

# HOSPITALITY

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910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212, 404-874-9652, [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)

February 2004

## William Sheppard, 1865-1927

### *Missionary, Explorer, Human Rights Activist*

**By Diana George**

If Americans know anything about early explorers in Africa, they are likely to recognize the names of Henry Stanley and David Livingstone. Some might have heard of the horrors of the colonial rubber and ivory trades there – the murder, maiming, enslavement, and torture of thousands of Congolese people to fill Belgian King Leopold II's pockets and open West Africa to what he called “free trade.” A few might know that such American luminaries as Mark Twain joined in the first international human rights campaign to stop Leopold.

Not many are likely to know the name of Southern Presbyterian Minister William Sheppard, though Sheppard was the first African-American missionary in Congo, arriving there in 1890 just as Stanley was currying favor with Leopold, as Joseph Conrad was traveling up the Congo River to encounter conditions he would later recall in *The Heart of Darkness*, and as Congo Free State mercenaries were chopping off hands and murdering men, women and children for the sake of commerce.

Born in Waynesboro, Virginia, in 1865, Sheppard grew up in what would have been at the time a middle-class, African-American household. His father was the town barber; his mother worked in a local health spa. Both were devout Presbyterians.

After studying at Virginia's Hampton Institute, and taking his theological training at Colored Theological Seminary (now Stillman College) in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Sheppard worked as a Presbyterian minister in Montgomery, Alabama and here in Atlanta.

For years before he was approved to go, Sheppard petitioned the Southern Presbyterian Church to give him a mission in Africa. It was not until the church could find a white missionary (Samuel Lapsley) to head up that effort that Sheppard got his assignment, and though it was Sheppard who became fluent in African languages (especially Bakuba), Sheppard who located the hidden kingdom of Kuba, and Sheppard who headed up that mission after Lapsley's death, most Presbyterians are much more likely to have read of Samuel Lapsley than of William Sheppard.

After Lapsley's death and under the influence of William Morrison (the white missionary sent to replace Lapsley) Sheppard began documenting the

horrors of Leopold's Congo Free State. Posing as a Free State official, Sheppard took photographs of dead and mutilated Congolese. He interviewed their murderers. He even counted, one-by-one, their severed hands, smoked and piled in baskets as proof of the mercenaries' effectiveness.

Sheppard's first-hand reports and photographs became central to the work of Morrison, British journalist E.D. Morel, Mark Twain, and



others determined to bring an end to Leopold's reign of terror. For his troubles, Sheppard was sued, defamed, and dismissed from his position in Congo.

What has kept us from knowing more about William Sheppard might well be that, as historian Adam Hochschild points out, in contrast to **Sheppard, continued on page 10**

*William Sheppard posing with the chief of the Ibanche people. (Photograph courtesy Presbyterian Historical Society, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Montreat, NC)*

## Working Their Way Down

### *On Quigley's Ending Poverty*

**By Monica Gaughan**

I was having a wonderful Christmas Eve with my father. We spent the morning at Open Door and ate lunch with the community. I felt very much aware of the spirit of the season—it is hard *not* to be in touch with the reality of the Christ Child at 910 Ponce. I was feeling relaxed and ready for family and friends to come to my home for meals, and presents, and music.

And then...

A pie crust can have a powerful effect, something my grandmother taught me. Try as she might, Grandma never did succeed in teaching me how to make a good pie crust. A mature woman now, I humbly accept this limitation, and take the store-bought pie crust low road. Unfortunately, I forgot to buy the crust during my planning-to-have-time-to-be-spiritual Advent season. I had to go out on Christmas Eve. You know, the traffic, the crowds...the Publix. I was right in the middle of Christmas, American style.

Although I was only in the store for a quarter hour at most, it was enough to remind me of the reality of the holidays—indeed, of everyday life—for the checkers, and baggers, and stockers who work for

me and my fellow Americans for wages that are inadequate to support them or their families. Earlier in the production process, there were farm workers and packers and bakers and inspectors who contributed their low-wage labor to the pie crust defrosting in my hands. Standing in line, I am the beneficiary of the low-profit margin, low-wage American food chain. I think I might be the predator, but the facts are not close at hand, and it is hard to contemplate anyway.

William P. Quigley's *Ending Poverty as We Know It: Guaranteeing a Right to a Job at a Living Wage* is exactly the kind of book that makes me want to give home-made pie crust another try. Our public discourse and political rhetoric blame the individual for poverty. If only “they” would work, make sacrifices... If only “they” were not lazy, did not have children... then there would be no poverty problem. This Horatio Alger ideology brought to us by trust fund babies, celebrities, and television preachers has been the philosophical foundation of such policy innovations as welfare-to-work and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF, which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children). Calvin is alive and well in 21<sup>st</sup>

**Ending Poverty, continued on page 10**

# Care of the Feet and the Soul

By Hannah Loring-Davis

*"Do you understand what I have just done to you?" he asked. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and it is right that you do so, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another's feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you. I am telling you the truth: no slaves are greater than their master, and no messengers are greater than the one who sent them. Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice!" (John 13:12-17)*

Foot pain and injuries are among the most common and crippling health problems for our brothers and sisters who live on the streets. Constant walking, limited access to comfortable shoes, and inability to keep feet dry and clean leads to myriad problems ranging from fungus to blisters to frostbite.

In answer to the call that Jesus has issued us in John 13, Thursday evenings at The Open Door, the **Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic** and the **Soul Care Foot Clinic** provide care that addresses some of these problems. With a growing roster of committed and caring volunteers, each person who comes to the clinic receives assessment and care for specific issues as well as an opportunity to just soak in a whirlpool footbath and get a foot massage. This simple act of foot care seems to create a moment that for many feels so luxurious.

The Soul Care Foot Clinic has been in operation for the last six years. Two nursing students, Heather Bichol and Joanna Whatley, from Georgia Baptist Nursing School, started the ministry as a senior project that they continued after graduation. They put together a training manual and recruited other students and friends to come on Thursday nights to wash and care for the tired and weary feet of countless of our homeless friends.

Recently, I took over coordinating the volunteers for the clinic and working in the clinic myself. The opportunity to coordinate this remarkable effort has been a profound learning experience. I have seen and felt the healing power of touch that can take place through the simple act of foot washing, and the clinic provides a safe yet intimate environment in which to care for and serve our homeless friends.

Wayne, a member of the Open Door worshipping community who frequents the clinic always leaves with a huge smile on his face. As he hugs me goodbye, he always says, "Hannah, I'll see you next week. You know I've got to get my pedicure!"

Herman, a member of our worshipping community came in to spend Christmas with us. Herman injured his foot years ago and still lives with a significant amount of pain. While he was here he told me several times that the time he gets to spend at the foot clinic is "the best thing we have going here at the Open Door!"

And while Herman is known for a good tall tale, it is truly a gift to sit at his feet and talk to him for a while. ♦

*Hannah Loring-Davis is the coordinator of the Harriet Tubman Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care Clinic.*



DIANA GEORGE

*From left to right, some of the Emory medical students who volunteer their skills and care to our free clinic: Matt Sherwood, S.J. Reedy, Allison, and Lindsay.*

## Free Health Clinic Looks to the Future

By Matt Sherwood and S.J. Reedy

Health care is a basic human right that, for many, is unrealized. As medical students, we have always believed in that right. Through the Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic, we are doing what we can to serve those in need. The clinic is named for Harriet Tubman with the idea that by providing health care to the underserved, we can empower people to take control of their health. We volunteer for the Open Door's clinic with the hope of continuing and even expanding that mission.

We continue to provide the essential care for our patients on Thursday nights, but we feel that we can do much more. Hopefully, we can expand our services in the near future, and provide more complete health care to our growing community. So far, we have sincerely enjoyed helping the Open Door's unique community and hope to continue to be of service in caring for this small part of Atlanta's homeless population. ♦

*Matt and S.J., of Emory University Medical School, are student coordinators of the medical clinic.*

# HOSPITALITY

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 Community, please contact any of the following:

**Phil Leonard:** Volunteer Coordinator, Hardwick Prison Trip, Resident Volunteer Applications  
**Gladys Rustay:** Jackson Prison Trip and Food Coordinator  
**Ed Loring:** Street Preacher and Word On The Street Host, Resident Volunteer Coordinator  
**Murphy Davis:** Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator  
**Dick Rustay and Chuck Harris:** Dayspring Farm Coordinators



MURPHY DAVIS

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# Fragile Victories

## *Reflections on My Last Hours at the Open Door*

By Heather Barger

**December 10, 2003, 3:00 p.m.**

It's my last day at the Open Door as a Resident Volunteer. The temperature has dropped to 38 degrees today. The sky is a dismal gray, and it's been misting rain this morning. As I pack up the last truckload of stuff to go and sweep up the dust bunnies that have collected over the last year and nine months, I watch Ray, a.k.a. "Stonewall," pack all of his earthly belongings into two gray garbage bags to store in a dumpster while he seeks a warm, dry place to pass the hours until nightfall. Watching him from my window which overlooks the back yard, I am aware that the discomfort, the illness, and the proximity to death increase day by day this time of year for the homeless poor.

Murphy and Ed are at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson spending what will likely be the last four or five hours of Eddie Crawford's life with him and his family – talking, laughing, crying, sharing the Eucharist of potato chips and Pepsi, and praying with all their might for the dim light of life to overcome the shadow of death that creeps closer to Eddie every minute. Even in this Advent season when we wait in hope of new life, I suppose that my last task as a Resident Volunteer will be to stand in the cold night air with a candle on the steps of the state capitol while a medical doctor assists the technicians pumping deadly chemicals into Eddie's veins.

**3:50 p.m.**

I look out my window and see two Atlanta police officers wandering around the backyard, not a totally unfamiliar sight at the Open Door, but normally they would be here in the wee hours of the morning shining flashlights into the sleepy, scared eyes of homeless sisters and brothers whose crime is sleeping outside. I run to tell Gladys who is on house duty that there are police on the property, but by the time she gets out there, they're gone.

**4:15 p.m.**

"Eddie was granted a stay!" my next door neighbor, Tonnie, yells to me as he bolts out of his bedroom heading downstairs to announce the good news.

"For how long?" I yell back.

"Don't know, I just caught it on the radio," comes the reply from the stairwell.

I am cautiously hopeful since a few weeks ago we got news that there was a delay in James Willie Brown's execution while we were at the vigil at the Capitol. We left, and he was killed an hour later. Death is still leaning over Eddie's shoulder.

**4:30 p.m.**

Lauren arrives home from a walk with Luca, the Open Door dog. She tells me that she ran into Herbert, who was dumpster-diving somewhere off of Barnett Street. He asked if he could walk with her for a while because cops were crawling all over the place, and he was afraid he would be picked up if they were "sweeping the streets." He knew he would be safer if it appeared he were simply out for a walk with

a friend as opposed to walking the streets for no good reason. Is there a difference? I guess so, if you're poor. They saw five cop cars in the span of a few blocks. When they came to a more secluded spot, Herbert thanked Lauren and took off to investigate another dumpster for supper potential. He had escaped the threat of arrest or harassment, for the moment.

**4:45 p.m.**

Someone called the house from Amnesty International to say that the Georgia Supreme Court granted Eddie a stay of at least 90 days in order to do DNA testing and further investigation of the evidence in his case. Hallelujah! This is perhaps the best we can hope for under the circumstances, the tiny light of 90 days of life amidst the still impending power of death.

Gladys tells me that there was a bank robbery just up the street, and that is why there are cops all over the neighborhood. She says they are looking for a man dressed in dark clothing who may have red paint splattered on him from the paint bomb planted among the stolen cash. I cannot imagine that any bank robber would try to get away on foot, nor can I imagine that he would stay this close to the crime scene. Yet our Herbert must seek out the protection of discreet alleyways and friends who look less menacing with whom to walk because to be homeless is to be a criminal by default. I say a quick prayer that all of our homeless friends in this area of town are wearing light-colored clothes today.

**5:00 p.m.**

Tonnie helps me carry my stuff downstairs to the truck, and Lauren and I drive two blocks down the street to unload at my mom's house, my home for the next couple of months. During one of our runs to and from the house, Sean walks up and greets us both. I remember Sean from a time he came to our soup kitchen and asked me for MARTA tokens because he had to go to Decatur where his mother had been hospitalized. He returned the next day specifically to thank me for helping him out and to report that his mom was recovering at her home.

Sean is breathing heavily and switching his weight from side to side with agitation. He explains that he has just earned \$40 helping a guy move some furniture, and the guy has offered to hire him on full-time beginning on Friday (two days from now). But he is trying to get a room for the week starting tonight since it's getting colder, and he just needs \$10 more.

He offers to rake my mom's front and back yards, carry some of my boxes, anything just so he can sleep inside tonight. We explain that we are both volunteers at the Open Door and don't have \$10 to give him. He looks dejected, but thanks us anyway and walks on down the street.

**5:15 p.m.**

Lauren and I finish bringing the last few items inside. A knock at the front door. I go downstairs, and there is Sean on the front stoop. He is beaming.

"I got it!" he says, "I got the \$10!"

He helped some guy down the street unload some scaffolding. I am amazed, and I congratulate him. He is rubbing his shoulder as though he may have overexerted himself in his excitement, and his finger is cut. He explains that he has called the woman who runs the rooming house over on Glen Iris, and she is about to leave. If he doesn't get there to pay her in the next half hour, he won't have a room for tonight. He wants to know if we can give him a ride over to Glen Iris so he won't miss her. I ask him to wait a minute while I go inside. Lauren agrees that

we can give him a ride. I grab a band-aid for his finger, and we all three hop in the truck.

I ask Sean how he met up with the guy who gave him the job moving furniture. He says that he was at the labor pool downtown, but there was no work available there. When he crossed the street, this guy was standing there and asked him if he was looking for work. The guy told Sean he would pay him \$40 if Sean helped move some furniture today, and then Sean could work full-time starting Friday. He says that his mother and siblings have often offered to help him out with money or a place to stay. "But I don't want a handout," he says. "Now I can say I earned it myself."

We arrive at the rooming

house in ten minutes, at least twenty minutes faster than if he had walked it. Lauren and I congratulate him on his job. He thanks us and hurries into the house.

We drive back towards 910 Ponce for a few minutes in silence. I'm thinking about Sean and the minor miracle it took for him to sleep in a bed for a week...the guy waiting across the street from the labor pool, the other who just happened to need help when Sean needed \$10, finding Lauren, who could go with me to give him a ride to the rooming house just in time to get inside for the night. I wonder how long this job will really last. He has no contract. The guy could cut him loose as soon as work slows down. I wonder if Sean will ever save enough money to get out of the rooming house and into his own place. I realize that most days are probably like this for Sean,

**Fragile Victories, continued on page 9**



MURPHY DAVIS

*Heather Barger leads the way to Amicolola Falls on a community hike in December 2003.*

# Public Toilets

## A Familiar Sight in Scotland



MURPHY DAVIS

Everywhere we went during our travels in Europe, we found the public toilets. (Several years ago we were in Quebec with Erskine and Nan Clarke and Erskine said, “You know, I don’t think I’ve ever traveled with anybody who photographed all the toilets.”) After an unsuccessful 21-year effort to get public toilets in Atlanta, we are always interested to see how commonplace and accessible they are in much of the rest of the world. Here, Clive and Connie Bonner point the way near the ruins of the Whithorn Priory in Southwest Scotland. See page 6-7 for more from Europe.

### would you like to receive *hospitality*?

If you or a loved one would like to receive *Hospitality* every month, please fill out, clip, and send this form to:

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

\_\_\_Please add me (or my friend) to the *Hospitality* mailing list.

\_\_\_Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

\_\_\_I would like to explore a six- to twelve-month commitment as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door. Please contact me. (Also see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org) for more information about RV opportunities.)

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

# Time

By Dorothy Hoogterp, R.N.

One day

One World

One place  
Where time stands still  
Where the crawling hands of the clock  
Mark off only  
hours  
from lock-up to lock-up...  
from medication time to medication time...  
from Chow to Chow.

But the real TIME goes on and on  
Two and a half years to ten  
Five to fifteen...fifteen to forty...  
Life...or natural life plus five years.

Time is about hoping against hope  
From Parole Board to Parole Board  
And a twelve-month flop three years running.

Time is your woman giving up  
And divorcing you  
Or taking the baby to another state  
with another man...  
because: “a kid has to have a REAL father”  
and a father that’s locked up is really dead already.

Time is the GOOD TIME  
Abolished by legislative decree.

Time is ADDED-ON TIME  
because a man gets mad  
and busts a bunch of windows  
because he can’t stand TIME  
any more.

“Time marches on”  
so they say...

But it leaves the man  
“Doing Time”

Behind.

FOREVER. ♣

## poetry corner



JULIE LONNEMAN

Send us your poetry!  
We especially welcome poetry  
from people in prison and on  
the streets. Send to:

Mark M. Bashor, The Poetry Corner  
The Open Door Community  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave NE  
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

In January of 1983, Dorothy Hoogterp published a volume of her poetry called *Two Books of Prison Poetry*. *Book One: Fifty Sons in Prison* was “written to my ‘sons’ in prison.” *Book Two: Double Trouble* was “written about prison and mental illness.” A very special thanks to Dorothy’s friend, Rev. Pamela Fulton of Manistique, Michigan, for bringing Dorothy’s collection of poetry to our attention. Rev. Fulton also wrote the following biographical sketch of her friend:

*Dorothy Hoogterp is an 87 year old long time social activist. The mother of thirteen children, her husband died when the youngest was three years old. Dorothy raised all those children on an R.N.’s salary. Most have college degrees and several have graduate degrees. She now has nearly 60 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Dorothy has worked as a nurse in several capacities. She did community nursing during the war on poverty and worked for several years on the mental health unit of Ionia Prison in Ionia, Michigan. While in that position she wrote many poems for individual inmates and gathered them into a volume of her work called Two Books of Prison Poetry. The poem “Time” remains as one of Dorothy’s favorites.*



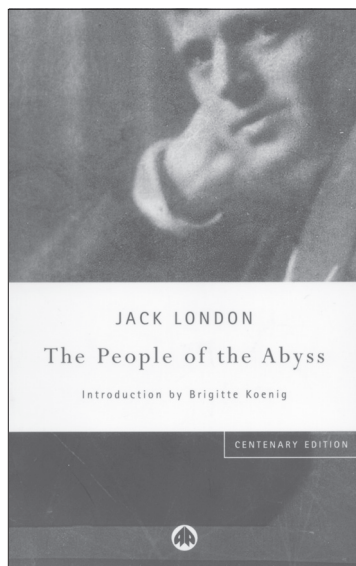
# On Being Told that the Economy is Improving

## *A Note on NPR and Jack London*

By Diana George

*From the slimy, spittle-drenched sidewalk, they were picking up bits of orange peel, apple skin, and grape stems, and, they were eating them. The pits of greengage plums they cracked between their teeth for the kernels inside. They picked up stray bits of bread the size of peas, apple cores so black and dirty one would not take them to be apple cores, and these things these two men took into their mouths, and chewed them, and swallowed them; and this, between six and seven o'clock in the evening of August 20, year of our Lord 1902, in the heart of the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen.*

*-The People of the Abyss,*  
Jack London



Over a century ago, one of Dorothy Day's favorite writers – Jack London – traveled to London, England, traded his regular clothes for rags he found in a second-hand shop, and walked the streets of that city posing as one of the homeless. He lived in shelters (work houses) to learn what it meant to be out of work, living in the streets, and ignored by “the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen.”

One hundred and two years later, it is time to reread *The People of the Abyss*, Jack London's account of what Stephen Crane had earlier called an “experiment in misery” – an attempt to become one of the poor, to know poverty within poverty. It is especially important to read of London's life in the streets when, today, so many of our brothers, sisters, and children walk our own streets, enduring conditions not far removed from those London experienced so long ago.

The U.S. has, quite surely, taken over from Britain the dubious honor of being called “the greatest, wealthiest, and most powerful empire the world has ever seen,” and in the midst of all that wealth and power it is increasingly difficult to see the level of demeaning poverty that is growing everyday in our streets, under our bridges, in the gullies, in abandoned warehouses, in churchyards, and against doorways.

Despite the current communications boom, most Americans cannot see this poverty and never hear of it. At the Open Door we do see it, but that is most likely because we want to.

On the first day of December, in the first week of Advent, I sat in my room listening to a National Public Radio report on what they were calling an “improved economy.” It was cold and rainy in Atlanta that morning and men and women from the street were lined up and huddled under our eaves waiting for a bag breakfast. Normally, we can bring people in, but that day we couldn't, so the tension and

frustration in the yard were high. Amazingly, people's patience goes up with the tension. For every shouting match there is somebody who wants to make peace. For every curse there is a word of thanksgiving.

The NPR report was focused solely on what this “economic upswing” might mean for the next presidential election.

There were no nuances in this story and little to suggest that the reporters had any sense of what is going on in the real economy of making it day-to-day on low income, below-minimum-wage income, temporary income, or (given free trade agreements) no income at all. I wished they could sit with me and just take a look out the window.

Daily, I watch old men and women (our elders) pick through dumpsters.

Daily, I am reminded of how little I know about living in the streets in this city.

Twice this winter, I have been stopped short by my own ignorance / my own habits of mind.

The first time was with a man I've known since I got here. He usually looks pretty spaced-out, so I assumed he was doing some drug or wasted on alcohol. Listerine is a preferred beverage for a number of alcoholics in the streets, and since he never really smelled of liquor, I thought maybe it was just a lot of Listerine dulling his eyes and slowing his responses. Now that I know him better, I realize the spaced-out look isn't alcohol or illegal drugs at all but prescribed medications for everything from a bi-polar condition to high blood pressure, anxiety, headaches, sleeplessness, and allergies. I knew that he slept in the streets somewhere, but I didn't know where. He is at The Open Door most days and gets food and a change of clothes and a shower on shower days. He worries when our routine changes, so that morning in Advent he was probably anxious.

The week before, I had heard that he had finally been approved for a place, and he looked happy about that. I was happy about it because I could see him going downhill as the days got wetter and colder, and I didn't like thinking about him sleeping outside. So, when I saw him, I said, “Hey! I heard you got a place! Congratulations!” He nodded and just said it was good. He was relieved.

I mentioned his place to Barbara here in the house. She tried to set me straight: “It isn't inside. It's a doorway.” I told her that he said he was approved for a place. “I'm pretty sure he's inside.”

When he came through the sorting room that morning, I asked about it. “It's a church doorway,” he told me, “but they gave me a letter to show the police. It says I'm allowed to sleep there.”

A church doorway. That's what he meant by

being approved for a place.

Later the same week, I was talking to a couple I've come to know in our yard. I don't recall what it was they were noticing, but I overheard one say to the other, “We'll have to do that at home.”

Okay. Home. That sounds to me like a place to live, so I asked where their place is.

“We found an abandoned car that's all covered in kudzu. So far, nobody's found us.”

The week before Christmas, I heard that they had lost their place. Maybe the hard frost killed back the kudzu. Whatever it was, they were on the streets looking for a spot to sleep.

We see them here at The Open Door most evenings. They drink coffee and eat sandwiches in the yard. After that, I'm not sure where they go. Maybe they sleep in whatever doorway, yard, ditch, or underpass they can find. Or, maybe they “carry the banner.” That's what Jack London called walking the streets all night. Just walking. Rarely stopping.

Over a century ago, *The People of the Abyss* described a life of harassment and exhaustion, a life in which street people kept moving to avoid arrest, and London painted a picture that could easily be Atlanta today. *And now*, he wrote, *I wish to criticize the powers that be:*

*All night long they make the homeless ones walk up and down. They drive them out of doors and passages, and lock them out of the parks. The evident intention of all this is to deprive them of sleep. Well and good, the powers have the power to deprive them of sleep, or of*

**Jack London, continued on page 10**



### volunteer needs

- People to accompany community members to doctors' appointments
- People to serve breakfast on Mondays, 5:50-9:30 a.m.
- Groups or individuals to make meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna, please) on whole-wheat bread for our homeless and hungry friends
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community any evening Tuesday through Thursday

**For more information,**  
contact Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906 or  
[pleon2000@mindspring.com](mailto:pleon2000@mindspring.com)



# Inch By Inch

## *Across Europe With the Catholic Workers*

By Murphy Davis

It was a long-awaited journey. In 2001, I was invited to give the keynote talk at the annual gathering of the European Catholic Workers, and Ed Loring was asked to do a workshop. Maybe it should have been a sign to us when SwissAir, the airline that had booked our tickets, went belly-up. But ten days before we were to depart for Germany, I got the news that the travel plans had to change. New destination: Grady Hospital. The remission of Burkitt's lymphoma had lasted seven years, but I spent 89 days of the next seven months in the bed at "the Gradys" for major surgery and mega-chemotherapy. Ed and our daughter Hannah and the Open Door Community walked the whole ordeal with me. The European Catholic Workers made-do without us, and I got well. Grace abounds.

And the Catholic Workers re-issued the invitation for October '03. We were thrilled to say, Yes, Yes, Yes! This also provided a wonderful opportunity to visit several former Open Door volunteers and friends.

We started in Scotland: a week with Ruth and Norman Shanks. Norman, the former Leader of the Iona Community, is now Pastor of the Govan Old Parish in Glasgow. There was hardly enough time to squeeze in all the talk of politics, family, theology and community with walks through Glasgow and the countryside. I preached at Govan Old and we delighted in meeting the folks there and hearing of their struggle to keep the gate open (literally and figuratively) to their historic "little cathedral" in the midst of a community ravaged by unemployment, poverty, drugs and despair. But the gate is open, the light is on, and the welcome is warm.

In the Borders of Scotland we visited commuting volunteers Connie and Clive Bonner in their new home in the Manse in Annan. Connie's first year as Pastor of the Annan United Reformed Church has been a lively one. Ed preached on the Sunday we were there and we enjoyed an evening of Scottish culture in the parish hall. We spent an unforgettable three days with Connie's "mum" in the tiny fishing village of Maidens on the Firth of Clyde.

On to the beautiful medieval city of Tübingen in Southern Germany, we enjoyed a happy reunion with Jurgen Moltmann and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel. Elisabeth was just back from a meeting with other feminist theologians, and Jurgen shared two of his latest books with us. I wish I could describe the look on Ed's face when Jurgen showed Ed page 126 of *Science and Wisdom* where he quotes from Ed's *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door*.

Our good friend Charlotta Norby, an attorney at the Southern Center for Human Rights and regular Open Door volunteer, was visiting her parents Greta and Jens in Skodstrup (north of Aarhus), Denmark just in time for us to visit there. Ed and I provided the week's entertainment by trying to say *anything* in Danish, but the warmth of their hospitality was thankfully provided in English.

For years we have hoped to visit Hamburg

and the Brot und Rosen (Bread and Roses) Catholic Worker community. Several of the founders of the community are former Open Door volunteers, and we have maintained a close relationship since their founding seven years ago. We stayed with dear friends Dietrich and Uta Gerstner in their active household with four-year old Joel and 15-month old twins, Daniel and Elias, renewed our friendship with Ute Andreson, and got to know the rest of the community and guests. We enjoyed being present to represent the American Catholic Workers for a grand "7 and 70" celebration—the seventh anniversary of Brot und Rosen and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Catholic Worker movement. The community there perseveres in their work to welcome undocumented refugees and struggle locally and in Germany for a more welcoming policy.

The time in Hamburg included the opportunity for a side trip to the Neuengamme Concentration Camp, and another to Leipzig, Greifenhain, and Oederon, the birthplace of Ed's grandfather (for whom Eduard Nuessner Loring is named). We found in Oederon a beautiful little town that has probably changed little since young Georg Eduard Nuessner left there about 100 years ago. We found it very moving in the churches of Oederon and Greifenhain to see folks casually pull out church record books dating back as far as the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Catholic Worker gathering in Amsterdam capped off this wonderful journey. Folks gathered

from communities in England—Oxford, London and Liverpool; Germany—Hamburg and Dortmund; and Amsterdam. As always in such a gathering, there are hearts heavy with the struggles of the poor, the homeless and hungry, refugees, those without access to health care and housing, and the horror of the growing distance between rich and poor accelerated and exacerbated by the preemptive war on Iraq and Afghanistan. Workers come together hungry for a word, for analysis to shed light on the path, for the assurance of companions to share the struggle. But it was not a time of long faces and sad stories. For while we all bear the stories of defeat and suffering, there is a joy of life together that issues in laughter and great fun together. There was plenty of time to enjoy the children, very good food, singing together, the wonderful museums (ah, especially the Van Gogh!) and beautiful Amsterdam. We flew home with deep thanksgiving for the opportunity to be part of the movement for justice, peace, and faith in action. We are thankful for our Catholic Worker sisters and brothers, and thankful for faces to put with the names "across the pond," and for this wonderful and amazing opportunity to renew the "ties that bind." Life is good. We're grateful for the journey. ✠

*Murphy Davis is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*Ute and Dietrich Gerstner welcome guests to the "7 and 70" Celebration at Bread and Roses Catholic Worker Community.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*Norman Shanks stands on the bank of the River Clyde at the back of Govan Old Parish Church in Glasgow.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*In Oederon (in the former East Germany), the church staff helped us to locate a distant cousin of Ed's, Jutta Nuessner Mertons. Here Jutta and Ed are with a memorial to Jutta's father, Oscar Nuessner.*





*Catholic Workers from seven European communities gathered for the picture holding the Peace flag that we saw hanging from homes and buildings everywhere we went in Europe.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*Connie Bonner (on the right) with her church secretary, Francis Bell, decked out for the Scottish Heritage celebration in the parish hall at the Annan United Reformed Church.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*We stopped for a visit and a word of encouragement and solidarity with the PeaceWatch folks outside the Parliament building in Copenhagen, Denmark. They have kept a continuous presence since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan.*



MURPHY DAVIS

*Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jurgen Moltmann at home in Tubingen, Germany.*

## Suicide Prayer

By Ed Loring

Train trip with Dietrich, Viola, and Elisabeth, Murphy, and me to Amsterdam for the European Catholic Worker Gathering. Out of Hamburg, our train stopped for 45 minutes.

In front of us a train was used for a man to obey his fear and utter desperation. He flung himself before the train.

*Death, sweet Death, deliver me from the Hell of Life. I am yours. Relieve my suffering and redeem me from this chained existence in the prison of Life. Come train, come on fast train. Deliver me and do for me what I cannot do for myself. ✠*



ED LORING

*Charlotta Norby and Murphy Davis at the beach in Denmark.*

*Ute introduces the festivities. On the left, Uta Andreson and right, Joel, Viola, Pamela and Elisabeth.*



MURPHY DAVIS

## The Swan

By Ed Loring

She lay, twisted neck broken, down in a ditch. White like purity. Dead like a German prisoner too exhausted to dig the canal. Wham! Bang! A sleek silver fox Mercedes threw her beautiful body, long neck, never again to cry in goose, "alas," toward the road ditch water near ice. What cry remained drowned out?

We had to look. Could we see? Men, freezing, hunger shrieking like dark madness, digging ditches? Kapos over them (brothers all, we are brothers all in one image in one blood), brutal lashes against their backs when slowed by pain or shovel dropped from frozen fingers.

"Ship this 'Muslim' to Auschwitz," he screamed.

"Hell, no!" spoke the rigid SS guard and who calmly put the pistol point behind his ear and with pleasure pulled the index finger tight.

We could not look long. We shall see forever: The elegant swan dead in a ditch near the entrance to the Neuengamme Concentration Camp. ✠

*Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



# The Wednesday Report

## *An Advent Day in the Life of Eddie Crawford*

By Ed Loring

I am a young man, but I could be old. Expecting death at 7 p.m., Murphy and I went Buickwise to Georgia's Death Row visiting area. Lots of family and lots of time and talk as the clock ticked toward death. Elephant-like death-squad men rubbed their hands and never sat. Nor would they give their names because they were instructed not to do so. Jesus sat in the visitor's cage. Bedroom plastic sandals clung to his feet. His shoes had been taken from him so he could not use the laces to kill himself. The state has spent millions for this flesh and Death wants no one but his own employees strapping, pounding, shooting venom in veins, and watching with a few others' eyes, the warm body turn cold and justice, according to the court, be fulfilled.

"Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?" Because the state is the state only so long as its citizens will go to war to kill, and obey the courts who kill, and then, too, there is money galore for those who tell the servants of the death machine to do their underpaid, hardly significant work of death, death, death.

Advent. Mary is pregnant. Hurting with each hoof fall, she sits on the donkey's back. No matter what a pregnant virgin rides, it hurts, it costs. But now only a few more miles and a warm room awaits in the inn, Mary dreams. Advent 2003: Margie Love and Will Crawford, Eddie's mother and father, sit waiting, waiting, waiting... Advent is eclipsed by Herod's mad Liturgy of death and fear, of military might and the helpless hope that flickers on the margins.

"No stay, no clemency," spoke the Pardons and Paroles Board with arthritis aflame in their jaws. How much easier it is to claim death than life. Great political awards await, like a golden Easter egg, for those who want this work of Imperial security. "We will do the best we can, 'till we can't," Willie Dee taught us. The Georgia Supreme Court still had the case in review at 3 p.m. when the warden told us to leave. We held no hope from the state supremes. Four hours till Execution.

"Eddie, thank you for your faith and years of friendship. I love you; the Peace of Jesus be with you." What a feeble good-bye. What I had hoped to say... What was it I had hoped to say? Murphy, too, spoke of thanksgiving, love, and peace.

Outside on the prison parking lot, shiny cars sat locked and silent, ready to speed away from it all at the next shift change. Only a few men and women like this work of caging, controlling, beating and killing the all but defenseless convicts. Lots of crying and mourning like the Egyptians on Passover night. Is Eddie the oldest son? We said good-byes. Randy Loney, ever faithful, went with the family. That's it. We knew the execution would happen. 7 p.m.: and at 7:10 the Death Certificate would be signed by a death official.

Rain and cold fell from the Georgia sky. Red clay exposed from bulldozers skinning the earth for more room in the inn for rich men and women whose

lives are falling apart in the American way of life. We called Ed and Mary Ruth Weir. Please come to the truck stop. Please sit with us, before the vigils begin at the prison, Atlanta, Athens, Americus, in homes and hearts. Naomi was our truck stop server. Prayer, friends, and coffee are good braces for a friend's death. We watched the clock; it was and always has been merciless. Time to go. Murphy called Sara Totonchi for an update. "Oh, we thought you knew. He got an indefinite stay from the Georgia Supreme Court! For DNA testing. Now he is alive and we've

got some time!!" Rejoicing and thanksgiving. Advent again. Light in Darkness. Unseen Jesus sometimes sits on the Georgia Supreme Court. We headed home where in our dining room there is a large banner of the Pregnant Mary calling us home, building room in the world for all through her body. Eddie Crawford, we love you and hope with Advent. Hope for your life and restoration. ✠

*Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*

## Re-Member Those in Prison

By Chuck Harris

The United States locks up a lot of people. In fact, this country can boast that it has one of the most imprisoned populations in the world. In Georgia, the state prisons are getting so crowded that people are being held for extended periods in county jails waiting to be transferred to the state. It makes sense, then, that anyone proclaiming freedom to the captives would probably have a tough time getting elected to public office. Politicians like having that "get tough on crime" image. That's one way to get elected in this country. If you really want to run a "get tough on crime" campaign, you don't oppose the death penalty. In fact, support for the death penalty almost seems a prerequisite for any serious candidate in the major political parties.

At The Open Door we know how politicians and a lot of Americans feel about prisoners, and we know that our work with outcasts, people on the margins, and people the politicians don't want to be around doesn't end in the streets. We also offer hospitality to those who are in prison. When we know a homeless man or woman has been arrested, someone from The Open Door goes to visit. News of people in the prison and jail system is shared at the house when the community gathers for prayer. We write a lot of letters to and get a lot of letters from people in the state prison system. We organize monthly trips to the enormous prison complex at Hardwick and to death row in Jackson.



At Christmas time, we read the names of each person held on death row. We need to hear those names to remind us that these are not just statistics but real people waiting to be killed by the State. This Christmas, Murphy Davis read Eddie Crawford's name with a shout of joy because, on December 10, Eddie had just come within three hours of being killed before he was issued a stay of execution.

The writer of Hebrews asked early Christians to "Remember those who are in

prison as though you were in prison with them." That one sentence is a tall order and probably impossible to achieve fully. I doubt we can ever experience the suffering of the imprisoned without actually being in prison. By corresponding with and visiting prisoners we get glimpses, anyway, of the reality. We learn more about individuals than the news stories tell – stories that report only the worst thing the prisoner has ever done and so boil an entire lifetime into a single horrible moment.

Those news story expectations were probably with me as I passed through all the barred gates and security checks on the way to the visiting room at Jackson. One of the myths of the death penalty is that it is a punishment reserved for the worst of the worst. The fact is, the death penalty is reserved for the poorest of the poor, for those who get bad lawyers, or for anyone who commits a murder on the meaner side of a political boundary.

What is so striking about the death row visiting room, though, is the normalcy of it all. Parents sit with sons, wives with husbands, friends

**Re-member, continued on next page**



**Re-member, from page 8**

with friends. Kids are playing. There is laughter and intense conversation. It could be a gathering in a big living room (though this one is concrete and steel with uncomfortable furniture) [Editor's note: The only woman under death sentence in Georgia visits with family and friends in isolation from the other prisoners].

So on one level there is this normal human interaction going on – people being hopeful, trying to make the best of things. Then there is the reality that every one of these prisoners is waiting to hear about his own death.

One Saturday two years ago, I met Fred Gilreath and learned he had received his death warrant. It was for the coming Tuesday. After having been convicted of killing his wife many years ago, Fred had rebuilt a relationship with his children and others in his family. There in the visiting room were his son and daughter, his grandchildren, and his brothers. What I saw was a healthy, decent person who in a few days would be killed, an act that would accomplish nothing except to create a whole new group of victims.

Dorothy Day believed that we lighten the burden of others when we share in their suffering. Maybe that's what is important about being there to hear people's stories, to get closer to the truth. On death row there are stories of transformation, of finding hope, and building a meaningful life as a captive. These are the stories we never hear.

I guess it was mainly out of curiosity that I started visiting on death row. That was about five years ago. Since then, there have been a lot of letters and many hours of just sitting and talking with the man I've come to know as more than a prisoner and more than a death row inmate. Dorothy Day would say that I have lightened his burden by sharing in his suffering, but the truth is, he has also lightened mine. I went to death row five years ago to visit a stranger. Today I travel to Jackson to see a friend, and I am staggered by the thought that the State wants to kill this man who is, as Helen Prejean so often reminds us, much more than the worst thing he has done. ✠

*Chuck Harris is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.*

**Fragile Victories, from page 3**

for Herbert, for Eddie. Most days they wait in hope for \$50 to get a room for the night, for a ride across town, for a long-term job, for a refuge from the police, for 90 more days to live. And most days they are met with disappointment.

"God," I turn to Lauren and say, "the victories are so temporary, so..." I drift off.

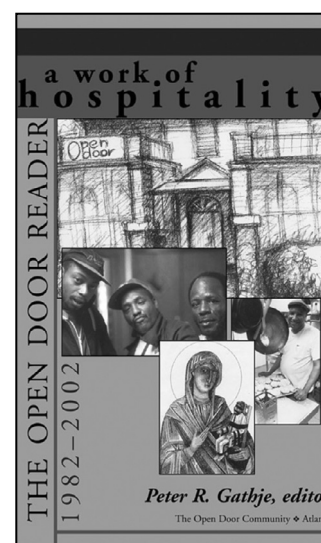
"Fragile," she finishes for me. "Yeah."

**6:00 pm**

My last supper circle at the Open Door. Diana gathers prayer concerns, and we give great thanks to God that we are standing in the circle at home instead of downtown on the capitol steps tonight. I think about Murphy and Ed returning from an exhausting day at the prison with the knowledge that Eddie is still alive. I picture Eddie and his family receiving the news that the Supreme Court has granted a stay. I think about Herbert finding safety in Lauren's companionship. I imagine Sean resting peacefully in a warm bed.

Diana asks me to lead a song after we pray. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" I sing with a lump in my throat and tears welling in my eyes. That's right, joy. We have to celebrate these temporary, fragile victories. We must listen to these small whispers of "yes" to life. We have to give thanks for these tiny, waning lights of hope in our midst lest we be consumed by the darkness all around us. ✠

*Heather Barger recently finished her term as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.*

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*The family gathered around the Christmas dinner table. Before the dessert course, the question was asked: "Well, what did you think of A Work of Hospitality?" As always, a reading was assigned before Christmas for discussion at our family gathering. The purpose has always been to lead our children and their spouses down a path they have never traveled and to invoke new thoughts and ideas. This year, A Work of Hospitality danced through our heads – so much so that dessert was almost forgotten (extremely unusual for most in this group).*

*While most of us have helped from time to time in homeless shelters, this ministry screamed at each of us and provoked deep philosophical questions that could not be answered in one evening – perhaps in a lifetime. As one might imagine, the questions flowed freely and rapidly; the answers came less easily. Some of the questions were: "When you visited the Open Door, did they ask you to give up all your worldly possessions and 'follow them'?" "What about the victims of those in prison – are they not worthy of attention?" "Is the purpose of this ministry social justice or spiritual salvation and are the two compatible in this environment?" We learned that one couple had spent five hours discussing the book while driving during the holidays.*

*Everyone experienced the writings as powerful. The results of the Christmas reading assignment certainly exceeded expectations – as all of us indeed traveled down an unfamiliar, unsettling path and the book left us with a desire to better understand the Open Door Community and its ministry.*

**–Travis and Betty Halford  
Atlanta, GA**

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**Ending Poverty**, continued from page 1  
Century America: welfare as we know it has ended, and work is supposed to be the means of personal economic salvation. Quigley blows the lid off the smug insistence that the Protestant work ethic will solve the poverty problem. Simply put, the poor work. They are poor not because they do not work, but because their wages are inadequate. This effectively turns the entire causal logic on its head. Work is not the solution; *it is the problem*. Now the very poor work and are still poor, as are the at-poverty-line poor, and the near poor.

Like Marx before him, Quigley emphasizes the deep structural features of the economic and political order that create poverty. In the first half of the book, Quigley illuminates the well-developed official modifiers for poverty—very poor, near poor, working poor—in the sort of way I would imagine an Inuit describing the kind of precipitation each name for snow represents. For example, the 2002 poverty line for a family of four is \$18,100; that means that an hourly wage adequate to lift a family above that poverty line is \$8.19, more than three dollars higher than the current federal minimum wage. The general consensus is that a living wage—a wage meeting the actual requirements for food, housing, health care, transportation, clothes, recreation, and so on—is at least twice as much as the current minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.

Overall, some 40 million Americans live in poverty, most of them in households with employed members. I congratulate Quigley for explaining in a clear and concise fashion the complicated formulae for calculating poverty levels under varying conditions. More important, he dispels myths about the relationship between work and poverty:

1. In 1998, 70% of poor people worked, one quarter of them full-time.
2. One-quarter of American workers makes wages inadequate to lift a family of four above the federal poverty line.
3. Working full-time at minimum wage grosses an annual “salary” of \$10,712 at the current minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour, inadequate to lift any family out of poverty.
4. The minimum wage rate does not have an automatic cost of living adjustment; Congress must do it, the last time taking effect in 1997.

The book is packed with such depressing, well-documented facts, ones likely quite well known to readers of *Hospitality*.

Despite appealing to my over-developed appreciation for demographic facts, Quigley is first and foremost a moral voice critiquing a corrupt social and economic order. What is quite exciting are the multiple bases on which he founds his argument for changing the definition of poverty and its relationship to honest work. For example, he uses polling data taken over the last century that show that the overwhelming majority of Americans believe that wages for work should be adequate to maintain a family. In Chapter 5, he introduces “A New Definition of Poverty” that seeks to “recognize that if

we truly believe that all humans are entitled to human dignity, then each must be given a realistic opportunity to be self-supporting in order to become self-sufficient (p. 45).” His most important contribution is tying this

concept to a long tradition of philosophical, political, religious (various denominations), constitutional, and international legal principles that are consistent with the concept of a living wage.

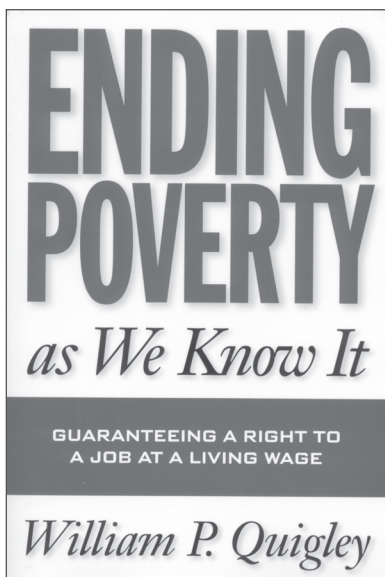
In 1776, the idea that free, white, native-born property-owning men could be self-determining and governing was so compelling that soon African-Americans, women, Native-Americans, immigrants, and homosexuals wanted in on the revolution. Although imperfectly implemented for many, and still unrealized for sexual minorities, civil rights for most are officially enshrined in our most basic constitutional and federal legal documents. Quigley argues that if American society could evolve to this level of civil inclusion in one century, it is possible for us to dream of a society in which economic rights are similarly enshrined. Although

initially skeptical of Quigley’s constitutional solution to poverty, I am convinced that he is right: A constitutional amendment that recognizes each person’s fundamental right to economic self-sufficiency is a logical extension of over two hundred years of philosophical and political thought. Like civil rights, economic rights are a logical extension of cherished American principles.

In addition, the federal government already has a strong set of legal, regulatory, and programmatic relationships with employers that could be expanded and modified to incorporate the working poor. In other words, Quigley proposes that the implementation of an economic justice amendment would be administratively and bureaucratically feasible because the infrastructure is already in place. Call me a political optimist, but I think this could work.

I intend to adopt Quigley the next time I teach social policy. I thought I had the ultimate ace in the hole this semester with Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed*. It was inconceivable to me that my students would fail to be moved by her narratives, especially when I combined the text with university service worker budget simulations. The discussion I hoped to have about a living wage devolved very quickly into the argument that the minimum wage should be eliminated on the basis that it interferes with the free market. Quigley reassures me, “Opposition based on an irrational faith in the unseen hand of the market economy is beyond rational discussion (p. 132).” Next time, I am going to limit that line of argumentation by focusing on the dozens of alternative arguments Quigley proposes. I am not sure that Quigley will solve the moral quagmire of today’s college conservatives (among others), but I do think this text can help me where Ehrenreich cannot. Quigley’s analysis is rigorous and well-documented, he demonstrates admirable restraint and objectivity, and he appeals to core philosophical and constitutional principles in his argumentation. He is a professor’s radical: elegant in his theorizing, careful in his analysis, and breathtaking in his vision. ♣

Monica Gaughan is Professor of Public Policy at Georgia Tech University and a regular volunteer at the Open Door Community. Bill Quigley is a frequent contributor to *Hospitality* and the Janet Mary Riley Distinguished Professor of Law at Loyola University of New Orleans.



**Ending Poverty as We Know It.**  
William P. Quigley. 245 pp. Philadelphia, 2003. Temple University Press.

**Sheppard**, continued from page 1  
the pomposity and violence of the very famous Henry Stanley’s explorations, Sheppard’s journey was “respectful and nonviolent.” His name seldom turns up in histories of great exploration because, Hochschild writes, “he doesn’t fit the conventional image of the white explorer in Africa. To begin with, he wasn’t white.” ♣

*Note:* You will find more about William Sheppard and Leopold II’s Congo Free State in three fine sources:

Adam Hochschild’s *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*

Pagan Kennedy’s *Black Livingstone: A True Tale of Adventure in the Nineteenth-Century Congo*

William E. Phipps’ *William Sheppard: Congo’s African American Livingstone*

Diana George, a professor at Michigan Technological University, is spending her sabbatical year as a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

## Jack London, from page 5

*anything else for that matter; but why under the sun do they open the gates of the parks at five o’clock in the morning and let the homeless ones go inside and sleep? If it is their intention to deprive them of sleep, why do they let them sleep after five in the morning? And, if it is not their intention to deprive them of sleep, why don’t they let them sleep earlier in the night?*

London makes a plea, in *People of the Abyss*, for sanity and caring. After a night spent out with others “carrying the banner,” London tells his readers that he did not stop and rest in the park:

*I was wet to the skin, it is true, and I had had no sleep for twenty-four hours; but, still...I had to look about me, first for a breakfast, and next for work.*

It is, indeed, a good time to reread Jack London. The people he wrote of in 1902 in England are still with us today in 2004 in Atlanta, New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Houston, Memphis, Miami, Orlando, St. Louis, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Duluth, Tucson, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and in Washington, D.C. They are with us in small towns and major cities; in the heat of the South and in the bitter cold of the North. They are with us whether we see them or not, whether the “powers that be” keep them out of our sight or not. They are with us.

*And, so, dear soft people*, London writes, *should you ever visit London Town [or Atlanta, Georgia] and see these men [and women] asleep on the benches and in the grass, please do not think they are lazy creatures, preferring sleep to work. Know that the powers that be have kept them walking all the night long, and that in the day they have no where else to sleep.* ♣

Jack London’s *People of the Abyss* is currently available in paperback in a Centenary Edition published by Pluto Press (2002) as a tribute to the 100th anniversary of London’s experiment in misery.



# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Heather,

I just read your sermon in *Hospitality* and wanted to write to you to compliment you on it. It is a moving and thoughtful sermon, and helps to remind us all of our needs and our obligations to each other. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Felton Jenkins  
Madison, GA

Dear Murphy,

Hi, my friend. This is an open letter to you and the readers of *Hospitality*. I would like to thank you, Murphy, for the support you have shown me for the past 24 years of the 27 years I have now served. You have really been a great influence in my life. You were there for me during my years on death row and by the grace of God I am now a former death row inmate. And Murphy, you are still with me throughout this incarceration.

If it was not for you all sending me the *Hospitality* newspaper once a month, my name would never be called for mail. What really makes you so very special is that you continue to be a voice for the voiceless in society, for our homeless, our poor, our women and men in prisons, and for those still on death row. My thanks to you.

Peace,  
A friend in prison

Murphy, Ed, and other Ministers of the Open Door Community,

Your *Hospitality* newsletter keeps me connected to your work across the miles, and it continually reminds me of Christ's radical call, even as I try to minister to a church in the Maryland suburbs.

In the Spirit,  
Lance Mullins  
Columbia, MD

Dear Friends,

I am ever grateful for your publication and presence and ever more grateful when I find peaceful moments and discipline to sit and read *Hospitality*. I always learn and am never disappointed.

My knowledge of and respect for you all is now going on 15 years—since high school when I first came with Roswell Presbyterian Church under Jill Cohn's goading.

I will graduate from medical school this coming May and have chosen to become a pediatrician. Many others in the field say they chose it because of a preferential affinity for working with children. I don't feel such a preference, as I've loved the chance to work with adults as well. I envision serving many populations in my career but see these coming three years of pediatric training as a time for some focus.

I'm writing mostly to say thank you for continuing to represent a different paradigm, defining "sufficient" and "enough" in a refreshing way. I'm writing too to remind myself as I embark on a career wrought with power and financial gain.

Love,  
Perry Sheffield  
Augusta, GA

Dear Rev. Loring:

Apparently, the city's leadership, mayors, and councils either do not read/see what other communities do regarding the homeless problems, or lack the imagination and/or will to follow.

Several years ago, the city of San Diego literally lifted their building codes to allow developers to create really low-cost housing. They permitted the construction of apartments of smaller size, comparable to a motel or hotel, but including refrigerators, stoves, and sinks. They also eliminated the usual required parking areas.

Such really low-cost housing enabled many homeless to leave the streets. Are there not many now-derelect areas that could be cleared for such developments? I believe it is a matter of the city fathers/mothers to get off their duffs and do it.

Sincerely,  
Chester T. Cohen  
Alpharetta, GA

Dear Ed,

I just got finished reading a borrowed copy of *I Hear Hope Banging at my Back Door*. What an awesome book. I myself have been homeless when not in prison the 25 years plus I've spent there, in and out on the hard drugs for some 35 years. I of course could go on and on about the pain and misery I've endured but that's not what I want to share with you.

I wanted to just give up. Someone handed me a tattered copy of your book and I couldn't put it down. You and your brothers' and sisters' powerful words gave me strength and a feeling of joy to know that I and others out there and that God saw to it that I got just the right and perfect help I needed it right on time.

Anyway, thanks Ed. Bless you. I hope you can manage to send me copies of the other two books you offer. Sorry I can't pay but I will one day if not in the way of a donation then maybe I can pass them on to another of our brothers in need. Please keep up the struggle with helping us. And know that had it not been for reading your powerful stuff today I ain't sure I wouldn't have given up. I thank you from my heart.

Today my pride is on my Walk with God and am trying to learn to live a new way. Thanks for the part you played. It would not have been a happy ending, this day, with any less of a message. Keep up the good you are doing and I'll promise to continue to grow in the God THING.

Peace and Love,  
A friend

Dear Friends,

Use the enclosed for food during the season of renewal. May God continue to bless others through your faithful interpretation of God's Word in ministry to the homeless in Atlanta.

Jennie & Jay Sambamurthi  
Huntsville, AL

To the editor,

In a world where the gap between the very rich and poor continues to widen, is there any wonder why there is a growing unrest among those at the bottom and hatred and violence again the US, where land is occupied and resources and labor exploited without the consent of the governed? It is astounding that the top 500 richest people have more wealth than the poorest half of the world's population.

People who are secure and free from want are more likely to be peaceful, yet why is the U.S. and particularly this government seen as war-mongering? It seems many are turning from the values that our mountain forebears practiced: those of integrity, meaningful work, community self-reliance, trust, and cooperation that characterized a sustainable local economy. Rather, now there seems to be a soul-less ethic that presides, which translates into "everyone for him or herself, take all you can and when you have it all, believe that you are secure behind your gated community, another name for prison. The guiding principles in this ethic are corruption, profiteering on the backs of others, narrow self-interest, cutthroat competition, fear and exploitation of global labor and markets.

A recent example of this is the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas talks in Miami, November 19-20. The FTAA has been called "NAFTA on steroids" with far reaching detrimental effects on all of us if it is voted into law early next year. Basically, it privatizes the benefits for large corporations while socializing the costs to the public without accountability for public services, the environment, and labor conditions. Due to unfair competition, it especially hurts small farmers and merchants, forcing them off their land and out of business and increases competition for low-paying jobs as more and more companies move south of the border. Free trade is not sustainable unless it is fair.

But there is a growing coalition of people from all walks of life who are saying we will only vote for trade policies that reduce poverty, creative living wage jobs, and protect the environment and public interest, support family farmers and food security and enable countries to invest in sustainable development policies.

Thus we see that what is good for our neighbors around the world is good for us, strengthening local economies by using the valuable wisdom of the people's resourcefulness and renewable resources in our communities to create just and sustainable development. Whether we are talking about health care, energy, downtown merchants, or farming, local decentralized community self-reliance is more sustainable and less vulnerable to the fickle whims of politics. Everything we care about is finally up to all of us.

Sincerely,  
Pat Tompkins  
Bakersville, NC

Dear Open Door Community,

My husband Aaron and I spent some time at your community in the winter of 1998 as part of a service learning trip. We learned a lot about ourselves and others while we were there. In lieu of traditional wedding favors, we are donating the money to you. All of our guests were notified of this at the reception. Thank you for all that you did for us.

Sincerely,  
Mauri (Maureen) and Aaron Ford  
Howell, MI



RITA CORBIN



# Open Door Community Ministries

**Soup Kitchen:** Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. – noon.

**Weekday Breakfast:** Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m.

**Showers:** Thursday, 8 a.m.

**Use of Phone:** Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,  
Wednesday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon.

**Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and**

**Soul Foot Care Clinic:** Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

**Clarification Meetings:** Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

**Weekend Retreats:** Four times each year (for our household, volunteers and supporters).

**Prison Ministry:** Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, GA, in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville; The Jackson (Death Row) Trip; Pastoral visits in various jails and prisons

**We are open...**

**Monday through Saturday:** We answer telephones from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. The building is open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday for donations. (We do not answer phone and door during our noon prayers and lunch break from 12:30 until 2:00.) Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times.

**On Sunday we invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m. and join us, following worship, for a delicious supper.**

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

## Join Us in Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together. Our worship space is limited, so if you are considering bringing a group to worship, please contact Phil Leonard at [pleon2000@mindspring.com](mailto:pleon2000@mindspring.com) or 404-874-4906.

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| February 1  | Worship at Dayspring Farm<br>(No worship at 910)                           |
| February 8  | Worship at 910<br>5:00 pm Short Eucharist<br>Music Night                   |
| February 15 | Worship at 910<br>Bill Mallard preaching                                   |
| February 22 | Worship at 910<br>Anthony Granberry preaching                              |
| February 25 | 6:00 a.m. Ash Wednesday Service<br>The back yard of 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. |
| February 29 | Worship at 910<br>Billy Moore preaching                                    |



JULIE LÖNNEMAN

Please check  
[www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)  
or call us for the most up-to-date worship schedule.

## Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We will meet for clarification on selected Tuesday evenings in February, from 7:30-9 pm.



*Plan to join us for discussion and reflection!*

For the latest information and scheduled topics, please call 404-874-9652 or see [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org).

## Needs of the Community

- |                         |                                       |                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| JEANS                   | hams and turkeys for our Soup Kitchen | disposable razors     |
| men's work shirts       | sandwiches                            | deodorant             |
| underwear for men       | quick grits                           | vaseline              |
| women's underwear       | cheese                                | combs                 |
| men's belts             | coffee                                | toothbrushes          |
| socks                   | multi-vitamins                        | lip balm              |
| men's shoes (all sizes) | MARTA tokens                          | SOAP (any size)       |
| EYEGLASSES              | postage stamps                        | SHAMPOO (travel size) |
| BLANKETS                | HEAVY DUTY GAS LAWN MOWER             | alarm clocks          |
|                         | MINIVAN IN GOOD RUNNING CONDITION     |                       |
|                         | two mountain bikes for Dayspring Farm |                       |
|                         | WASHING MACHINE FOR DAYSPRING FARM    |                       |

## Medicine Needs List

(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care Clinic)

**We are also looking for volunteers to help staff our Soul Foot Care Clinic!**

- |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| nail files                           |
| Ibuprofen                            |
| lubriderm lotion                     |
| <b>COUGH DROPS</b>                   |
| toenail clippers (large)             |
| medicated foot powder                |
| antifungal cream (Tolfanate)         |
| non-drowsy allergy tablets           |
| <b>COUGH MEDICINE (alcohol free)</b> |