and access to opportunity in a small way in Reconstruction, and now all that was taken away from them, not just by Southern whites but by the President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court. It was a bitter and devastating development. As bad as this was, however, it was not as crushing as the second development. The reason given by the white society for this return to oppression as slaves and second-class citizens was that black people were second-class citizens, that the Civil War and Reconstruction had been a tragic mistake. Thus the chains of slavery were returned with a stunning difference—black people were taught to hate themselves because they had betrayed their freedom. The lie of racism not only re-established slavery in the form of legal segregation, it also asserted that black people had forfeited their freedom because they were not able to handle it. This was a master stroke by the masters: recover the cheap labor of black people and absolve the white people from responsibility for this development by blaming black people for it.

The struggle in the African-American community in response against this process was fierce at first. The response to the 1883 Supreme Court decision that overturned the Civil Rights Act of 1875, for example, was broad in the African-American community. African Methodist Episcopal bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who had been expelled by the white Georgia legislature after his election to it at the beginning of Reconstruction, reacted to the Supreme Court decision by calling the court "a conclave of human donkeys." As we noted earlier, Ida B. Wells began a life of resistance in 1884, when she refused to give up her seat in a train car reserved for whites. T. Thomas Fortune, too, became a powerful voice as editor of the New York Age and began a campaign to return the nation to reality. The real problem, he said, was "not the Negro but the Nation...it is whether the republic shall be a republic or a stupendous sham." Fortune gave Wells shelter and a column in his paper after her offices were bombed in Memphis by whites. He also founded the Afro-American League in 1890 as a way for black people to join together to fight the growing oppression. Another example of the strong African-American resistance was William Monroe Trotter. Like Fortune, he was a fiery journalist, and he once shocked the nation by tongue-lashing President Woodrow Wilson in a meeting with Wilson for the President's re-instituting segregation in the federal government.

W. E. B. DuBois became the leading intellectual voice of this protest movement. The primary aims of this movement were to repudiate the white claim of black inferiority, and to call for a return to the human rights gains of Reconstruction. These "radicals," as they came to be called, had the audacity to claim that white people were the problem, not black people. They began the discussion with the fact that whites had betrayed the promises of the Civil War and Reconstruction. They repudiated the white propaganda that the loss of human rights for African-Americans was caused by a lack in African-Americans, in their inability to handle freedom and power. They lifted up the truth: it was

white oppression and the system of race that stripped African-Americans of their rights. This strong—and largely forgotten—protest was overwhelmed by the tidal wave of racism. The situation became so desperate that the giant of the human rights struggle, Frederick B. Douglass, decided in his old age to go on a speaking tour of the country to try to rekindle the fires of freedom. Unfortunately, for us all, he died in February of 1895, before he could undertake the tour.

With the passing of Douglass came the emergence of the next African-American giant. He would offer a different and more acceptable approach to whites. His voice would far overshadow all the voices of protest

WHILE WE RUN THIS RACE



Nibs Stroupe

Countering the Power of Racism

Nibs Stroupe, with
Inez Fleming

In a book that is challenging, illuminating, and ultimately hopeful, Nibs Stroupe, the white pastor of the multi-cultural Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, Georgia, grapples with this question: why, after the Civil Rights movement has become part of American history, does racism still pervade society? What can be done to change this? As Stroupe unflinchingly examines racism in the United States, adding her voice is Inez Fleming, a black elder at Oakhurst, who tells the story of tears and laughter within the congregation as blacks and whites struggle together, creating an extraordinary church family.

Stroupe shows how and why race continues to entrap all Americans in its grip. He steadfastly maintains that acknowledging the power of the system of race throughout society—in our schools, courts, prisons, and housing—is the necessary first step to dismantling it. Using themes from gospel music, Stroupe convinces us that we cannot give in, or give up. This is also the story of Oakhurst, once a prosperous white church, that became a church in crisis with its membership down to 80. Yet because of a deep commitment to multi-culturalism, the church again thrives and its large congregation, almost equally black and white, actively reaches out into the surrounding inner-city community of Decatur. How did they do it? As Stroupe says, "by risking to trust one another." This inspiring book demonstrates clearly that, although racism is powerful, it is not inexorable: it can be overcome.

NIBS STROUPE has been an activist for the homeless and prison reform, as well as pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church.

Inez Fleming has worked closely with Pastor Stroupe in developing and leading workshops that promote multi-racial leadership and understanding.

"The diversity which we feared has empowered us to confront God's truth in the world."

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Inez Fleming

(History, continued from page 4)

because he offered a perspective that whites found more to their liking. His name was Booker T. Washington, and he electrified white society with a speech that he gave in 1895 at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. From 1895 to 1915, he had no peer in influence as a black man. His life is a complex story, and we will review it only superficially here as it pertains to the struggle in the African-American community concerning the best response to growing white oppression.

Washington's story was inspiring and warmed the hearts of white people. His autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, tells it best. He rose from the poverty and the oppression of slavery—never having even known who his white father was—to the heights of power and influence. It was this kind of story that whites enjoyed and hated. On one hand, whites enjoyed it because it proved that black people could make it if they really tried, if they overcame their deficits. The story of Booker T. Washington enabled white people to deny the existence of racism. On the other hand, whites also hated his story because, after all, the system of race was designed to keep African-Americans such as Washington from reaching the goals of success in society.

Washington's Atlanta speech in September 1895 caught the nation's attention because he accepted the white demands for racial segregation and second-class citizenship for black people. The speech was given at the invitation of white businessmen, and there was great applause from the mostly white audience as Washington virtually surrendered the struggle to re-gain the human rights of Reconstruction.

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle, rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera house.

Washington surrendered the human rights struggle, and then sought to centralize the power that white society gave him as a result. He deprecated activity for social justice, and he ridiculed the black use of power in Reconstruction. He emphasized the idea African-American people should pull themselves up (as he had) through education, hard work, and good character. Washington emphasized that black people should make themselves ready for human rights, and then white people would accept them as equals. Again and again in this period, Washington attacked protest and agitation for justice. He emphasized that black people would be accepted as equals only when they had made themselves more acceptable.

In public, Washington turned aside proof of racism by whites. Though he deplored the hundreds of lynchings of black people he still insisted that they were not proof of white resistance to the idea of black equality. Yet it was the lynching in 1892 of one of the most respectable black persons in Memphis, Tom Moss, that radicalized people like Ida B. Wells forever. Washington's stonewalling and centralization of power provoked a fierce debate in the African-American community. Fighters for justice such as Wells, Trotter, and DuBois spoke out against Washington's accommodation to the system of race. Washington's ability to wield power and

money, however, eventually won over most black people, even Thomas Fortune. The accepted idea in white, and in some black, circles was that the renewal of white oppression of black people was caused by black inferiority, and not by the system of race constructed by whites. Washington won the struggle in the short run, and the black "radicals" were put on the defensive. The campaign to blame black people for their own enslavement was complete.

There is a sad irony to Washington's story, on a personal level for him, and on a societal level for us all. He became the most powerful and respected black man in the United States. He sought to exemplify his own philosophy: work hard, keep your nose clean, and you will be seen as a human being, not as a skin color. Even Washington, however, in all his respectability, was not immune from the power of racism. On a visit to New York in March 1911, for example, he was beaten on the streets by a white man who falsely accused him of making advances to a white woman. Washington was rescued by white police as he fled his assailant in the streets and was initially arrested as a suspected burglar. Though he was eventually cleared legally, the point of the system of "race" was driven home to him in a poignant and violent way as one of his biographers shares with us:

In addressing these broader issues of racial justice, Washington generally omitted his usual weasel words. His changed tone could be explained by a conjunction of many changes in the American racial scene. Washington's absence from the councils of

the White House gave him more freedom. The Wilson administration ushered in an era of federal government promotion of white supremacy that was a slap in the face of every black person. The NAACP continued to challenge Washington's accommodation even as he modified it. All of these considerations must have affected his course of action, but surely the most vivid and recurrent was his self-recognition as he ran bleeding through the New York streets, that in the atmosphere of American racism even Booker T. Washington was lynchable.

The irony of the most powerful and most respected black man in America being attacked because of his "race" points to the sad truth of this experiment in democracy. The story of Reconstruction began with hope and possibility. It ends in sadness and frustration. The human rights gains of Reconstruction were discarded, and Reconstruction came to be regarded as failure. The blame for this failure placed not on white people, where it belonged, but on African-American people. Black people were seen as unable to handle freedom, equality and power, and thus slavery was re-established as legal segregation with a vengeance. For the next few decades, the oppression would be great, despite the founding of organizations such as the NAACP and the Urban League and efforts by some white people to overcome it.

The repudiation and ridicule of the humanity of black people seemed indomitable. Despite activism by some white people and many black people, few breakthroughs were allowed. It is a stunning and depressing chapter in American history, but it provides us with the historical context to examine our own time and our struggles concerning the affirmation of human rights in our society. We will now turn to more modern history to discern and discuss the next real breakthrough in human rights in this country: the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s. This is a contemporary history for many of us. As such, it is controversial and its meaning is difficult to interpret. There are lessons to be learned, however, as we compare the modern civil rights movement and its aftermath with Reconstruction and its aftermath. We turn next to modern times.

Please see the March issue of *Hospitality* for part 6 in this series on Reconstruction.



PAUL SCOTTEN

Hazel Kennedy, our new Resident Volunteer, brings her warm smile and spirit to the Open Door Community.

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Editor's note: In the last issue of Hospitality we shared Part I of a collection of stories told to us by Dr. Clinton Marsh in several sessions at the Open Door. Part II completes the collection for now but we look forward to hearing more.

Dr. Marsh at 78, remains active in the church and the community. He has founded Georgians Against Violence to advocate for gun control in our state and he continues to Co-Chair the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and (Honorary) People for Urban Justice, and is a member of the Open Door's Advisory Board and the Warren Wilson College Board of Visitors. Many Presbyterians will remember his service to the Church as moderator of the General Assembly, Staff of the (UPUSA) Synod; President of Knoxville College; Staff of the All-Africa Council of Churches; and President (interim) of Johnson C. Smith Seminary.

Part I of the stories reflects on America's original sin of racism and of Dr. Marsh's daily fear growing up as an African American child in Wilcox County Alabama. He grew up with his grandparents (both born into slavery) and parents who saw to it that he and his brother and sister were well-educated and prepared to make their way through the minefield of racial barriers and intolerance. We are grateful for Dr. Marsh's stories and witness.

When I was growing up, we always spoke of the police as "the law," and that was a pejorative term. That was a term of hatred, because "the law" was never on our side. An illustration of this is the share cropping system which was set up after slavery, when black people needed employment and landowners needed their land farmed. The landowner furnished the land, the seed, the fertilizer and the tenant did the work. Then the crop was to be shared 50-50—after the tenant's debts were subtracted. Well, tenants for the most part didn't have any money so they had to get the landlord's permission to go to the store to get something on credit with his authorization. The result was that however little stuff they bought, and however good the crop was, they never had anything coming. Not only that—they were always in debt. The tenant farmers always owed more than their share of the crop. Alabama had a convenient law that said that as long as the tenant owed the landowner, he could not leave the place. You wonder about slavery? Do you really think slavery was abolished?

There was a man, named Ned, who lived right next to our mission school who worked for a white farmer and he went through that cycle every year. So one year he did not borrow anything. His plantation owner, Sadler, kept asking how he was getting on. "Fine, just fine, Mr. Sadler." Came time to settle up and he was put off by Sadler. And he was put off again. And put off again. And he realized that the plantation owner was not going to pay him. Now that's where "the law" comes in. There was one law for Sadler and one law for Ned. Well, the sequel to this is that Ned disappeared. Actually, he was staying in our barn which was remote—a mile or so away. (And my mother didn't know this until she heard me talking about it when she was probably 75 years old. I said, "You never wondered why your husband was eating so much food?") So Ned's wife went and said to Mr. Sadler, "Mr. Sadler, Ned's done gone off and left me. Can I take my things and children and go off to Greene County with my folks?" He responded, "Yeah, go on. That n—g-r wasn't any good anyhow." She went to Greene County and Ned joined her over there. And that's how one man escaped from slavery, but "the law" supported the slavery.

In the last 2 years there have been terrible problems with floods in the Midwest and south Georgia. In the floods, of course, to survive you try to get to higher ground. If there's a forest fire or brush fire, you try to get out of the neighborhood. But what do you do if there's an earthquake and the ground under your feet isn't trustworthy? Well, you see, that is what it was like for most of my life. What should have been the ground underneath my feet—the United States legal system—was my enemy. The ground under my feet was never trustworthy.

A church in Iowa wrote to our school principal in Wilcox County and asked whether we'd like to have a band. Of course we would. So they sent down sixteen band instruments and we had a band which was fine. Except it wasn't fine. The white school didn't have a band and so it was dead wrong for us to have one you see. That spring the principal arranged with the town authorities (the population was only 900, so there wasn't a mayor) that on a Saturday afternoon we would have a marching drill and just give a little free

concert on the square. Now not many of you have any idea what Saturday afternoon was like in these small towns. Everybody who could possibly come to town came to town. So our band played, and of course, the people gathered around. A white merchant even sent some soft drinks to the band. So we were standing there refreshing ourselves and a "law" officer, Jenkins, may God rest his soul in hell (I know that doesn't sound very kind—at least I'm praying for God to help him wherever he is), came shoving through the crowd saying, "Clear the walk—let people through here."

Here we were on a Saturday afternoon in Camden, Alabama. A band was waiting to play and most of the people standing around—black and white—had never seen a band before. Nobody was going anywhere, but this was Jenkins' way of expressing hostility about this band. My older brother, who was sixteen, was standing there with his clarinet in his arm with his back

to the wall, talking to a girl in the band. He wasn't aware of what was going on, and he evidently answered the girl and said, "Uh huh" whereupon Jenkins struck him on the side of the head, knocked his glasses off and said, "You say 'uh huh' to a white man? I'll teach you how to talk to a white man." My father was in the crowd and he stepped up between them. Jenkins said, "What is it to you ol' man?" then pulled his gun out and shouted, "I'll blow your brains out." The incredible thing is that my father grabbed him by the collar! There was Jenkins standing there with a gun in his hand! I think it shocked him so that it just immobilized him. He put his gun in his holster and went on down the street. Now had he shot my father, it would have been just another dead n—g-r, you see. There wouldn't have been any question raised about it. Later, some of the nice people like a couple of men who operated a hardware store asked my father to come over and they apologized. If he had been shot, they would have sent the widow some notes, groceries or something—that would have been all

there was to it. Incidentally, I never realized until maybe ten years ago that this story was a legend. When a black man grabbed Jenkins by the collar, the story spread like wildfire. Everybody, at least all the black folks, knew that a man named Mr. Marsh grabbed Jenkins by the collar. Maybe that gives you an idea why I grew up understanding "the law" as my enemy—something to be hated and feared.

The NAACP was organized in about 1909, and it fought all through those years in the courts. The ironic thing about it was that the NAACP was always criticized as a "communist" organization. Now, how do you label an organization "communist" which puts so much faith in the possibility of the justice system, and it spends almost all its money and time in the U. S. Courts? Thurgood Marshall became the chief legal counsel in 1937. Our case was in 1939, (when Marsh and five other young men attempted to de-segregate the University of Tennessee graduate school—see Part I), so we were one of Thurgood's first cases. Incidentally, if you want to know what happened to our case, it was merged with some other cases that went on through the courts. We were never involved in it anymore but it was part of the effort the NAACP carried on through the years.

Through this struggle the church was always a mixed bag; more bad than good, I hate to say. As I pointed out to you, our education was provided because of people hundreds of miles away from us who gave and sacrificed that we might have good schooling. Many other churches did that sort of thing too. But by and large, the church was dominated by the society. During the civil rights movement, one of the efforts was to work with the white churches. Now oftentimes whether it was the churches or the university, we weren't really trying to get in. Many of the blacks weren't really trying to get in to those churches, they just believed that the point needed to be made.

There's a story that went around that some of the crowd called Thurgood and said, "Mr. Marshall, I got a problem." "What's the matter? Won't those Southern Baptists let you in their churches?" "That's not the trouble, Mr. Marshall. They let us in, but what we need to know is how long is it legal to hold a man under water when you baptize him?"

The black church was a mixed bag. What happened did happen in the churches, and the best organizing came from the churches. But sadly, a large number of churches stood away and had nothing to do with it. It was tragic. I went out to Hattiesburg, Mississippi in the summer of 1964 to participate in the voter registration campaign. Incidentally, in these campaigns, every Sunday night we would meet in a local church to get our instructions and counsel. The

(continued on page 7)

Clinton Marsh

A Reflection On My Life Part II

by Clinton Marsh
edited by Murphy Davis



Dr. Clinton Marsh

(Marsh, continued from page 6)

real purpose was to get our nerve back up. I remember I was standing there holding hands as we were about to leave. We were singing "We Shall Overcome" and then singing the verse "We Are Not Afraid"; just lying through our teeth 'cause anybody who was in that situation knew that he or she could step out the door and breathe your last. Not scared? We were afraid. There was good brave leadership in the black church. But there were also those few who would leave the meetings and go straight to the white leaders to tell everything they knew.

The church, white and black, was a mixed bag. In the civil rights movement, the national white churches stood tall. Those national leaders were cursed by millions of their members around the country because they took stands that required a lot of courage. In fact, our Presbyterian Church and some others are still suffering. But in many cases, it was only the presence of white church leaders that prevented massacres. Sheriff Bull Connor of Birmingham and Sheriff Jim Clark of Selma thought nothing about shooting the n—g—rs down. But with these church leaders present they couldn't do what they might otherwise have done.

Now let me wind up by saying I fought for integration but it's been terribly expensive. It has cost us terribly. You see, we hadn't thought far enough in advance. We did not realize that when schools integrated, the black principals, black band directors and black coaches were going to disappear. Usually, they were either made a vice-principal or principal of an elementary school. Or if they were too good, kicked upstairs to administration. We lost so much. What I had that was so terribly precious were those caring black teachers. But hundreds of thousands of our kids today are without them.

Now they used to tell us when we were fighting those legal battles, "Well, now, you know you can't legislate good will." We would respond, "We're not trying to legislate good will. We're trying to legislate justice." But what they said has proved so prophetic, in this way: many structural things changed but now so many black children are being taught by white teachers who hate their guts. We weren't able to legislate good will. Some white teachers want their jobs so they keep teaching but some of them have swallowed the propaganda and don't believe that black children can learn. Others don't want them to learn.

Without making any blanket statements about white teachers, it has to be said that many of our black children are suffering terribly because we succeeded in making structural changes without finding the caring and good will to help the children along. At the same time, the students so often lack the positive role models of teachers, coaches, counselors and principals that they had in the old segregated school systems.

Thank you for listening to my stories. It might not have been organized, but it's honest and every word of it is true. Let me say one more thing. People ask me, "Well, aren't you bitter?" I was for a long time. But I remember that it was some white people from the church who didn't know me who reached out in love to me. I realized I didn't gain anything by being bitter and mad, so I try to keep telling the story with all its truth and smile. Thank you and God bless all of you.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door.

*Letter from
Rosalynn Carter
to the
Journey of Hope
October, 1994*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my support and appreciation for the efforts of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation to help educate others about the need for abolishment of the death penalty.

Having been involved for so long in human rights efforts around the world, and familiar with the international conventions and declarations that make human rights a part of international law, I see the death penalty as an obvious violation of basic human rights. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration states, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment." Surely we must all know that the death penalty is torture, and cruel, and inhuman, and degrading treatment and punishment.

As a Christian, trying to live by God's example of love and forgiveness, I am spiritually and morally opposed to the death penalty, and strongly believe that it must be abolished.

I send my best wishes for the success of the Journey of Hope and my prayers for the realization of our goal in the near future.

Sincerely,

Rosalynn Carter

All of the Open Door cars have well over 100,000 miles, and two have recently died.

Do you have a vehicle to donate?

Please call us at 876-6977.



I Hear Hope Banging on My Back Door

Part IX: Vision and Solidarity

by Ed Loring

"Justice is important, but supper is essential"

On a clear, cold and crisp December night in 1956, Hal Beaver hunkered over the Myers Park High School twenty-yard line. On the command "uagahee," Paul Anderson snapped the pigskin to Hal. I darted from the right end of the line for 20 yards, faked right, angled left, loped 15 yards and caught the baby in my ever loving arms. Eight seconds later, I stood in the end zone. Home free. Home at last. Hal and I were all-American boys! The all white crowd either cheered or groaned. Hal and I returned to Charlotte that night and dreamed of glory.

On the cloudy, cool and confused December afternoon of Christmas past, 38 years later, Hal and I sat in the Open Door dining room with an assortment of family, visitors, homeless folk, volunteers, community members and friends. We had hosted several hundred homeless, first for breakfast, followed by a festive feast as Murphy and Elizabeth (who left last month for a year-long sabbatical) led us through this most holy of occasions. In the late afternoon as the Atlanta sky flamed with dying embers we began our clean-up of the house. Hal started for the kitchen when I asked him to play his guitar and sing for us while we scrubbed the pots and mopped the floors.

His first song was blues master Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen." Hal lobbed the ball: "This is the answer to hunger and homeless in America."

"Mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm
mmm mmm mmm mmm
You better come on
in my kitchen
babe, it's goin' to be rainin' outdoors.

Oh, can't you hear that wind howl?
Oh-y, can't you hear that wind would howl?
You better come on
in my kitchen
baby, it's goin' to be rainin' outdoors.

Winter time's comin'
hit's gon' be slow.
You can't make the winter, babe
that's dry long so
you better come on
in my kitchen
'cause it's gon' to be rainin' outdoors."

Hal Beaver is correct. Robert Johnson is right. Dorothy Day lived it profoundly ever as Peter Maurin essayed it easily:

"People with Homes should have a room of hospitality
so as to give shelter to the needy members of the parish (read neighborhood?)"

Paul laid it on the line (Romans 12:13); Jesus identified with it (Matthew 25:31-46). Isaiah envisioned it and even heard Yahweh demand it in his prophetic imaginations (Isaiah 58:7). Yes, "you better come on in my kitchen" because as important though justice be, Supper is Essential. Reinhold Niebuhr put it this way: love is both the fulfillment and the negation of justice, for love fulfills the demand of the law, but goes beyond the law into unmerited care and covenantal solidarity.

Today, the temperature has fallen to 35° and Mike Bucky promises us the low 20°s tonight. Our public bathroom is filled with men, flesh shaking and cold. Our back porch is cluttered with women and men motionless under waves of loved-donated blankets. What have we heard and learned in the hope that raps upon our back door? We have learned again what Jesus teaches us daily; for Jesus has chosen the cry of the poor as the primary vehicle of his Word. Love of the other is the rock upon which we must stand. Love of fellow believers forms the Church. Love of the enemy builds peace and social stability. Love of the stranger shapes our communities into the Beloved Community, the Kingdom of God on earth. In our society, in these waning days of the bloodiest century in human history, the homeless poor and death row prisoner teach us that agape-love, the love of servanthood and solidarity, the power of liberation and the hunger for justice, the "yes" to Cain's continuing question: "Am I my sister's (or brother's) keeper?"—is most faithfully, most essentially, put into practice as hospitality; hospitality toward the homeless poor, convict, people of color, teenage mothers on welfare, the stranger and enemy, the one of whom we are afraid. (The drawing of the African American man whose image flooded our screens and papers who was to have abducted, and with little

doubt, murdered Susan Smith's two baby boys [white southern boys in a state that prides itself with the Confederate battle flag soaring over the capitol dome] oh, he, is the Christ image for us today. He is the test of our hospitality and the verification of our Christian doctrine and life).

Love as hospitality is described well by John Cogley. He wrote in The Catholic Worker, October 1947:

"This is the ideal of hospitality: Being sister to sister, brother to brother, children of the same Parent. Not scientific social work—hospitality. Not haughty superior dealing with "problem cases"—hospitality. Not condescending judge dealing with errant accused—hospitality. No, hospitality is derived from the Latin word for "guest." It expresses a relationship between equal people: host and guest. It is bound by the rules of courtesy and human companionship, and ruled by the law of charity.

There are always men and women who need hospitality, for one reason or another. There are, in an imperfect world of imperfect men and women, always those who need a calling back to life, a restoration of personality. There are always those lonely people, in all times, in all places, who need the knowledge of being respected as men and women, of living with other men and women with dignity, of sharing their own burdens with others and bearing some of the burdens for others.

Hospitality reminds people that they are sisters and brothers, children of God, dependent on others and capable of being depended on by others.

It is not a specialized work, requiring scientific training. It is something for everyone to practice according to the measure they are able to do so.

The charm of hospitality, because it is peculiarly human, appeals to all people...it is not surprising that often God should use the hospitality people give each other as an instrument of God's grace."

—John Cogley, The Catholic Worker, October 1947

When Love is Hospitality and Supper is Essential

"Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor."
(Isaiah 58:7a)

"Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers."

(Romans 12:13)

"Listen! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into their house and eat with them, and they will eat with me."
(Revelations 3:20)

There is much ambiguity, complexity and even layers of confusion in the world today and surrounding the response of the Judeo-Christian life and ethics. Nonetheless, one thing is perfectly clear: God loves and is on the side of the dispossessed and disinherited. Jesus came not for the well, but for the sick. He did not come for the righteous but for the unrighteous. Jesus yearns for equality: love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Therefore biblical hospitality is the love of God, channelled through our lives and laws, our homes and institutions for these particular people: the undeserving poor; the wounded and broken; prostitutes and johns; lepers; insane folk (especially those who do not take their medication); crippled and lame; white males; alcoholics and drug addicts; dead beat dads and mothers who have aborted or forsaken their children (Susan Smith?); the marginalized; labor pool laborers; migrant workers; you; me; and "every hung-up person in the whole wide universe" (Bob Dylan).

Into our homes, churches, synagogues and mosques we love the other as we welcome the stranger to supper. We provide lodging as we build community and covenantal solidarity in the celebration of life and the struggle for justice. Last month a Methodist church in the Inman Park neighborhood of

(continued on page 9)

(I Hear Hope, continued from page 8)

Atlanta announced that nearby residents could move into the church, along with their beds and belongings, during the 1996 summer Olympic Games. In this way, these folks could rent their bedrooms for \$250 to \$500+ per night. What a fine gesture of hospitality inside a dwelling place for God and God's good friends. But ultimately what good is it to host those who are able to host you? (Luke 6:27-36). How lovely it would be if this congregation would choose, after the rich return to their homes, to invite the homeless, the ex-convict, the jobless or the parentless child to reside in these same places. Ah, what love! What hospitality! What joy in the very heart of God! "Remember," states the writer of Hebrews, "to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2).

Two images of opening homes and churches are gifts to us from the recent past. First, in the Underground Railroad, people of faith broke state and federal laws, took slaves into their homes, fed, clothed, and provided for them on their freedom journey. Often, they ate supper together. The cost was higher than the most expensive bed on an Olympic's night. Their currency used for housing the homeless slaves and breaking the fetters of those in chains and bondage, was faith, courage, trust and commitment to freedom and equality.

A second image is bestowed upon us by that faithful minority who hid and transported Jews during the horrible regime of Adolph Hitler. In contrast to them were the majority of local Christians who supported Hitler's pogrom as was the case with slavery in America. Yet, these people opened their homes to strangers and enemies of the state (who were labeled as problems by the propaganda of the business community, and they were deemed bad for the economy). Great deeds of love and hospitality, and of sacrifice and hope, were established by these faithful folk and their Jewish brothers and sisters.

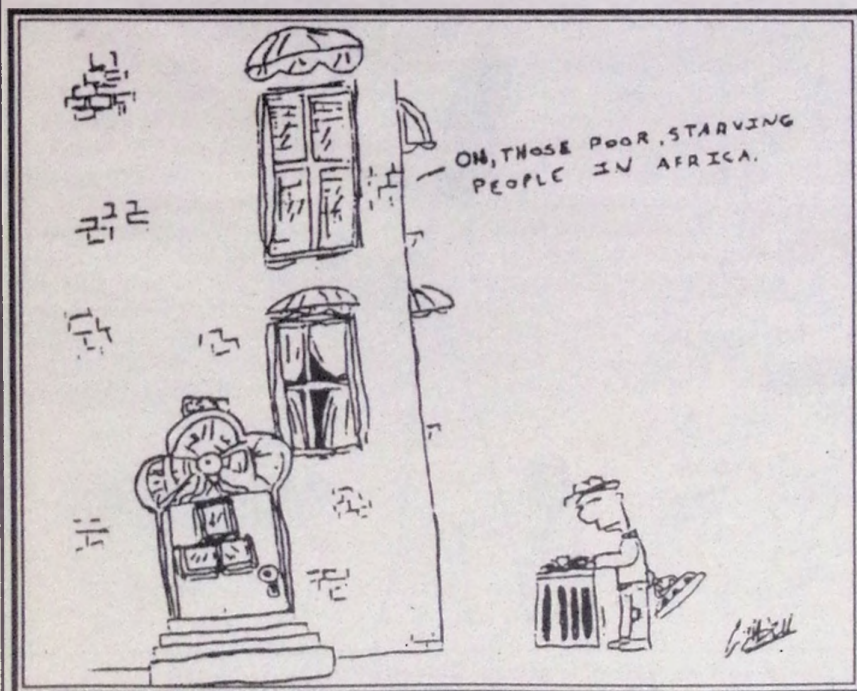
Neither the Underground Railroad nor the Resistance Movement are models for us today. But they are important and vital images. The poor and most especially the African American male, who are homeless, unemployed and present to the majority of Americans, are the enemy, the ones whom we fear. With the end of the Cold War and subsequent sending of friendship trips to Russia, the poor of our land are now our targets of hate and fear. They serve as scapegoats for our social malaise. Only 1% of our national budget is spent on welfare; nonetheless, 90% of our focus on social problems is directed towards accusations against our weakest and most vulnerable citizens. The response of the Old and New Testaments is clear—condemn the oppression and propaganda, and welcome the stranger, the widow and the orphan into our homes and lives.

Love is the fulfillment of our lives. The inward journey toward depths of spirituality in an intimate relationship with Yahweh, and Jesus teaches us to incarnate love as hospitality of the heart. We make room for Jesus in our lives, for the one for whom there was no room in the inn. But Jesus does not travel alone. He brings into the center of our lives with him and into our homes and supper table, the ragged and motley crew of outsiders.

Prophetic hospitality is an aim of our outward journey. It is a life together with the poor and disinherited that gifts us with covenantal solidarity. We join the justice struggle for daily bread, housing, liberty, and equality for all the children of this loving God who calls us. The first step is the most difficult of all; but it is one needed today more so than any other moment in our history: "Open your homes to the homeless poor."

(Reader's responses are invited and encouraged. What do you think?)

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door.



Cartoon by Cameron Lukkar, age 14

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS WATCH

The S.O.A. Watch announces the release of "School of Assassins," a 20-minute video documentary on the U. S. Army School of the Americas (S.O.A.) by Maryknoll Productions.

"School of Assassins," narrated by Susan Sarandon, provides an excellent educational resource for peace organizations, church groups, and student gatherings. The video reveals our nation's devastating military policies in Latin America by focusing on this little-known military training school in Georgia. (VHS video cassette \$14.95 + \$2.00 Postage & Handling.)

Contact: Maryknoll World Productions, P.O.
Box 308, Maryknoll, NY 10545
Phone: 1-800-227-8523 or FAX: 914-945-0670

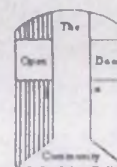
(The oppression of poor people by their government is always an issue with the Open Door Community)

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,
(April 9 - 16):

PALM SUNDAY	Open Door Community, 5pm
MONDAY	Grady Hospital, Butler St., 5pm
TUESDAY	City Jail, Peachtree St., SW, 5pm
WEDNESDAY	Trust Co. Bank, Park Place, 5pm
MAUNDY THURSDAY	City Hall, Trinity Ave., 5pm
GOOD FRIDAY	State Capital, Washington St., 5pm
HOLY SATURDAY	City Shelter, Jefferson St., 5pm
EASTER MORNING	23 Butler St., 6:30am
Worship of the Resurrected Lord Followed by a ham and egg breakfast	



Living and Dying on a Chair

As I rode the bus to work, I was lulled into a state of blankness. To watch the park roll by was activity enough. Then there was a homeless man sitting on a bench. Then another. A continuous line of these men sitting on benches rolled by. An inexplicable horror grew in me with each man, until I gasped for the knowledge that these were dying men. The chairs upon which they had been forced to sit were sucking the life out of them. They are men dying on the street.

As I rode the van back from Death-Row, I stared out the window. The man I had visited knows he will live three more months. He cannot look beyond that. He cannot tell his daughter that he will see her at Easter. To know one living in such terror numbed me. In the spring, he may be forced to sit in a chair that will blow the life out of him. They are men living on Death-Row.

- D. Andrew Harvill

Roosevelt Green Was My Teacher

Editor's note: The author of this piece wishes to remain anonymous.

To be on death row, convicted of murder, sentenced to die, and to be a proponent of capital punishment can be a demanding challenge to one's beliefs and principles; that is where I was, physically and philosophically.

It is not that I wished to see my friends executed; but I had supported the death penalty as a civilian, and I felt it would be hypocritical to alter my position because execution could now happen to me.

I avoided the conversations, the debates, the arguments; but I saw no reason to reverse my stance. Actually, as the years passed, I found support. The daily exposure to the hatred, the rancor, and the violence served as reinforcement.

I knew the theological battle that appeared clearly and soundly to endorse the institution. I thought that God actually approved of the electric chair.

I was saddened as several of the men who had befriended me were killed. We had shared meals, played cards, and exchanged experiences. They were not printed profiles, televised photographs, or social statistics. Despite the offenses, these men had treated me with politeness, respect, and even kindness. I grieved their loss.

But I remained adamant, although silent, on the issue. It seemed just.

Then the date scheduled for Roosevelt Green approached. Though we never had any problems, he was a menace to many. He used intimidation, threats, and force as if they were sports, a form of amusement.

I think he enjoyed the suffering for which he was responsible.

The execution was set for seven in the evening, and about twenty minutes after the hour, an officer quietly informed us that it had been successful.

There was a chorus of sighs of relief. You could feel the tension ease.

And then I heard applause. It did not sit well with me.

A man, a UDS (Under Death Sentence) prisoner was celebrating the successful execution of another human being. The more I considered it the more agitated my spirit became. I sought comfort through prayer.

Jacob wrestled with an angel; I was in a round-robin match with Heaven's best. I struggled through the night, pleading for an understanding, seeking peace. All that was certain was that it was wrong for Roosevelt to die. Nothing could make Roosevelt's death right. He deserved to live. To be punished, yes; to be imprisoned, yes; but to die, no.

As dawn broke through the bars, the Holy Spirit penetrated my mind, pierced my heart: "Would Jesus, were He a citizen of this state, in this era, condone the act? More precisely, had He been a correctional officer instead of a carpenter, would He have escorted Roosevelt to the death chamber, strapped him in the electric chair, and pulled the switch?" If that picture bothers you, as it bothered me that morning, then how can we, as imitators of Christ, favor capital punishment?

It is misleading to say that I have watched men die; none of us on the row actually witnesses the execution. However, I have seen them in their last days, even within hours, of that final moment.

I close my eyes and remember many of their faces and re-experience their impact.

Jerome's death saddened me more than any other because he was the last person to know that he was about to die. He simply could not, or would not, accept the possibility. It may have been his retardation (his IQ was less than 70), or it may have been a reliance on the Christian community that promised to "pray him out of the electric chair." In any event, Jerome was unaware.

Richard's death troubled me more than the others because of the fear I saw in his eyes. It was as if he was waiting for the current to hit at any second, and it terrified him. What could one say or do with time so short? I have never seen such raw, naked fright. He was alone and afraid and... It is a place to avoid.

Buddy's death comforted me more than the others. He had received dying grace. There was this deep, rich peace that radiated from his countenance. He did not want to die; but he was prepared. His faith rested in the Lord, not in the courts, or in the Board of Pardons and Paroles. He was a fine example of the testimonies of Stephen, Paul, and John. He maintained a sense of dignity in these undignified circumstances.

Roosevelt's death shamed me, and through that shame, the Holy Spirit convicted me. I had struggled. At times I was mindful that I was usurping God's power as I decided who deserved the death penalty and who did not. But here was Roosevelt—a classic-case criminal—who could disturb and offend the most compassionate heart.

Who could defend him? Jesus had. And this fact caused me much distress, challenged my established beliefs. Spiritually, I tossed and turned,

15 years, 6 months, 24 days Mar. 22, 1992

GIVING UP

Throwing a pebble in a pond...causes a ripple effect.
It goes but so far and stops.

However, it is only one of the many that will occur.
I await death...

by Jose M. High

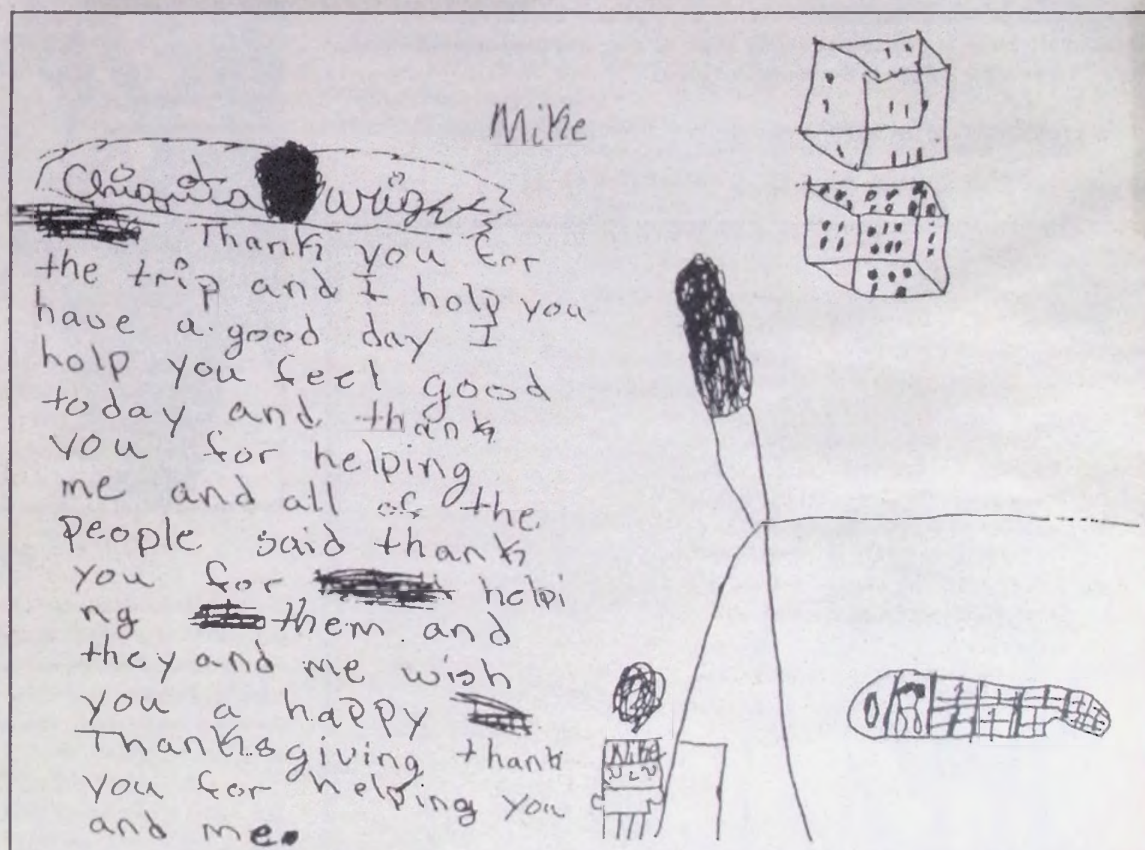
being pushed, pulled, prodded, pressured—always returning to the realization that it was wrong to kill Roosevelt. We did not have the right or the authority.

I needed Roosevelt to teach me. Not Jerome, whom everybody liked, a friend who laughed easily. Not Buddy, whom everyone appreciated, who smiled freely. But Roosevelt, with whom few associated, who raged angrily. As Jerome's questionable mental state and Buddy's undeniable deep remorse merited mercy, so Roosevelt's humanity merited mercy. He was entitled to our decency, our compassion, our forgiveness, even if he never requested it.

I now object to capital punishment, thanks to Roosevelt. I have learned the truths within God's sacred and holy word. I am no longer quiet. My small, feeble voice, but a persistent one, hopes to make a difference.

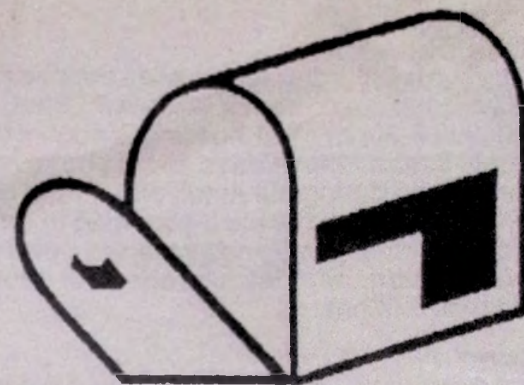
I am also grateful to the one who clapped. His response shamed me, allowing the Lord to convict me, to educate me.

Jesus died for Roosevelt. Why would He ask you to kill Roosevelt? We all merit God's mercy.



On a recent Hardwick trip to visit her father in prison, Chiquita Wright wrote this letter to Mike, a volunteer van driver from Mountain Park United Methodist Church.

Grace and Peaces of Mail



Dear Ed,

Hospitality always is thought-provoking. Your remarks on Succoth, the "Feast of Booths" or "Festival of Shelters" are very much to the point; even Amos would be in full agreement with you! I had no idea you would print my "picky" remarks about the Ox in Amos V into *Hospitality*. Use the space for weightier stuff! Still, I had a chuckle when I read the letter again.

Having had ten weeks in Europe this summer, and then reading right through your publication does create a certain fusion. Recently I read a good quote from John Wesley to the effect that when your income increases you should increase your giving, not your standard of living. Also very much to the point! Next time I see you I want to hear your thoughts on the relationship of repentance and forgiveness. Hopefully not in a pharisaic mood.

Yours in His Love,

Ludwig Dewitz
Professor of Hebrew & Old Testament
Studies, Retired,
Columbia Theological Seminary,
Decatur, GA

Dear Ed and Murphy,

We haven't heard from you for some time. We hope you're all right. The reason I express that "hope" is because not too long ago Sallie and Clyde happened to be watching a TV broadcast from Atlanta and, lo and behold, there was Ed Loring protesting the removal of the homeless from the park that the city was going to improve for public use (excluding the urban poor). They said that you (Ed) were giving the Mayor quite a talking to, saying that if the city had all this money to fix up the park, why didn't they spend similar sums on providing accommodations for the homeless (obviously, not a direct quotation, but words to that effect). For your sake, I hope they didn't throw you in jail for being a public nuisance or some such nonsense.

Sunny and I often discuss the plight of the world, here and abroad, particularly with reference to the conflicts among people of different races or religions. We feel that, in the long run, the only solution is for all colors and ethnic groups to intermarry until we all acquire a similar color. At least that would take care of the color discrimination. At the rate we're going now, it may require at least a millennium to reach such a goal.

Clearly, the amalgamation of people of different religious persuasions will be more difficult because the fundamentalists, at least, are so convinced that they have the only answer that they will resist joining families with other religious beliefs. Of course one hesitates to urge others to change their convictions when they get so much comfort from them. All we wish is that they wouldn't be so violent in their activities, whether they be Palestinians vs. Jews, Muslims v. Hindus or Protestants vs. Catholics. It seems to us that the Buddhists have done the best job of being peaceful about their convictions—holding their beliefs and letting others do the same.

Roddie Chandler
Clermont, FL

Dear Ed,

Recently, I was on vacation in Los Angeles with my woman-friend. We visited her family in the Koreatown section of L.A. The Sunday we left L.A. I walked to the Korean grocery store to pick up a newspaper. I walked past the Berendo Street First Baptist Korean Church. People were dressed in their Sunday-best going to their worship service. Across the street, armed guards watched the cars of the churchgoers. On the sidewalk approximately twenty feet from the church entrance lay a homeless person. Members of the Congregation walked by the homeless person as if he didn't exist. Let's work to get rid of armed guards in church parking lots. Let's work to get the homeless person into a house instead of a church sidewalk.

Sincerely,

Dan Bednar
Fort Dodge, IA

Dear Friends,

I'm sorry I have remained out of touch for so long. The amount of work that is required of me here is extraordinary. Quite a lot more than I bargained for. Like life at the Open Door, life at Union Theological Seminary demands one's entire being. Despite the hardship, I know that I am at the right place, doing the right thing. In addition to my studies I am managing the same soup kitchen that I did last year.

Currently, I am writing an interpretation (exegesis) of the story of Jacob wrestling with God, Gen. 32:23-33. I am very excited by what I've read. In short, I believe this is a story about struggle and survival. The text tells me that we are a people who struggle with God and with other people. We might not always prevail in our struggles but we can endure. Sometimes to endure is all we can do and yet, God tells us that to endure is to prevail. I ponder the words of my homeless friend Glenn Toombs who says that he might not have anything, but he knows he can survive.

This survival theology has the possibility of being misused and misunderstood. To say that surviving is enough, is not to say that it is survival without struggle. It would be heresy to use this theology as slave masters used Pauline theology of "reward in heaven" to keep people in bondage. Rather, this is a theology of hope and contentment, that demands struggle with God and people. This is the message of Jacob's struggle as I see it. How I derived this is a very long story, which I will send to you when I am finished writing my interpretation.

I hope to see all of you soon, and pray that you can endure with joy for life. May the love and grace of God be on you always.

Your Partner,

Andrew Harvill
New York, NY

To the Editor:

I read your paper for the first time today. I was pleased at finding some way of knowing what was happening in Atlanta that was not lead news. At the present time I am unable to donate anything to your cause but I hope to be free soon and will not forget you. I am looking forward to receiving my own copy of *Hospitality*.

Always,

Candace (Candy) Davis
Davisboro, GA

Dear Brother Ed:

I pray you, and my family at the Open Door, are as blessed as I feel inside. The joy and peace I feel inside has nothing to do with these bars and concrete, and not the fact that the State is trying to kill us. It's the peace Christ spoke of in John 14: "My peace I leave with you not as the world giveth, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." Therefore, I'm not troubled, neither am I afraid. I mean it.

I want to thank yourself, Mr. John Cole Vodicka and Mr. Barry Burnside for the visits here on Death Row as well as your prayers and support. It's incomprehensible to those not confined to know the value of your service to those confined here.

I make special mention of Mr. John Cole Vodicka for his unselfish sacrifice that he makes for those who are confined in jail, and persons who have no voice or are powerless to rectify or address the injustices and discrimination of the poor, disenfranchised, and forgotten, through his Prison & Jail Project based in Americus, GA.

Also, I make mention of his tireless efforts to travel to different towns in four directions to gather families for transport to visit us on Death Row. May God strengthen you, Brothers and Sisters, who minister to our needs. We love you all. John, we love you buddy.

Marcus Wellons

Dear Hospitality,

Our music and other arts ministry have found *Hospitality* very helpful. We give thanks for your ministries and pray for you.

Sincerely,

Lynn Drake
Director of Arts On the Island (AOI)
Savannah, GA

WE ARE OPEN. . .

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00pm, and from 7:00 until 8:30pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days (Both phone and door are not answered during our lunch break from noon until 2:00.). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. **On Sunday we are open from 7:00am until noon.** Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

OUR MINISTRY. . .

SOUP KITCHEN—Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon
SUNDAY BREAKFAST—Sunday morning at 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, 2:00pm-5pm

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

WEEKEND RETREATS—Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), April 28-30.

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

Open Door Community Worship

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

Please join us!

February 5 Worship at 9:10

February 12 Worship at 9:10

February 19 Worship at 9:10

February 26 Worship at 9:10



Open Door Community Needs

JEANS
T-Shirts
Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Blankets
Motor Vehicle
Quick Grits
Cheese
Coffee
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Postage Stamps
Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Non-Aerosol Deodorant
Disposable Razors
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Vaseline
Socks
Shampoo
Men's Belts
Washcloths
Sandwiches
Twin Mattresses
Wed & Fri Soup Kitchen Volunteers*
Butler St. Breakfast Volunteers*

* please contact Jeannie Lukkar, Volunteer Coordinator, at 874-2120.

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

If you have found Hospitality helpful and would like to know more about the Open Door Community, please fill out, clip and send this coupon to **The Open Door Community • 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE • Atlanta, GA 30306-4212.**

____ Please ADD to the Hospitality mailing list.

____ Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

____ I'm interested in volunteering. Please give me more information.

____ I would like to explore a six to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please send more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____, State _____ Zip _____ + _____

Phone _____

Moving?

Bulk rate mail is not forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service. Send Hospitality, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA, 30306-4212, your new mailing address as soon as you know it. Please enclose the mailing label from your most recent issue. *Thank you!*