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# HOSPITALITY

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

vol. 22, no. 7

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

July 2003

# Lift Every Voice

**By Nibs Stroupe**

(Editor's note: This sermon was preached by Nibs Stroupe, pastor of Oakhurst Presbyterian Church in Decatur, GA, and a regular contributor to Hospitality. Nibs and Caroline Leach co-authored O Lord, Hold Our Hands, which tells the story of their multicultural church. The book, which was reviewed in the May 2003 Hospitality, is available from Westminster John Knox Press.)

And you shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years. Then you shall send abroad the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall send abroad the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to her property and each of you shall return to her family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be to you; in it you shall neither sow, nor reap what grows of itself, nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you; you shall eat what it yields out of the field. (Leviticus 25:8-12, RSV)

By the waters of Babylon,  
there we sat down and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.

On the willows there  
we hung up our lyres.  
For there our captors  
required of us songs,  
and our tormentors, mirth, saying,  
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"

How shall we sing the Lord's song  
in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand wither!  
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not set Jerusalem

above my highest joy!

Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites,  
the day of Jerusalem,  
how they said, "Rase it, rase it!  
Down to its foundations!"  
O daughter of Babylon, you devastator!



Happy shall she be who requites you  
with what you have done to us!

Happy shall she be who takes your little ones  
And dashes them against the rock! (Psalm 137, RSV)

On a summer day in 1855, a young black slave woman went down to the Cumberland River near Nashville. She cradled her three-year-old daughter in her arms. She had run through the woods – she was seeking to escape from slavery. She had just learned that the little girl that she carried in her arms had been taught by her white mistress to spy on her and on other slaves. She could not stand this wrenching apart

of mother and daughter by slavery. So she was seeking to escape from slavery. She was not seeking her freedom on the Underground Railroad, though. Rather, she would seek it in the waters of the Cumberland River.

Like the mother of Moses, she, too, would put her baby down into the waters of the river in order to escape the horrors of slavery. Unlike the mother of Moses, the basket carrying this baby would be her mother's arms, sending both mother and daughter to death in the Cumberland. It seemed to this young mother the only way to escape slavery and its treacheries. She would drown herself and her daughter in the river. Right before she jumped in the river, an old black woman called out to her: "Child, don't do it! Don't you see those clouds overhead? They're the thrones of the Lord, and they're a sign that the Lord has need of this child."

Then came one of the most important decisions in American history. The young black woman, Sarah Sheppard, decided not to commit suicide. She decided that she and her daughter Samuella Sheppard would live.

Samuella, who came to be called Ella, was taken to freedom on the Underground Railroad to Ohio by her daddy. Before he could return to get Sarah, his wife and Ella's mother, she was sold deeper into the South. Ella did not see her mother again until after the Civil War. At age fourteen, she came back to Nashville from Ohio and found her mother. It was then that she learned of the prophecy of Aunt Viney, the old black woman on the banks of the Cumberland River on that terrible but momentous day in 1855.

Ella Sheppard longed to fulfill that prophecy, so she went back to Ohio to finish learning to read and write. She would then come back South so that she could teach other black folk who needed to learn to read and write. She also continued her musical training in Ohio. A year later, she returned to Tennessee to teach in a black school in Gallatin near Nashville – she was 15 years old.

It was a dangerous time. Though defeated in the Civil War, white southerners did not intend to share power with black people. The Black Codes were passed all over the South in 1866 to re-institute slavery, and schools that taught people who used to be slaves were often burned down and their teachers

**Voice, continued on page 8**

# Five Reasons To Oppose The Death Penalty

## Reason #1: The Death Penalty Is Racist.

The 1972 *Furman v. Georgia* case abolished the death penalty for four years on the grounds that capital punishment was rife with racial disparities. Over twenty-five years later, those disparities are as glaring as ever:

- African Americans are 12% of the U.S. population, but are 43% of prisoners on death row. Although Blacks constitute 50% of all murder victims, 83% of the victims in death penalty cases are white.

- Since 1976, only ten executions involved a white defendant who had killed a Black victim [out of a total of 858 executions nationwide].

- In all, only 37 of the over 18,000 executions in this country's history involved a white person being punished for killing a Black person.

- A comprehensive Georgia study found that killers of whites are 4.3 times more likely to receive a death sentence than killers of Blacks.

- More than 75% of those on federal death row are non-white. Of the 156 federal death penalty prosecutions approved by the Attorney General since 1988, 74% of the defendants were non-white.

### *The crime of being poor and Black*

Girvies Davis spent 16 years on death row. He was sentenced to death in 1978, accused of being an accomplice in a robbery in which someone else shot and killed the victim. There was no physical evidence linking him to the crime. He was convicted purely on the basis

of a signed "confession" — a confession in which he also confessed to nine other murders known to have been committed by others.

He was illiterate at the time he supposedly penned the confession. Girvies said that police took him out for a ride and threatened to shoot him "while trying to escape" if he didn't sign the confession. The police admitted that they took him for a drive, claiming it was to

search for evidence! Despite this information, Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar refused to commute Girvies Davis' sentence or allow a retrial, and he was executed on May 17, 1995. He died because he was poor and Black. ♦

*Need more reasons? Look for four more in the coming months. Reprinted from Campaign To End The Death Penalty, [www.nodethpenalty.org](http://www.nodethpenalty.org).*

## James Fain Memorial at Jubilee Partners



JON VAN DUINEN



JON VAN DUINEN

*Aaron King carried James' cross on the wooded road to the cemetery.*

*Ira Terrell and Wil Winterfeld place the cross at James Fain's grave.*



JON VAN DUINEN

*On May 18, the Open Door Community joined our friends at Jubilee Partners for a worship service and celebration meal to remember our friends buried in the Jubilee cemetery who were refugees, homeless persons, and folks from death row. We placed a beautiful cross (handcrafted by Chuck Harris) on the grave of James Fain, a member of the Open Door who died of AIDS in 1995. We are so grateful to our sisters and brothers at Jubilee who offer this beautiful and holy place for those who are "free at last."*

# 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

**Tonnie King:** Guest Ministry, Food Coordinator, and Hardwick Prison Trip

**Gladys Rustay:** Treasurer, 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

**Chuck Harris:** Dayspring Farm Coordinator



DAYSPRING FARM BY JON VAN DUINEN

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**Circulation:** Tonnie King and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests

**Subscriptions or change of address:** Charlotta Norby and Julie Martin

*(A \$7 donation to the Open Door would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing Hospitality for one year. A \$30 donation covers overseas delivery for one year. )*

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# Learning in Different Ways at the Open Door

By Deb Van Duinen

That all of life is learning seems an obvious enough statement. In fact, it's often something that I preach to my high school students when they tell me they can hardly wait for summer vacation to come, so that they "don't have to think."

In some ways, I can't blame them. The hidden curriculum in our schools in the U.S. teaches them to believe this. Course material, for example, is divided into separate, isolated subject areas; what students learn in English often doesn't connect to what they learn in History or Art class. In fact, a lot of the time, it doesn't even apply!

The traditional role that the teacher plays, as the authoritarian knowledge bank, also contributes. Students soon learn that in order to get good grades, they need to agree with a teacher's perspective. Why bother caring about what fellow classmates think? What matters is what the teacher says. Furthermore, our current fixation with standardized tests and other such "objective" assessments send students the message that the "important" things to learn are those that can be simplified to true or false, fill-in-the-blanks, or multiple choice questions. All students have to do is to read the textbook (created by "experts") and memorize the answers. Cramming before an exam or test is a common experience for students – proof enough that we've taught them that learning is all about getting the right answer, an answer that most often has no context.

And so, while I've tried to counteract this in my own high school teaching, I never realized until recently how much of my own learning and teaching is still influenced by the academic world, a world in which I've spent 21 of the 28 years of my life as a student and four years as a teacher.

When my students do research papers, for example, I always stress to them the importance of finding credible sources, and to some degree this is necessary. However, by narrowly defining "credible" by the degrees and qualifications people have behind their names, I communicate to my students that people without such formal learning and experience aren't worthy to be listened to. If my students were to study homelessness, for example, I'm sure I would have encouraged them to go to the library and read through books, magazines, and newspapers in order to get their research. It never would have occurred to me to have them talk to people who could speak about homelessness from their own experiences rather than from an academic viewpoint. In fact, I probably would have discounted those experiences because they were too "personal" and not analytic enough.

My experiences here at the Open Door have changed this for me. First of all, just realizing how much I have been learning about homelessness, the prison and justice systems, and radical discipleship without having a formal curriculum, lectures, and a notebook in hand is proof that true and life-changing learning can and does occur outside of classroom walls. Second, when I consider from whom I have learned most of these things, I'm forced to admit that my "teachers" have been people without formal degrees or sometimes even a high school education. They've taught me from their experiences, a vantage point much more "truthful" than a sterilized and distant academic one.

Furthermore, I've concluded that in order for God's truth to be heard and actualized, everyone, whether formally educated or not, needs to have the space and encouragement for his or her voice to be heard. The Open Door does an amazing job of this. When we're in Sunday School class, for example, we don't just hear from Ed, who has a PhD in church history and a seminary degree. It's also Bear and Russ and Roger and Aaron and Sye and Anthony, who received their "degrees" from the streets, who majored in homelessness and prison experiences, and who are equipped to teach me something just as important.

In one of our Weekly Ministries meeting, Ralph Dukes shared with us that if he weren't at Open Door, he'd be a dead man. He didn't quote any scholars or use fancy language; he spoke a heartfelt response from his experience on the streets as an alcoholic. And instead of entering into an analysis of our socio-political system, he just spoke from his heart, making me wonder where we all would be if we didn't have community around us.

Another time, while I was struggling with my intellectual response to the question, *What has Martin Luther King Junior's life meant to you?*, Ronald spoke truth when he answered that part of how King affected him was his decision to live at the Open Door. Describing the Open Door Community as "a miracle" from his experience as a black man who never thought he could live with white people, he summed up what happens here far better than any three-point sermon or well-written *Hospitality* article.

During breakfast reflections, when Aaron shared his experience with police officers as a black man on the streets, I gained insights into our "justice" system that I would never be able to find in books. My schooling taught me that police officers are my friends and are there to serve and protect citizens. While this may apply to white people like me, Aaron helped me see that African Americans, particularly those who are poor, learn something very different. I needed to hear this.

I must admit that these new ideas about learning didn't come easily to me. After so many years of being trained to respect and value a "professional" opinion, I found myself not knowing how to listen to my new friends. Their experiences just seemed so different than my own, and my own experiences left me with little or no knowledge about the issues with which they were dealing. Through the examples set by other community members who celebrated when truth was proclaimed, however, I slowly began to listen to my friends in a different way. I began to see how valuable their perspectives were, and how much they knew that I didn't. I began to see how similar my journey was to theirs, and my struggles, though often disguised by my



JON VAN DUINEN  
Breakfast at dawn, Easter Morning, The Open Door Community.

privilege as a white, middle-class person, were like theirs. I began to see that formal degrees often keep us from being real with each other, and that formal education can be harmful to my growth and development.

The first time I heard Bear angrily admit that his "disease was messing" with him, I remember thinking about how I was so thankful that I didn't have alcohol or drug addictions to worry about. What I didn't realize was that all of us struggle with addictions, addictions with different faces. For so many of us, who have addictions that are less noticeable than alcohol or drug, openly admitting to our addictions is something we don't have to do. In fact, I wasn't even aware of some of the addictions in my own life. Bear has helped me slowly overcome some of these addictions. When he says that for today, just today, he's clean and sober, he helps me in my journey.

In August, I'll go back to teaching high school students. I'm not sure how I'll incorporate what I've learned here into my formal and informal curriculum, but I'm eager to relearn the things I teach from different sources and people. And what a better place to start than with my students? ♦

Deb Vriend Van Duinen, along with her husband Jon, has just completed a term at the Open Door as a Resident Volunteer. She will return this fall to teaching high school English in Holland, Michigan.

## Join us as a Resident Volunteer



TONNIE KING

Meridith Owensby has been a breakfast volunteer at the Open Door for 4 years. After she graduated from Georgia Tech this spring, she joined us as a Resident Volunteer until August. Thank you Meridith!

Live in a residential Christian community.

Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, homeless, and imprisoned.

Join street actions and peaceful demonstrations.

Enjoy regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Join Bible study and theological reflections from the Base. You might come to the margins and find your center.

Contact: Phil Leonard  
For information and application forms, visit [www.opendoorcommunity.org](http://www.opendoorcommunity.org)



# Connections

*Dietrich Gerstner, Brot & Rosen Community  
Hamburg, Germany*

## Bread & Roses

In February of 1986, I arrived at the Greyhound Station in downtown Atlanta after a long ride from Washington, D.C. Not yet 21 years of age, I was travelling around the States visiting different communities and peace and justice groups. I had called in advance, asking whether I could stay for a few days.

Well, those few days turned out to be two years: the two most formative and inspiring years of my life so far! Life and work at the Open Door truly turned me around – it was a conversion experience. When I returned to Germany in early 1988, I knew this was more than just some kind of interesting, exotic adventure in a faraway country. This experience had to do with the way I should live my life here in Germany.

A few years later, I got connected to a group called The Friends of the Catholic Worker. All of us were folks who had had some life-changing experiences at Catholic Worker communities or similar places like Koinonia Partners, Jubilee Partners or The Open Door Community. Most of us were trained either as theologians or as social workers.

Ten years ago, twelve of us knew we had to get more serious about starting an intentional Christian, Catholic Worker community. In 1996, we finally managed to find a place big enough for our community and a life of hospitality in Hamburg, Germany – and the Bread & Roses Catholic Worker was born.

This year, after many years, it was wonderful to return to the Open Door for a visit with my wife Uta and our three little boys: Joel, Daniel and Elias. For me, this was a trip back to my (communal) roots. And as a family living in a community of service and resistance in “old Europe,” it was so important to feel the connection to like-minded and –spirited sisters and brothers in the U.S. We so deeply need to connect on the level of grassroots resistance to the domination system of this Empire we are witnessing.

## Bread & Roses in Hamburg

In our house of hospitality in Hamburg, we as a community live together under one roof with refugees from many different countries. Without bureaucratic obstacles and regardless of legal status, refugees are welcomed into our house and find a home here for some time.

As a community we have a vision of another lifestyle: serving the poor and marginalized; working towards justice, peace and the integrity of creation; and living in intentional community. These are the three main “pillars” of our life and work.

## The Community

At the moment, our community consists of only three core members and two volunteers from Germany and the United States. In addition, we have four children, aged one to seven. We rent a former parish center and two adjoining apartments from the Protestant Church, and it is in this 26-room home that we live together as a community and give hospitality to homeless refugees.

As a community, we share time, money and

work duties. Our Christian faith is our basis, and once a year we renew our commitment to common life, work, and prayer. Each day is started with a short prayer in our small chapel in the basement of our house. Our household is complemented by volunteers who live with us for a year or two, as well as by people who visit for several days or weeks.

We share income and try to live a simple life. Much of our common household as a community of hospitality depends on donations, such as food, furniture, clothing and money. Over the years, some community members always had income-producing jobs “outside,” but only as part-time work. Dietrich, for example, works as a trainer for conflict resolution and mediator, and Ute (Ute Andresen was a volunteer at the Open Door in 1993, too!) is a part-time minister at our local church. Uta (Gerstner), who is also a pastor, is taking a break from outside work primarily to take care of our three little boys (we had twins in 2002!). From our common income, we pay for things such as our share of rent, health insurance, public transportation, and pocket money.

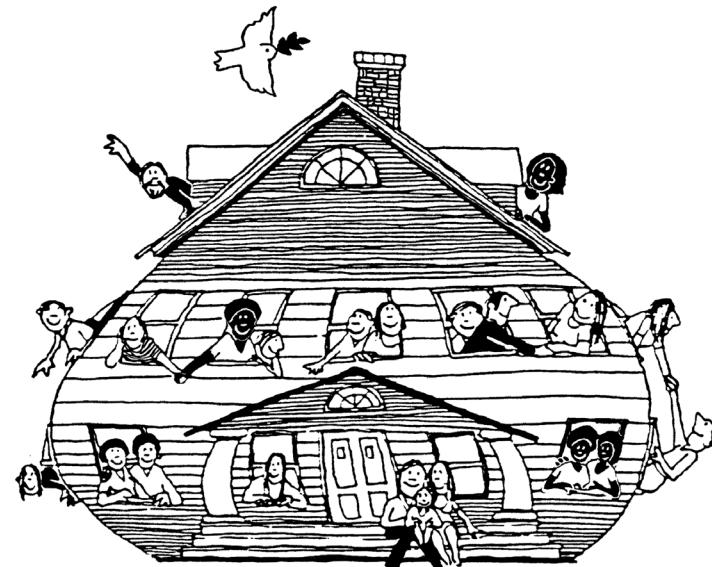
Decision making is done through consensus, with regular decisions being discussed at our weekly ministries meetings. We talk about projects and work around the house, give a structure to the upcoming week, answer letters and e-mails, etc. In addition, we meet for a whole day about once a month to discuss bigger issues like: How do we organize vigils? How can we talk about our guests in public for fundraising reasons? Do we want to invite new members into the community, and how in the world will we get any? Are we happy?! Even bigger issues are tackled twice a year during our community weekends.

## Hospitality

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware. (Hebrews 13:2)*

We share our house with refugees who have lost their place to stay, regardless of the reason. We started out inviting any homeless person, but are now limiting our space to refugees. There are usually up to eight people living with us. Over the years, we have had women and men, boys and girls, from all over the world staying at our home, though mainly from countries in Africa and the Near East Region. Some have stayed for just one night; others have stayed with us for years.

One example is Muhamad from Rwanda, who came to Hamburg as a stowaway on a ship. When he went to the immigration office and said he was seeking asylum, he was sent to Mecklenburg in eastern Germany, the region of the former GDR. There, he had to stay in a former Soviet military camp on the outskirts of a small village where the German inhabitants didn't like having foreigners (especially with dark skin) around. He was told by another refugee that it was very dangerous to leave the building and that he may not go outside on his own, not even to make a phone call from the only public telephone in the middle of the village. He could not learn German because there were no classes offered,



and the people of the village were openly racist. Muhamad got scared and decided to return to Hamburg, where he hoped to find other people from his country. This was a great risk, as he was technically not allowed to leave the county he was assigned to. When he decided to do so, he did this with the risk of having no food or shelter, as well as the daily risk of being caught by the police and be sent back to Mecklenburg.

Another example is Meral from Iran. She is in her late twenties and has a wealthy family background. A few years ago she applied for political asylum in Germany. In Iran, the property of her family had been taken away by the state; her father had been sentenced to death for being part of the democratic opposition. Obviously, a return to Iran could have been lethal for Meral. Despite that, her plea for asylum was turned down and she was threatened with deportation. She went underground and came to us as an “illegalized” alien. But nobody is illegal (says Elie Wiesel)! Thus, we took Meral in as a new member of our household; a great addition, as she could cook so well and was interested in basically everything. In the course of the following months, she managed to apply for asylum a second time and finally could move out – with the grant of full asylum by the foreign office.

Hospitality to us means offering room and food, a shelter, a family. Certainly, our children add to the sense of home at our House of Hospitality. We are not lawyers and don't either try to be social workers for our guests. Rather, we just live together as companions. Everybody shares household duties and takes turns doing the cooking.

## Political work, clarification of thought and resistance

*Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system. (Dorothy Day)*

In the tradition of the Catholic Worker movement, our life and work of hospitality cannot be separated from our vision of creating a “new society in the shell of the old” (Peter Maurin). In our free quarterly newsletter, we write about our life in the house of hospitality and publish ideas about an alternative lifestyle. We are part of different local networks in support of refugees and take part in (as well as organize) campaigns, vigils and demonstrations for basic human rights and a better life of refugees in our country.

On Good Friday, we regularly organize a political “Stations of the Cross” demonstration through the inner city. Meanwhile, over one hundred people join us in this march against injustice and exclusion of refugees and foreigners in our society.

We are part of a nationwide campaign against atomic energy. At the same time, we started *continued on page 5*

receiving mainly alternative energy (sun, wind, gas), something made possible for the first time ever by a new German law.

And we still have our regular round table discussions on issues, like: "How do we live a life of resistance to the powers?" "The situation of refugees in Hamburg," "The No Person Is Illegal Campaign," or "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his bride Maria von Wedemeyer."

#### Seven Years

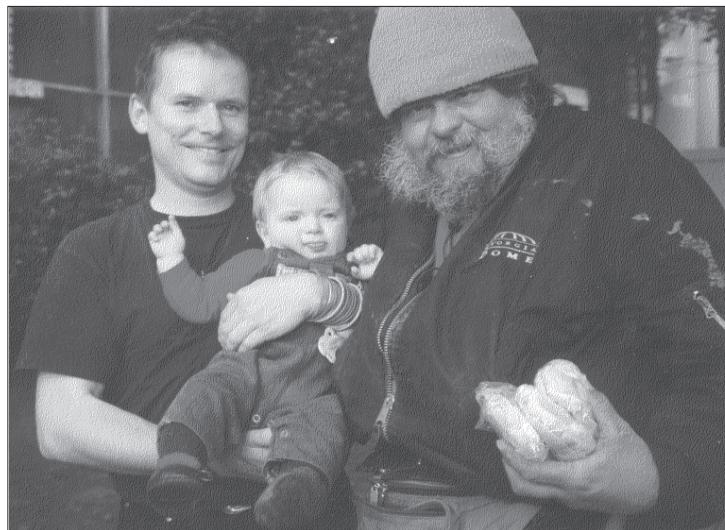
This is our seventh year of the Brot & Rosen house of hospitality in Hamburg!

Over the years, our house and community has changed quite a bit. First of all, there are the children – in

the beginning, we didn't have any children in the house, neither the

refugees nor we as a community. But then we took in Lilya and her little baby boy, André. Actually, he was born while his mother was with us. André was like a messenger, an angel foretelling the future of our house. Soon thereafter we, that is Uta and Dietrich, had Joel, and in 2002 our twins Daniel and Elias followed. Ever since then the liveliness, the laughter and the cry of children, black and white, has filled our house – among them Jonas, Pamela, and Katy.

Another noticeable development over the past years has been the declining fluctuation of refugees living with us. Other than voluntarily returning to their countries, the alternatives to living in our house are decreasing. Almost all the doors to a legal stay in Germany and Europe have been closed (except for valued information technology specialists who get green cards easily). Fortress Europe is filling the holes in its walls against the needy neighbors! As a result, some people stay with us for years. At this point, we don't really know what to do and what to think about this – except that we are all able to enjoy the growing feeling of closeness and friendship with our household members.



CLIVE BONNER

*Dietrich Gerstner with Daniel, one of his three sons, and George Britt, our longtime friend, in the front yard of the Open Door.*

Since Chris and Johannes left the community in March, we are down to an all-time low number of three community members, but luckily Birke has become a novice and another woman is looking into the option of joining the community. And maybe Brethren Volunteer Service will send another great volunteer this fall. Ever thought of joining us as a volunteer for some time? Hamburg is a wonderful city, if you don't mind rain. And we don't expect much of you: just an openness to intercultural and interreligious living, some basic knowledge of German, and interest in living in community. See you! ♦

#### Brot & Rosen

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[www.brot-und-rosen.de](http://www.brot-und-rosen.de)

## Freedomwalk 2003: September 7-13, 2003

*A week-long "Journey for Justice" across five southwest Georgia counties*



Please plan to join the Prison & Jail Project this coming September as we embark upon our 8th annual Freedomwalk.

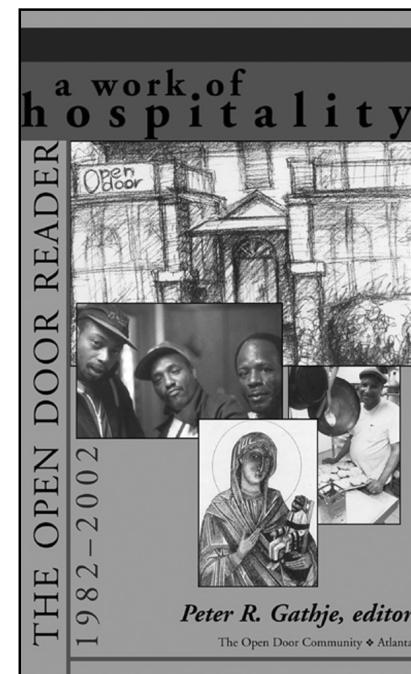
This year we will walk nearly 90 miles across southwest Georgia.

Along the way we will call attention to jailhouse conditions, courthouse oppression and other injustices we witness in this part of southeast Georgia.

Mark your calendars and look for more details in *Hospitality's* August issue!

**Prison & Jail Project**  
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(229) 928-2080

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### *A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader, 1982-2002*

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The following amounts are suggested as donations: \$15.00 per single copy, up to 10; \$12.00/copy for 10-29; \$7.50/copy for 30+. Make donations payable to "The Open Door Community," 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., N.E., Atlanta GA 30306-4212. If funds are not available, copies will be sent at no expense. Shipping & handling included.

*A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader is one of the most helpful books around for people who care about community, justice, radical Christian discipleship, and the plight of prisoners and the homeless in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. Articles from Hospitality, the Open Door Community's monthly newspaper, by Murphy Davis, Ed Loring, and other members and friends, shed light on the 21-year history of the Community's journey with Jesus and the poor. I gave copies of A Work of Hospitality to the members of the board of St. Francis House, so they could see what we were trying (in our own, quite different way) to do. This book is essential for anyone who wants to share the struggle – and the joy – of living in community and fellowship with Jesus.*

Fr. Emmett Jarrett, TSSF  
St. Francis House  
New London, CT

# The Wednesday Report

By Ed Loring

## Vignettes

### One

Ignatius Wallace is a friend of mine. We've been members of Concerned Black Clergy for more than the past decade. Last week, this Black man leaned against the wall at our MARTA Five Points train station. The Police were quickly at his side, telling him to move on or he would be arrested for loitering. (MARTA recently plastered "no loitering" signs all over the station. To those who can read between the lines, the signs read: "Welcome to the well healed; keep moving poor people, Black men."). Ignatius, bent a bit, but with head erect, explained in the midst of one thousand interruptions by the gun toting no-nonsense Police that his back pain was too severe to move. He was making a pain stop until the spasm in his back subsided; then he would get on the train.

The unfaithful Police did not believe him at first (it is their job not to believe; you are guilty till proven innocent, and Ignatius will always be a Black man and he is proud of it). Ignatius kept on talking and finally truth grasped the Police and the system decided to let him go. Turning, humanly and with gentler words, the Police said, "We have been instructed to 'clear' the area of drug dealers; and...well...you never know."

Time ticked without a single tick. Ignatius, suspected drug dealer (euphemism for Black Men now called crackheads, Atlanta's new n-gg-r epithet), turned, entered the deep bowels of the station, got on his homebound train and shot off into the cavernous darkness that the MARTA tunnel is.

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because they do what is right; the Beloved Community belongs to them. (Mt 5: 10)*

### Two

The week before I won my trial, MARTA Police Officer J.C. Anderson arrested me for preaching the Word of God at the same station where Ignatius was fingered as a drug dealer. William Stringfellow tells us: "Know the Word, Teach the Word, Preach the Word, Defend the Word, Incarnate the Word, Do the Word, Live the Word." I was giving it a try.

After the trial and the establishment of my innocence of "disorderly conduct," the city prosecutor and the MARTA Officer put a "ban" on me like a mojo working. This means I cannot ride the bus or train; I cannot come onto MARTA property for any reason. I attempted to appeal and asked Judge Ms. Carlisle how I could be banned when I was just set free and the charges were dropped. She yelled at me to *be quiet!*

"Her Honor" continued, saying, "This is a MARTA action. This has nothing to do with City Court. Now you leave. Next case."

We were stunned. The city prosecutor was involved. I was told there is no appeal.

Outside the courthouse, we circled up for reflection and prayer. Officer J.C. Anderson joined our circle and said that if he had understood what I was proclaiming (I had given a synopsis of the synoptics in the courtroom), he never would have arrested me. He had thought I was just a raving lunatic! (Wild like John? Mad like Jesus?) We laughed. He turned and headed off toward the next arrest.

Presently we are working to find a means to rescind the ban. I cannot do as Jesus, The Human One, has told me to do, without MARTA. I must have public transportation to do my street ministry. Many Presbyterians have stepped forward to help. Concerned Black Clergy is fully with me and is offering to go to the streets if need be. I am communicating with MARTA officials. The importance of this case, beyond my personal needs, are these: How does one Police officer have such absolute authority? Is this ban used on the poor, homeless, and young Black men as a tool to "clear" the system of those the well healed call "undesirables"? Is it true that the MARTA system has no appeal system, one of the cardinal points of a democratic system?

Hope to see you on the bus soon!

*Foxes have holes, birds have nests, fish have \$200 million dollar fish bowls, but The Human One has no place to rest his head without a loitering charge.*

*[Editor's note: As we go to press, Ed has*

*received a call from a MARTA police lieutenant, saying that he is not banned and is free to ride MARTA at any time. We will continue to raise questions about arbitrary use of police power in the MARTA system.]*

### Three

We have a new way to say "n-gg-r" in Atlanta: Crackheads. Colin Campbell of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* has designated the poor and homeless "Crackheads" – in the areas of the city that the Mayor's Office, Police, the Business Community, the Churches, the new suburban intown dwellers, and our city's one newspaper want free for white middle class folk. He lumps all the poor and homeless together as Crackheads. (Not far from Cracker Head, if you know what I mean).

The war against the homeless poor is fierce in Atlanta. Many whites want to move intown, but they are afraid of any thing or anyone who looks different. Especially Black Men. They all resemble Willie Horton of George I presidency, a ploy that set Black/White relations back 73 years. The battle begins at the bottom. Attacking and wounding the most vulnerable and oppressed. These Powers that Be dehumanize our friends and push them into jails and prisons. What does it look like from King & Spalding's Law firms' new windows? How does it feel, Colin, to sleep in a bed all night and write articles

*continued on page 7*

**Want to kill for Christ?**

**Need help in the trenches walking over baby bodies?**

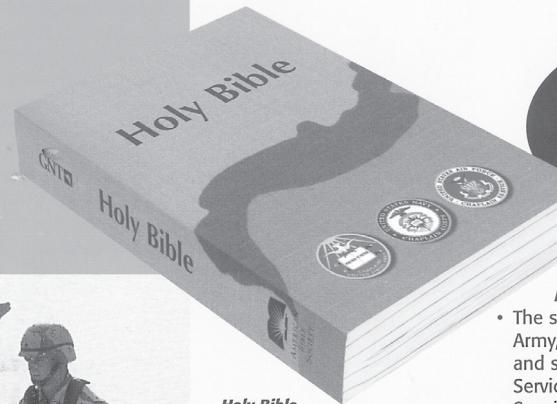
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*continued from page 6*  
about bedlessness all day?

We still plead: those who are addicted, homeless, poor and marginalized need love. They need respect, welcome, dignity, help, and housing. This downtown Olympian city has so many uncaring, rich, and mean folk who wound us all with their racism, covert violence, and creepy media and Police control.

#### Four

How fortunate are the fish!! Atlanta is building a \$200 million dollar fish bowl in the downtown area where the violent battle smolders against the homeless poor. The purpose is to save the city and strengthen Coke's domination of Atlanta. The plan is to net the tourists from outside the city to come in and throw their tax cut profits away. The giant fish bowl, like the Coke Museum, are not for the common good; rather their purpose is for the uncommon power and profit among mega-corporations who are trying to save the world by domination.

We live and die in a city with 15,000 homeless human beings, many of whom cannot swim. 25,000 boys, girls, women and men cannot acquire enough food for themselves each month in the city too busy to care. Grady Memorial Hospital, one of the holy spaces in downtown, has a \$20 million deficit that grows each time Congress meets, the governor yawns, the elite swing on the 8th hole. The co-pay for medications and clinic visits was raised 50% by the same government that gave us billions in tax cuts a few days earlier. **THE POOR PAY FOR THE WEALTH OF THE RICH.**

What, beloved disciples, would happen if Home Depot, whose overpricing and underpaying has produced such wealth they do not know what to do with it all, and Coca-Cola, whose brown sugar water fluids will rot your teeth – what if, I say, they built a \$100 million dollar fish bowl (they could still control downtown) and use \$100 million for housing the homeless and poor?

Well, too many middle class people would lose their jobs. Politicians would have less fear and hate to whip voters into outrageous votes against their self-interest and the common good. Advertisers would need to tell more truth without the homeless to scapegoat for product failures, and security sales would fall like a paratrooper over enemy (love your enemies) territory. Prison doors would open for 72% of our caged kin, and we would have a sense of what we are to do with our lives.

Be not afraid. Housing the children under our bridges, healing the wounds of our homeless, and policies of kindness and justice are not factors in the rough and tumble world of bottom-line profits and takeover tactics of Home Depot and Coke.

There is a built-in warning with the fish bowl. The bowl will look like Noah's ark. Noah's ark was built because God was so upset with the injustice and domination in the world that God became sorry she ever created creation. Yahweh-Elohim found one little family, just making ends meet, to keep dry during the flood. Then the waters

came and all the earth became still.

If the assessment is correct, that the fish bowl is not for the common good of all, and is being used as a tool and tactic to banish the "undesirable" from our shared space, then the use of the Ark is blasphemy. But it will be fire next time.

Jesus, the Jew and crucified leader, calls us to live in solidarity with the poor.

#### Five

Coming soon: The elite need a new symphony hall. They have told vast audiences that the old symphony hall is old and cannot contain the secret notes of virtuoso musicians who raise beauty to the glorious heavens. Cost: \$300 million. Where

does this money come from? Why does anyone not have a bed or bread in such a system of surplus?

*The Lord is our shepherd;  
we shall not want.*

Yeah, yeah, sure, but when? Where? Not in Atlanta. Who is God in Atlanta, anyway?

Oh well, poor folk, don't be bitter. Remember, just 183 shopping days left until Christmas. Hosea Williams' big bash and the Open Door Community's small gathering will, when the numbers are added, feed 29,200 folk on Christmas day.

Suggested Christmas gifts for this season:  
Fish food for hungry humans. ♦

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

## Online Resources for Peace, Action, and Resistance

### [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)

The Fellowship of Reconciliation is America's oldest interfaith peace organization.

### [www.MoveOn.org](http://www.MoveOn.org)

This online center for political action mobilizes people to action.

### [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

You can learn about upcoming peace demonstrations in your area.

### [www.nonviolence.org/vitw](http://www.nonviolence.org/vitw)

You've read the testimonies of Voices In The Wilderness delegates here on the pages of *Hospitality*. Learn more online.

### [www.sojonet/action](http://www.sojonet/action)

Sojourners community in Washington mobilizes Christians in the U.S. and Europe for peace.

## Welcome to the Spotlight *Matt Sherwood and S.J. Reedy*



RITA CORBIN

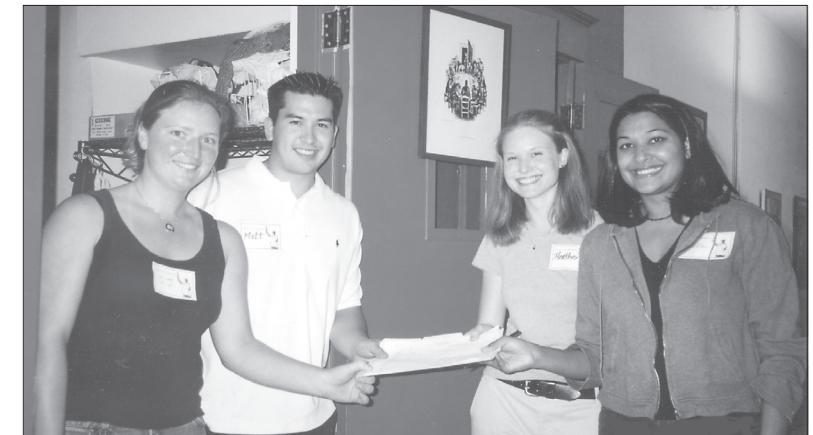
By Tonnie King

As the seasons continue to change, so does the guidance of the Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic. Heather Larson and Bijal Shaw, who have lovingly shepherded the clinic this year, are beginning their third year of medical training. Our new friends and new coordinators of the clinic are Matt Sherwood and S.J. Reedy.

We are very grateful to Matt and S.J. for sharing of themselves and caring for our many homeless friends – who continue to need the crucial care that is offered at the clinic. Sometimes it seems as though I cannot express enough how grateful the community is for the love our volunteers show for us and our friends on the streets!

Again, thank you, Heather and Bijal, for being who you are, and to Matt and S.J., for carrying the torch and continuing the race towards equality for all. ♦

*Tonnie King is a Partner at the Open Door Community.*



DEB VAN DUNEN

*S.J. Reedy, Matt Sherwood, Heather Larson, and Bijal Shaw.*

**Voice, continued from page 1**  
beaten and sometimes executed.

Freedom Schools sprang up around the South. When Reconstruction came in 1867, Tennessee had public schools for the first time in its history. In order to train black teachers, church societies had started schools in 1865 and 1866. One such school was Fisk Free Colored School, named after an official in the Freedman's Bureau. It was started by the American Missionary Association, whose roots were in New England. It was funded by the Tappan brothers, Lewis and Arthur. The Missionary Association had been on the leading edge of the abolitionist movement and had championed Cinque and his fellow Africans in the Amistad mutiny of 1839.

The president of Fisk was a New York abolitionist member named Erastus Milo Cravath. Many of the teachers at Fisk came from Cravath's alma mater, Oberlin College, in Ohio. Our own Marcia Peters is a graduate of Oberlin. Fisk opened its doors on January 9, 1866, and within a month it had enrolled 600 students, swelling to over 1000 by the end of the month. Enrolling there was Ella Sheppard and another 15-year-old teacher, Maggie Porter. Also joining them were Benjamin Holmes, Jennie Jackson, Eliza Walker, America Robinson, Thomas Ruttling, Isaac Dickeson, Greene Evans, and Minnie Tate. They would form the core of the students who would transform American history and American music.

Fisk ran into deep financial difficulty. Northern enthusiasm for black rights waned quickly, and white Southern resistance increased dramatically. The treasurer of Fisk was a white man named George White. He had been a Union soldier, and he had come back South to help the cause of freedom. His real vocation, however, was music, and he developed a choir of Fisk students. The most trained voice was that of 15-year-old Maggie Porter. They started singing together in black churches, trying to raise money for Fisk. They used European classical music, along with abolitionist and Civil War songs.

But George White had also heard them singing special songs to themselves and for themselves. He was impressed by the power of these songs and by how much the students put themselves into these songs. We just heard some of those songs a moment ago, sung by our Mass Choir. When George White asked about these songs, he was told that these were "cabin songs," songs sung by the slaves in their cabins away from the white folks, songs that helped them make it through slavery. And, indeed, in this group of nine students, seven had been slaves. Another student called these songs "spirituals" because she said that they helped the slaves retain their spirit and their identity in the midst of slavery,

which told them that they were nothing. They held on to their spirits by singing and by being lifted by these songs. The spirituals told them who they were.

George White tried to get the students to share these songs with him and to sing them in public, but they weren't interested, and they resisted doing it. They resisted for two reasons. For one reason, they were ashamed of their slave past – it was a difficult time to live through and to remember. And secondly, they didn't want to sing them in front of white people. They could have quoted Psalm 137: "How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" White persisted, though, and finally the students began to share their songs with him. Ella Sheppard led the way, bringing him "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Before I'd Be a Slave," songs that her mother had taught her.

Especially meaningful to her were lines from the second song:

*And before I'd be a slave,  
I'd be buried in my grave,  
and go home to my Lord and  
be free.*

George White could not get the notations right, so Ella Sheppard transcribed more than 100 songs for him.

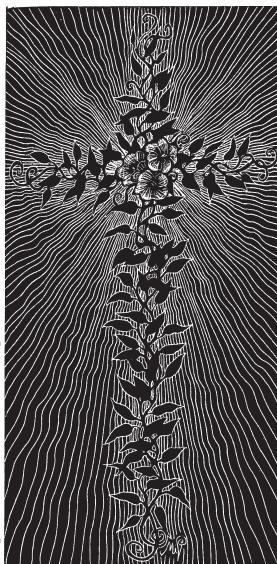
In the spring of 1871, it became clear that Fisk would soon have to close its doors. The money was drying up, and white Southerners continued to pound on them. George White decided that he would try a bold move. He would take his students on a concert tour to sing before white folk in the North, folk who had the money. They would follow the route of the Underground Railroad, first to Cincinnati, then to Oberlin College, and then if the money held out, on to

Pennsylvania and New Jersey and New York and New England. It was an ambitious dream that had little money behind it. On the evening of October 5, 1871, the students and their families gathered to pray together prior to departing on the tour. They had few clothes for a concert – the Fisk faculty had loaned them what they had. As Maggie Porter put it: "We were nothing but a bunch of kids – all we wanted was for Fisk to stand."<sup>1</sup> Their ages ranged from 14 to 20 – seven of them had been slaves.

They faced massive discrimination and segregation and racism in the North. In their first concerts, they were hooted, and they barely made expenses. The press noted, however, that there was something going on here, something that they had not heard before. The students were still singing European

**Voice, continued on page 9**

## poetry corner



**Send us your poetry!**

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

in prison for using and selling drugs      in prison for trying to sneak into this country  
in prison for stealing and scamming and fighting and killing  
but none were there for the massacres  
no generals, no politicians, no under-secretaries, no ambassadors

Yesterday my friend had on a brave face  
avoiding too much eye contact with the stares of hundreds of strangers  
convicts, prisoners, guards, snitches  
not yet knowing good from bad      staying out of people's business  
hoping to find a small pocket of safety and kindness and trust in the weeks ahead

Last night my friend climbed into bed in prison  
an arm's length away from the other prisoners  
laying awake on the thin mattress  
wondering who had slept there last      wondering how loved ones were sleeping  
awake through flashlight bed checks  
and never-ending noises echoing off the concrete floors and walls  
some you never ever want to hear

Yesterday my friend chose prison over silence  
chose to stand with the disappeared and those who never counted  
chose to spend months inside hoping to change us outside  
chose the chance to speak truth to power and power responded with prison  
Though my heart aches for my friend in prison  
no one on this planet is more free. ♦

*Bill Quigley teaches law at Loyola University in New Orleans, LA. He often represents peacemakers on trial for acts of war resistance, and he recently visited Iraq with a peace delegation.*

## Yesterday My Friend Chose Prison: 4-9-03 (dedicated to the School of the Americas prisoners of conscience)

By Bill Quigley

Yesterday my friend walked freely into prison  
Chose to violate a simple law to spotlight the evil  
of death squads and villages of massacred people that we cannot even name  
mothers and children and grandparents butchered buried  
and forgotten by most, but not by my friend.

Yesterday my friend stepped away from loves and family and friends  
was systematically stripped of everything, everything  
and systematically searched everywhere, everywhere  
was systematically numbered and uniformed and advised and warned  
clothes and underwear and shoes and everything put in a cardboard box,  
taped and mailed away

Yesterday my friend joined the people we put in the concrete and steel boxes  
mothers and children and fathers that we cannot even name

in prison for using and selling drugs      in prison for trying to sneak into this country  
in prison for stealing and scamming and fighting and killing  
but none were there for the massacres  
no generals, no politicians, no under-secretaries, no ambassadors

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no one on this planet is more free. ♦

**Voice, continued from page 8**  
 music and abolitionist songs. George White seemed to be everywhere, scrambling all over the place as manager, advance agent, ticket seller, public relations – trying to line up black churches, most of whom said yes. He left the direction of the choir largely to Ella Sheppard.

They made it to Oberlin College, which had such close ties to Fisk – they had sent many faculty to Fisk. They were scheduled to sing before a convention of five hundred ministers. The night before the concert, they made two important decisions. Using the chapter from Leviticus that Randy read this morning – the Jubilee verses – they changed their name to the Jubilee Singers. The Jubilee chapter that the biblical literalists never quote. Give the land back to the people – every fifty years, the land must be given back to the original owners. You never hear the Southern Baptists quoting these verses when they talk about following the Bible literally. The Fisk students became the Jubilee Singers. They also decided to include spirituals in their concert. After all, these were ministers who would be in the audience, and they might appreciate the songs.

## want to receive hospitality?

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

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910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE  
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Please accept my tax deductible donation to the Open Door Community.

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

For their concert, they did not start out on the stage. Rather, they stepped into the aisles of the church and started moving towards the stage. Maggie Porter began to sing:

*Steal away, steal away,  
steal to Jesus.  
Steal away, steal away home,  
I ain't got long to stay here.*

And there was an immediate hush among the ministers. They had been gossiping and talking about who was going to get what church, about what terrible things their church members were doing to them. We don't do that these days, of course, but back then they did. When Maggie Porter and the other Jubilee Singers stepped out to sing, the power of the voices, the depth of the passion, and the longing for jubilee said something new to these ministers. Something new and powerful and profound. The audience of hundreds of ministers was stunned and moved. They contributed money, and more importantly, they spread the word about the Jubilee Singers to their congregation and to other ministers.

One of those in the audience was the Reverend Thomas K. Beecher. He promised to seek an audience for them with his brother, the most famous preacher in America at that time, Henry Ward Beecher. He was pastor of Brooklyn's prosperous Plymouth Church. The Jubilee Singers did appear at Henry Beecher's church in December 1871, and he introduced them with these words:

*Hear the songs that have been sung by generations of be-nighted souls, on the plantation, by day and by night – songs that have enabled the captive to endure his chains, the mother to hope against hope and keep her soul up when all looked black and dark, when she had parted from all she loved, and the iron had entered into her soul...I hope you may be stimulated in your sympathies and gladly help them raise funds to prosecute their studies.<sup>2</sup>*

It was another turning point for the Jubilee Singers, and again Maggie Porter remem-

bered it this way:

*I often feel my heart quicken when I recall myself for the first time standing before the vast audience...and again hear my voice tremble as I attempted to lead, 'Steal Away to Jesus.'*

When the concert ended, Beecher jumped to his feet and pulled out a \$5 bill and urged all his parishioners to do the same and more. The Jubilee Singers took off from this point. In the next month they would earn \$5,000 for Fisk, and when their first tour ended in March, they had raised \$20,000 to pay off Fisk's debts and put Fisk back on solid financial footing. They would go on two more tours, and they always faced huge obstacles – racism growing, terrorism deepening. They were sick, and they were exhausted. They would sing for President Ulysses S. Grant, for Congress, for Mark Twain, for Queen Victoria, for Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and for thousands of others, almost all of whom were stunned in the same way as this critic who came to hear them with skeptical ears:

*The girls, dressed in water-proofs, and clothed about the neck with long woolen comforters to protect their throats, stood in a row in front. The young men occupied positions closely in the rear, the class standing solid, as they term it, in order to secure the most perfect harmony...I shall never forget the rich tones of the young men as they mingled their voices in a melody so beautiful and touching I scarcely knew whether I was 'in the body or out of the body.'<sup>3</sup>*

The Jubilee Singers raised over \$160,000 for Fisk, the equivalent of \$3,000,000 today and even more than that when you consider the costs of the buildings that they built for Fisk. Fisk was saved by the Jubilee Singers, and through its doors would pass many distinguished graduates, including W. E. B. Dubois, James Weldon Johnson, Roland Hayes, Margaret Murray Washington, John Hope Franklin, Nikki Giovanni, and John Lewis. More importantly, the Jubilee Singers introduced a whole new way of understanding the black experience and a whole new way of understanding music to the white, European and American world.

They sang the spirituals, reminding everybody of the cost and of the horror of slavery. But they also reminded everyone about the resiliency and the humanity of African people. They were in chains, and they were sold on the auction block. They were forbidden to read or write, forbidden even to worship by religious white folk. They were tortured and raped and executed, but still they survived, still they retained their humanity.

"*And still we rise,*" as Maya Angelou put it so well.

And the spirituals spoke of freedom, of that fundamental longing in the human heart that is one of the centerpieces of our lives. Frederick Douglass wrote about the power of the slave songs, of the spirituals, as he planned his escape from slavery:

*As I now look back, I am the more inclined to think that he suspected us, because, prudent as we were, I can see that we did many silly things well calculated to awaken suspicion. We were at times remarkably buoyant, singing hymns, and making joyous exclamations, almost as triumphant in their tone as if we had reached a land of freedom and safety. A keen observer might have detected in our repeated singing of*

*O Canaan, sweet Canaan,  
I am bound for the land of  
Canaan,*

*something more than a hope of  
reaching heaven. We meant to reach  
the North, and the North was our  
Canaan.*

*I thought I heard them say  
There were lions in the way;  
I don't expect to stay  
Much longer here.  
Run to Jesus, shun the danger  
I don't expect to stay  
Much longer here,*

*was a favorite air, and had a double  
meaning. On the lips of some it meant  
the expectation of a speedy summons  
to a world of spirits, but on the lips of  
our company it simply meant to a  
speedy pilgrimage to a free state, and  
deliverance from all the evils and  
dangers of slavery.<sup>4</sup>*

In his foundational book *Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, W. E. B. Dubois devotes his final chapter to these songs, these spirituals that he calls "Sorrow Songs."

*Through all the sorrow of the  
Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope  
– a faith in the ultimate justice of  
things. The minor cadences of de-  
spair change often to triumph and  
calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith  
in life, sometimes a faith in death,  
sometimes assurance of boundless  
justice in some fair world beyond.  
But whichever it is, the meaning is  
always clear: that sometime, some-  
where, men will judge men by their  
souls and not by their skin.<sup>5</sup>*

Perhaps most importantly of all, the Jubilee Singers proclaimed to the world that white people had not captured all of reality as they claimed to

**Voice, continued on page 10**

**Voice, continued from page 9**

have done. The Jubilee Singers opened up the idea and the possibility that there was a whole other world out there, a world untapped and unconquered by the white slave masters – a world of music, a world of humanity, a world of community. Bernice Reagon Johnson writes about the spirituals – she is the lead organizer of Sweet Honey in the Rock. She puts it this way:

*It took me decades to come to understand that music that is written down is not superior music. The music score is only one way of transmitting music. Music that is conveyed literally makes up the smallest portion of communicated music in the universe. Most of the music of the world is transmitted orally. To be a master at learning and teaching music orally is to be at the center of music making in the world.*

*Describing Black singing is not easy to put in words. In singing songs in a Black style, you have to be able to change the notes with feelings before the sound comes out of your body. It's like the feelings have to be inside the sound. So you are not singing notes and tones, you are giving out pieces of yourself, coming from places inside that you can only yourself visit in a singing. It is having what is inside yourself ride the air in the song you are singing.*<sup>6</sup>

We ought not to be surprised, then, that the civil rights movement of the twentieth century reclaimed the spirituals as the soul power which fired and carried that revolutionary movement. Again, Bernice Reagon Johnson on singing in jail after the first time she was arrested for participating in a civil rights demonstration:

*In jail, I practiced a kind of singing that has stuck with me. It is the kind of singing where the song and singing are used to say who you are and what you think, and to confront and be an instrument of getting through the world. It was the kind that was seamless with your existence. This singing took place on a different level than the singing that I had done in the glee clubs and choruses of my life. It was more related to the singing of the elders in church, but different*

*because it was me and now I knew what I was singing about and how it carried me through. Without a lot of conscious work I was beginning to become a singing fighter.*

*When I got out of jail, I was hoarse from around-the-clock singing. At the next mass meeting, I was asked to lead a song. I started to sing "Over my head I see freedom in the air." My voice! It was bigger! It had grown! It was as if my living through the jail experience had also been a voice lesson. I still think that to do Black singing, you not only need to do some struggle and living, you also have to sing your way through. You can actually feel and hear the changes in your instrument and the way in which you handle a song as you sing your life.*<sup>7</sup>

The spirituals introduced by the Jubilee Singers transformed American music from its European captivity, opening the door to jazz and the blues and gospel and even rock and roll. Nashville came to be known as "Music City" first not because of country music, but because of the Jubilee Singers. The spirituals introduced by the Jubilee Singers opened the door to a new vision of what it means to be human, what it means to seek freedom and justice, what it means to cling to God as the central definition of life and of our lives. The spirituals taught us that it is possible to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. Indeed, the only way to survive in a foreign land is

to sing the Lord's songs.

The spirituals taught all of us of the opportunity to be re-oriented towards our true humanity, our true center: the God who overcame Pharaoh, the God whose power overcame the white slave masters, the God whose power continues to work to overcome the injustice of racism and materialism at this very moment. The Jubilee Singers introduced all of us to this. They helped us to understand that slavery was nothing for black folk to be ashamed of – it is something for white folk to be ashamed of. So let us join the Jubilee Singers. Most of us cannot sing like them or like our Sanctuary Mass Choir that we heard this morning. We are asked, though, to sing our lives, and to join all those who came before them and all those who came after them. Let us, too, join in experiencing that new reality, that new humanity. Let us sing our lives. Let us lift every voice and sing. Amen. ♫

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Ward, *Dark Midnight When I Rise*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2000, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Collier Books, 1892, New York, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> W. E. B. Dubois, *Souls of Black Folk*. Avon Books, New York, 1965, p. 386.

<sup>6</sup> Bernice Reagon Johnson, *We Who Believe in Freedom*. Doubleday, New York, 1993, pp. 141, 150.

<sup>7</sup> Reagon, pp. 156-57.

## Morning Breakfast, by Andrew Zirka



MURPHY DAVIS

In early June, Andrew Zirka visited us for several days with his dad, John Zirka. John is an advocate for the homeless in Nashville, TN. Along with our good friend Don Beisswenger, John is a founder of The Living Room, which offers space each week in the Downtown Presbyterian Church for homeless and addicted sisters and brothers to share their lives and struggles and support each other.

Andrew drew this picture after he and his dad helped to serve breakfast at the Open Door. We look forward to their next visit!



### volunteer needs

- People with good computer data-entry skills to work four hours or more per week
- People to accompany community members to doctor's appointments
- People to serve breakfast, Monday and Tuesday mornings, 5:50-9:30 a.m.
- Groups to make meat and cheese sandwiches (no bologna, please) on whole-wheat bread for Soup Kitchen on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and for our friends on the streets
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays

For more information, call Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906 or e-mail him at [pleon2000@mindspring.com](mailto:pleon2000@mindspring.com)

# Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Open Door:

I wanted to commend you on the May issue of *Hospitality* (vol. 22, no. 5). The eulogy ("Remembering a Visionary Life") written by Jim Martin and the article entitled "Love Forged In the Fire of Struggle" (Murphy Davis) just blew me away. I felt both articles captured the essence of Mrs. Pauley and made me feel like I too, was privileged to have known her.

I really needed to read this story about this incredibly courageous and loving woman who would not compromise her personal integrity in order to be "politically correct" or "popular." I felt like reading the article was a little gift from God. Thank you.

Many Blessings!  
Susan Canna  
Angola, NY

Public housing was originally intended to house those who couldn't afford housing. The new apartments that were built and filled soon became slums that attracted crime, drugs and all sorts of social pathologies. A new homeless hotel would surely attract the same or worse crowd, even if it was originally well intended.

Jail may not be where these people need to go, but at some point you have to apply a stick of some sort to those who don't voluntarily want to change their behavior. Maybe it is involuntary commitment to treatment. If people can only live camping out, why do they have to camp in the middle of pretty parks? There are all sorts of places to camp. I personally know people who panhandle by trade, and they can rob if they don't get what they want. They give a pitiful sob story with their kids in tow and take the money straight to the crack dealer. It is hard to tell who deserves help and who needs jail time. Downtown and intown redevelopment is more fragile than it might seem. Too many aggressive panhandlers and customers will go elsewhere. Then we've got a downtown given over to the homeless.

Most people just have only so much toleration for this sort of thing. We need less obstruction from homeless advocates to solve this problem.

Jim Gingles  
Atlanta, GA

Thank you for all that you do and for your special newspaper with the best articles in town.

Rev. Richard K. Gibson  
Seattle, WA

Well, Mr. Loring,

You've succeeded in humiliating Walker L. Allen, Jr. of Greenville, NC ("Letters," *Hospitality*, April 2003, vol. 22, no. 4). Poor guy. Probably never gone hungry or spent a night in the park. Probably a Republican, thus making your contempt inevitable. Course guys like Walker Allen would probably send you some money if you ask nicely. You could feed more of the homeless if your love were universal—if it could somehow include both Ralph Dukes and Walker Allen.

David Howell  
Midlothian, VA

P.S. Very much appreciated The Message to Laodicea ("Listening To The Knock," *Hospitality*, April 2003, vol. 22, no. 4.).

Dear Ed, Murphy, and the Open Door Community,  
Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have thought about you often these past few weeks as I have begun to prepare eighteen youth for a mission trip to Washington, D.C. We will be focusing on the issues of homelessness and hunger within our nation's capital. Our group will also have the opportunity to meet with Congressman John Spratt to learn about politics and hopefully begin to question ways to change them.

Through the conversations with my youth and their parents, I continually find myself reflecting upon the times I spent with the community; those early morning breakfasts, challenging conversations, 24-hour vigils, and so much more. I am thankful that members of your community and some homeless friends helped to open my eyes to the harsh reality of life on the streets.

I am encouraged that I have eighteen youth from the small town of York, SC, anxious and willing to take their time, money and summer vacation to spend time working in D.C. at soup kitchens, food banks, and homeless shelters. I am curious to learn how our discussions will go and hope that these youth will be able to bring information back that we can use here. For although York is a smaller town, homelessness and poverty are prevalent in our community. Many of the poor seek out our church for monetary and food assistance.

Again, thank you for your continuous effort to make people aware of the needs of the homeless and poor. You have been an inspiration and guiding voice to many. Although I am no longer close in distance, the ministries of the Open Door Community remain in my prayers.

Blessings!  
Rev. Pressley Neal  
Associate Minister of Youth  
and Congregational Ministries  
First Presbyterian Church  
York, SC

Dear Ed and Murphy,

Yesterday *Hospitality* arrived in Jonesboro. Thanks for the issue on Frances (May 2003, vol. 22, no. 5). What a blessing her life and spirit gave to others. She is irreplaceable.

Keep on keeping on. One of these days I'll be back at the Open Door.

Peace with Justice,  
Karol Osborne  
Jonesboro, GA

Dear Ms. Davis and Mr. Loring,

Good morning! I hope you are feeling well, peaceful, and content (Php 4:10-13) and doing well! *Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is slow death to be gloomy all the time.* (Ps. 17:22, TEV).

Thank you! for sending me the book: *A Work of Hospitality, The Open Door Reader, 1982-2002*. Pardon the clichés, but it has "raised my consciousness," and certainly helped me see the world in a different way. I read it quickly (devoured it) and passed it on to several other inmates. The essays provoked many spirited discussions at table athwart the grits, greens, and cornbread.

Fondly,  
A friend in prison in Georgia

Hi,

Thank you so much for the June issue! I have been on your mailing list since the beginning of this year and I can't tell you how much it has enriched my life. I gave my June copy away to a friend and am hoping to get another one. I was especially moved by Murphy Davis' article on the Rosenbergs ("Fifty Years After the Rosenberg Execution: Looking Back and Ahead," June *Hospitality*, vol. 22, no. 6). What a timely and important piece of journalism!

Thank you, Murphy, from the bottom of my heart!  
Love in Jesus (the Jewish messiah!),  
Christina Fallis  
Atlanta, GA

We were pleased and challenged as always by your April issue of *Hospitality*, which just arrived here in El Salvador. I noticed there was a letter from Fifth Ave Presbyterian Church in New York City, which mentions Margaret Shafer, who is their outreach director. She was my college roommate and remains a good friend, although we don't see each other often. The Fall 2002 issue of the Wooster alumni magazine has an article by her about the church's work with homeless folk on their steps. You could see it at [www.wooster.edu/magazine](http://www.wooster.edu/magazine).

As you can imagine, there is a large gap between the church members and the homeless folk, since Fifth Ave is one of the most prestigious churches in the city. Margaret stresses what you know so well at the Open Door: the bridge across that gap is to get to know homeless folks as people rather than problems. To listen. The church has an ongoing court case to keep the police from clearing people off the church steps.

Thanks again for your vision and work.  
Love from both of us,  
Carol Cummings  
El Salvador



Dear Ed and All,  
I am so grateful for the two books, *A Work of Hospitality* and *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door*. Thank you. I know I've said it before, but it never gets said enough, that you guys are really special.

Did you see the *Christian Century* this month? A youth group is reported to have visited the Pax Christi House in Birmingham and one of the kids asked about the results of the work at the house. How many families get adequate housing after being here with you? How many men get jobs that pay a livable wage? How many kids get properly insured? It is reported that the youth group was given this answer: "I am not privileged to see the end of God's work in these people's lives. This house is one step on their long journey. While they are here with me, they will see Jesus."

This made me think of The Open Door. I am once again reminded of the face of Jesus as he stands in the bread line. It changed me to see that face and to be, for just a brief time, in the company of the community at 910 Ponce de Leon.

Grace and Peace,  
Elaine Blanchard  
Memphis, TN

(Elaine Blanchard is a UCC minister in Memphis. She spent a summer at the Open Door when she was a student at Memphis Theological Seminary.)

