

# HOSPITALITY

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Providing hospitality to the homeless & to those in prison, through Christ's love  
910 Ponce de Leon Ave. N.E. Atlanta, Ga. 30306 404-874-9652

## Love is Stronger than Death

by Murphy Davis

On July 12 of this year, I stood in a field surrounded by barbed wire in Jackson, Georgia, outside a prison that has come to represent for many of us, hell itself.

About 30 of us stood in a circle holding each other's hands and what must have looked like pitiful little flickering candles in the dark hours of early morning. And we sang hymns.

Out of the darkness of the night came an official procession: the front-office prison men in suits and ties. As blazing lights and television cameras engulfed and swallowed them up, the official proclamation came:

Ivon Ray Stanley  
twenty-eight years old  
functionally retarded  
Black man

Ivon Ray Stanley  
died calmly

in the electric chair  
at 12:24 AM

No complications.

A nice clean execution.

Eight years on death row: convicted, sentenced to die by a jury of twelve white church-going people of Bainbridge, Georgia who saw revenge as the proper response to the death of Mr. Clifford Floyd.

Ivon Ray Stanley was officially dead. The state had spoken.

And then there were tears in that field  
and sobs  
and groans  
"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,  
Have mercy."

The mother, the grandmother,  
the brother, the sister-in-law, the friends  
Broken  
Hurt

Defeated  
"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,  
Have mercy, Jesus!"

And it was very dark in that field.

The next day we stood in another circle in another field. But this time the soil under our feet was free soil. It was sanctuary.

We had gathered in a similar way before: two other prisoners and a Cuban refugee have been laid down in that beautiful part of the earth.

For some of us the understanding has come only recently that when we seek to serve our Lord in the suffering poor, the burying of the dead is one more of the acts of mercy to which we are sometimes called.



Fritz Eichenberg

### THE DOVE AND THE HAWK

So again we stood in the sunshine where the pasture meets the woods; where the lush green of the earth meets the rich blue of the sky.

Where the Cherokee once walked the earth that belonged to God and not white-faced folks; Where black slaves bent over cotton and corn; Where today Central Americans find a safe place to rest on their long and weary way to new home in Canada.

And as we stood there we were joined in one identity: we gathered, by the richness of God's grace, as refugees.

We gathered around the cold, stiff body of a young black man that the world had decided could be disposable: the body whose head was shaved and whose leg was burned by electrodes; and who was dressed in a suit for the first time in many years and shut up in a gray box forever.

(Cont. on page 2 - STRONGER THAN DEATH)

## Stronger than death (Cont. from front)

2

We joined as refugees: black, white, brown; young and old.  
We were Ivon Stanley's family.  
We were the Jubilee Community.  
We were the Open Door Community.  
We were the street people from the Open Door.  
We were the victims of violent crime and the families  
of those who have committed violent crime.  
We were refugees from Guatemala, Honduras, and El  
Salvador.  
We were lawyers and organizers who had worked  
frantically trying to stop the execution.  
We gathered together because we were out of sync with  
the condemning world. We didn't fit.

The world was through with Ivon Stanley. But, by grace, we gathered to worship the God of Life and bury our friend with love and dignity.

The officials gathered to pronounce that the law had been carried out, that justice had been done. But, by grace, we gathered to weep, to grieve and to recommit ourselves to God's promised justice which is mercy within mercy.

The prison cleaned up and went on with Business as Usual. By grace, we learned from Jim Foxvog what a profound act of love it can be to dig a grave in the hard Georgia clay in 95 degree heat.

The prison removed the file of #EF-103603. By grace we gathered to bury Ivon, our brother, who like all the lowly of the earth, is remembered by name by a loving God.

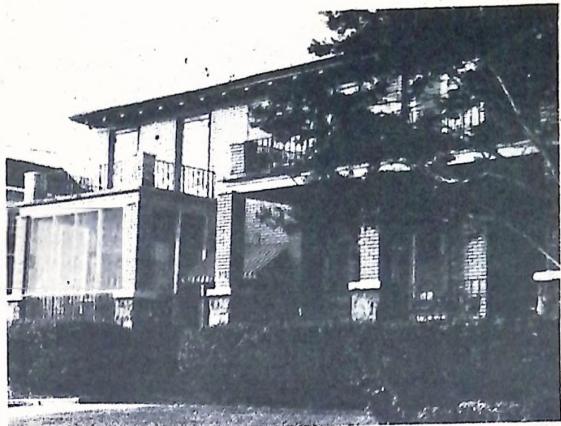
The press proclaimed abroad that Georgia's second execution had been much easier than the first. By grace, the scriptures that we read proclaimed to us that Love is stronger than Death.

And as we shoveled the dirt into the grave, the tears mingled with sweat. And through the blur we could see Jesus shoveling with us.

And he said, "Don't be afraid, my children, for I have overcome this mean old world. I have overcome it with love. And until the last day, I'll live as a refuge with you." \*



Fritz Eichenberg



**HOSPITALITY** is a regular publication of the Open Door Community, (P.C.U.S), 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 are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of the Open Door and about others involved in ministry to Atlanta's homeless, please contact any of the Resident Partners, listed below with their current administrative functions:

Murphy Davis - Southern Prison Ministry  
Director

Carolyn Johnson - Volunteer Co-ordinator

Rob Johnson - Treasurer, **HOSPITALITY** Editor

Ed Loring - Correspondence, Building, &  
Resident Volunteer Co-ordinator

## Wanted: Trailer

In early September, the Open Door Community, along with our friends at Koinonia Partners and Jubilee Partners, finalized the purchase of 32 acres of land in Jackson, Georgia. Together we are beginning an exciting new ministry that will relate to the nearby state prison where most of Georgia's death row inmates are imprisoned. For years we have seen the need for a hospitality house near the prison--a place where families, friends, clergy, and attorneys of the inmates can come before and after visits. The remoteness of the prison and its policies and atmosphere that virtually discourage visitation have led us to want to demonstrate, in contrast, the friendliness of Christ.

In the very near future construction of a house will begin by the folks from Jubilee and Koinonia.

We need a small, live-in type trailer that could be used by the person who will be supervising volunteer work crews. Beyond that use for several months, we'd like to place the trailer permanently on the property. Ideally it should have at least two beds, bath, and a small kitchen area. If you hear or know of such a trailer that can be donated (or loaned) call the Open Door at 874-9652

More details about this expansion of our prison ministry will be coming in future issues of **HOSPITALITY**. Please keep us in your prayers.

\* \* \*

Photos of Flo Rayburn and William Green on page 11 by Bill Culp. All others by Rob Johnson.

# AAH UPDATE

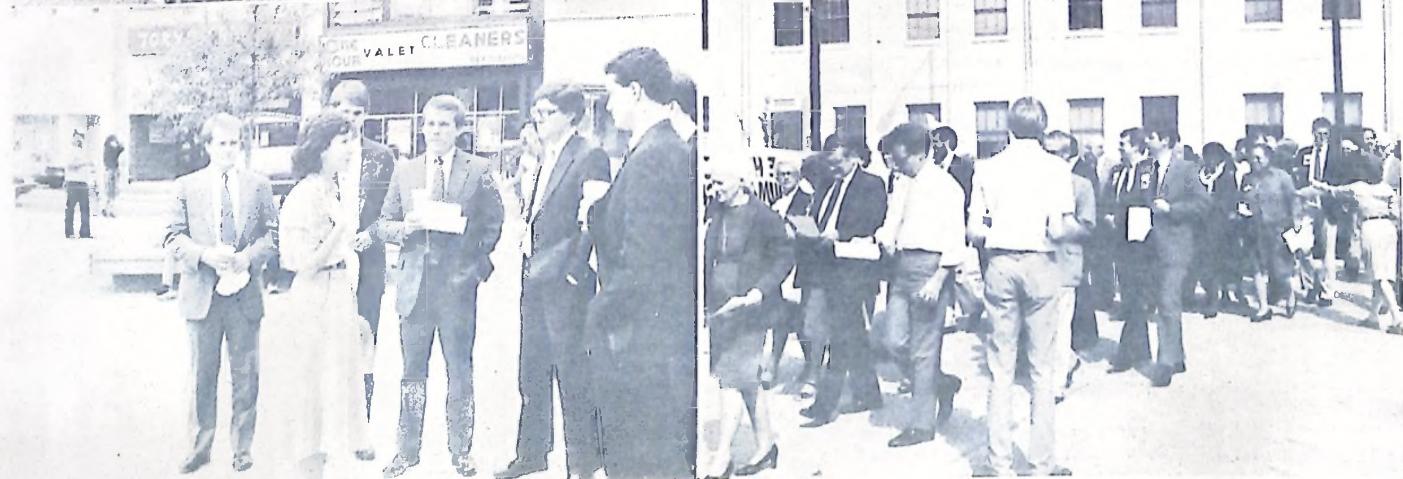
by John Pickens

The Atlanta Advocates for the Homeless (AAH) have started a series of street actions to raise the consciousness of governmental, religious and lay groups and individuals to the fact that 3800 men, women and children will be without shelter this winter. The existing shelters in Atlanta house only 1200 of the 5000 homeless persons - leaving 3800 out in the winter cold. Through the dramatization using an occupied coffin, an empty wheelchair and a person dressed to show the brokenness and pain caused by life on the streets, we have tried to present a graphic visual image that will directly convey that horrible reality that life on the streets during the cold winter months kills people and maims people through frostbitten feet and hands. The empty wheelchair is in memory of our deceased friend, Roosevelt Richardson. Roosevelt lived on the streets for several years and during the winter of 1982, both of his legs were severely frostbitten and both legs were amputated at the knee. Roosevelt had agreed to sit with us at these street actions, but unfortunately he died in late September before the actions started. We continually pray that this Winter Atlanta's citizens, governments, churches and other concerned groups will take appropriate action so that the pain, disfigurement, brokenness and death that came to be Roosevelt's lot during his last years will not be the lot of the 3800 homeless men, women and children left out of the existing shelters. AAH is committed to taking those actions that are necessary to see that adequate shelter is provided to our homeless brothers and sisters.

The remaining two street actions are scheduled for Friday, November 2nd, at the Peachtree Center Towers - east side of Peachtree Street, and Friday, November 9th, at Atlanta City Hall. Both actions will last from 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. COME JOIN US and carry a sign and/or pass out a leaflet.

AAH has also held two street demonstrations outside the construction site for the new Downtown Labor Center. This new center was scheduled to open on October 8th, but construction is not yet completed and completion is still several weeks or months away. Since the center serves as a day shelter for many of the homeless in the Grady Hospital - Butler Street - Auburn Avenue area, it is essential that this Center be opened NOW before cold weather hits. The fact that construction has been delayed beyond the contract deadline of October 8th shows the continuing low priority of our city government to the critical needs of the homeless. We will continue to have a presence inside and outside this construction site until its doors are opened.

Finally, on Thursday November 15th, AAH will hold a second public gathering for the homeless where we can hear from them and receive their input into what we should be doing on their behalf. This gathering will be held as a dinner banquet late in the afternoon with a showing of the video-tape of the first gathering last June.



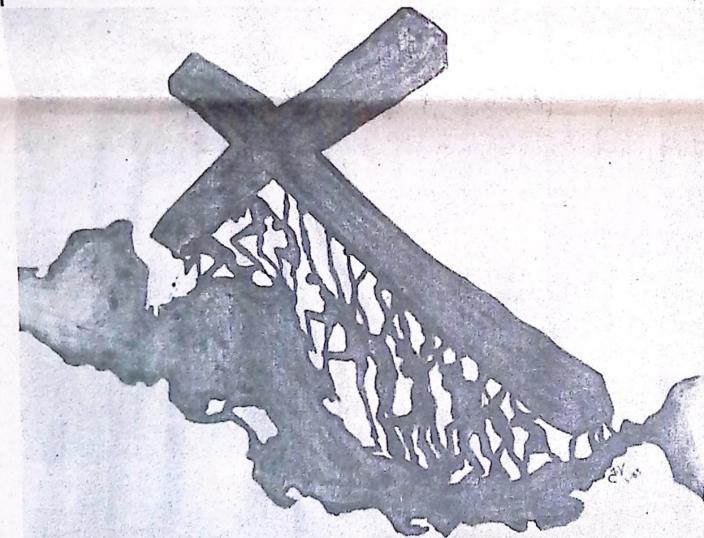
# Tell What You Have Seen<sup>4</sup> and Heard in Texas

by Rob Johnson

## Monday

"I'm going to Texas...with the Jubilee Partner bus...to pick up Central American refugees." That was the quick explanation given in passing conversations with our house guests as my travel gear piled up in front of my office door. By 4:20 pm Ryan Karis, Robbie Buller, Bruce and Jennifer arrived from 2-hour-away Comer, Ga., and we began the 16-hour trip through the night to Houston.

For a year I've wanted to share my Georgia Class III driver's license skills (?) with my dear friends from our sister Christian community. Over three years the bonds between us have grown. What connections we've discovered between their ministry with international refugees and ours with America's "urban refugees!" This bus trip is their 11th to Texas in an overground network that shepherds Central Americans from the Rio Grande valley to Georgia to eventual asylum in Canada. In recent weeks the wonderful news has come that the Canadian government has increased its 1984 quota for new refugees. The tough news is that Jubilee Partners will have a frenetic fall and is very much needing drivers like me to share the load. As Ryan, the project's coordinator, said to me over the 'phone a week earlier, "How about bringing along some fresh enthusiasm. We need it!"



## Tuesday

During our first day in Texas I start "meeting" refugees. Soon after we arrive at Houston's Casa Juan Diego (a Catholic Worker community serving mostly refugees), I discover new connotations behind the term, "undocumented aliens": days before we arrive, Bob and Susan have been preparing extensive files for each potential Canadian-bound refugee. Along with the stuff we see on EVERYFILE is the heart of this transcribed begging-for-mercy: a narrative about why the person is asking for sanctuary. Throughout the afternoon, I read some of these narratives.

Immediately I feel the similarity with the words written to the judges and the parole board begging for the lives of our friends now sitting on Georgia's death row. In these Salvadorans' appeals, too, there is the spectre of impending death. They, also, had been sentenced to certain death...sentenced by uncontrolled death squads, military police, and others violently grasping for power in a chaotic country.

(Cont. on page 5 - TEXAS)



Throughout the not-so-long night two impressions stand out. First, we pick up a mid-40-year-old homeless hitch hiker (Jim) just south of Atlanta. Immediately we begin our trip by practicing hospitality--sharing food, conversation, and space--until he gets off west of Montgomery. Bruce Bishop, a new volunteer at Jubilee, is a particularly warm host, talking a long time with Jim while I'm doing a 7-9pm driving shift. I say a silent prayer of thanks for the way this journey has begun with the juxtaposition of national and international homelessness.

The other impression comes as I near "sleep." Twice during the night I get a turn to sleep in the bunk that has been constructed in the back of the bus. The others rest on foam mats spread down the aisle (another juxtaposition--we use these in several church shelters for the homeless in Atlanta). Because the empty bus is relatively light, my bunk really bounces, particularly through Louisiana. At one point I begin realizing I'm not going to sleep much in this "first class" section. Just as some frustration starts turning to martyr self-righteousness I have a startling vision: I see a small girl clinging drowsily to her father's back, bouncing relentlessly through a dark, terrifying, unfamiliar Guatemalan forest. I remember scenes from the recent movie "El Norte." Suddenly my discomfort is diminished as I realize that thousands of frightened families are struggling this very moment to get to south Texas by other less-than-first-class means. How comfortable is my cross tonight.



# Texas

(Cont. from page 4)

So these powerless folk are appealing to powers outside their own homeland to give them life. And Canada asks for "proof" that they actually were in danger. Good God! You'd think it enough that a mother with 4 children could look you in the eye and (through interpreters) say, "The death squads killed my two brothers, forced my oldest boy to join the army, and threatened to kill me or kidnap one of my babies if I didn't turn over my husband." Wouldn't anybody demonstrate their sincerity by giving up all of their past security--even their culture--and by literally crawling into our hemisphere? Well, at least the Canadians are compassionate enough to acknowledge that even undeclared wars create innocent victims. The barbarity of our times is that the Reagan administration continues to deny that anything is even happening in Central America that warrants the US letting refugees into our country. To do so would contradict the position that there are no significant human rights violations occurring in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. While the governments there and here save face, innocent Central Americans literally have their heads decapitated.

## Other sketches -

At 11:30 am I help set tables for Casa Juan Diego's soup kitchen and then serve and eat lunch with about 60 people. Inevitably I find myself comparing and contrasting our Open Door Community's meal ministry with this one. Tom O'Brian, a resident volunteer, shows me how to set up one chair but leave two chairs folded by a table so people can first squeeze into the corner along the wall. We talk for a minute about "the little details" of hospitality. For sure there are lots of differences between our kitchens...but overwhelming continuity in the Big Detail--looking for Christ in the least who come hungry to our doors.

5 - We leave at 4 in the afternoon to drive 8 hours southwest to Alamo, Texas (in the "Valley") where Richa and Ruth Ann Fritzen live. During my driving turn, Robbie asks about how I got to the Open Door. I end up giving the hour-long version of my faith history which in turn leads to some fine reflections about each of our lives in intentional Christian community. What a blessing we both feel to be part of contemporary church renewal! Yet, as we compare our communities' process of including new members, we come up against the paradox of so few people being led to this lifestyle. I remember Graham Pultinghamp's *Surfjammers* interview in which his preliminary advice to those contemplating starting or joining a Christian Community was, "Don't do it unless you sense that you have absolutely no other choice." That still sounds to me like bizarre but necessary advice.

## Wednesday

I'm told that Casa Oscar Romero in the Valley is well known in Central America. It is one of the few safe sanctuaries for undocumented refugees who make it across the Mexican border. What a modest sanctuary! (I'm beginning to feel that the Open Door is the Hilton of southern Catholic Worker houses!) A former cinder block grocery store in the midst of one of those flat-top residential suburbs of the Gulf with an adjoining house trailer for staff. Most of my day is spent in the trailer visiting with Jack Elder and his three boys and Stacy Merk. Many of us have learned of them through their notoriety as the first church workers to face arrest because of their contact with refugees in this part of the country. Though Stacy jokes that the terms of her two-year probation sentence came from driving a few refugees between towns in the valley, it is so clear that she really experiences the costs of now being a felon. Jack is awaiting trial on similar charges.

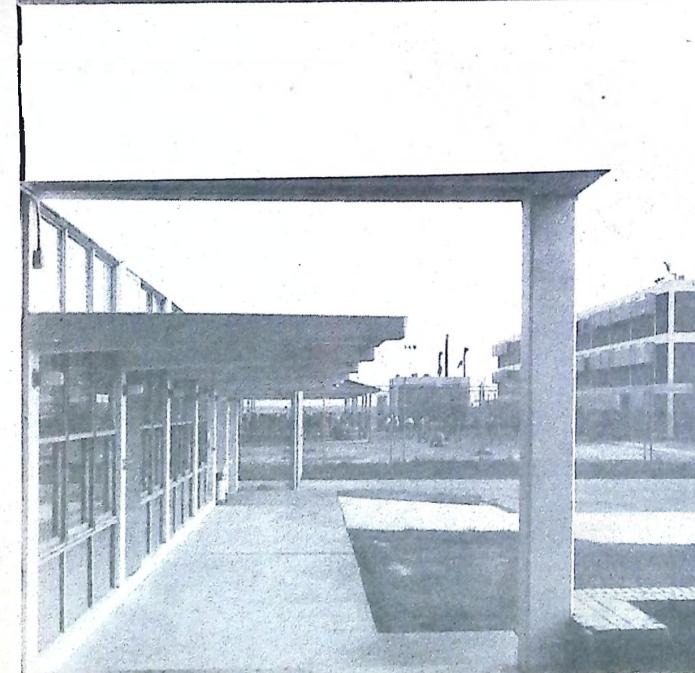
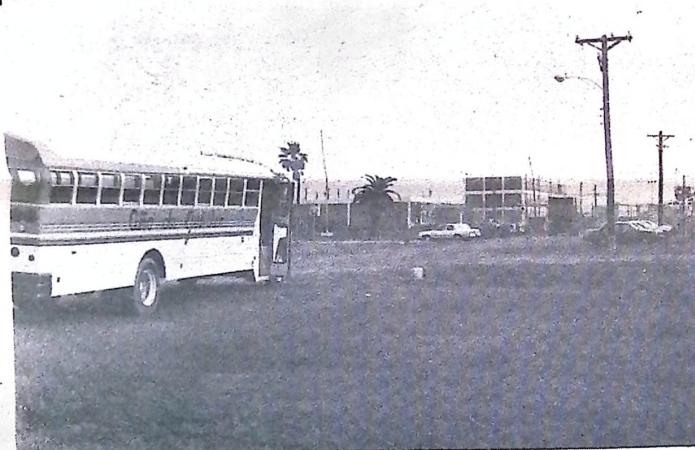
(Cont. on page 6 - TEXAS)



Earlier in the day I see the heart of the legal efforts to save captured refugees from being deported to likely death in their homeland. Another modest building is the office of Proyecto, a legal clinic with a case load that is staggering. Ryan tells me how the staff are constantly on the edge of burnout, treading on tight-ropes of crises as they attempt to save people from being sent back across the border. How similar are our legal friends who work against the death penalty. And in both cases the future looks even more bleak. The mood of the rich and wanting-to-be-even-more-secure of our country is to purge the land of those that threaten us. So often, too, these legal advocates are friends who are not part of a faith community. We love them dearly. Their "discipleship" is often more faithful than that of nominal Christians.

At 10:30 pm, Richard and Ruth Ann return from their day's final visits to refugees, Canadian consulate, detention center, etc. Seven of us wearily ride the Jubilee bus to the Mexican border, walk across check points and a dark, silent, ominous Rio Grande River into a Mexican town for a "real meal." Just as we begin negotiating the menu, the power in the entire town goes out! "Oh Lord," I pray, "may these humble ovens be gas!" They are! And we eat midst an eerie candle light.

A final image ends the day. As we walk a half-mile back to the U.S., down a blacked-out pot-holed main street, a small Mexican lad approaches and tries to sell us something. It's after midnight. Richard, who understands Spanish, laughs and tells us the boy wants to shine our shoes. In the darkness of the night and in the darkness between our cultures he can't see that we Gringos are all wearing sandals or tennis shoes.



#### Friday

Like many prisons in America, the detention center outside of Brownsville has a local nickname, El Corleone, Spanish for "The Corral." This is where they round 'em up and herd 'em out. Today Ryan, Richard, and Ruth Ann will interview imprisoned refugees who are potential candidates for the next Jubilee bus trip. Yesterday in our communications back to Comer, Georgia, we were advised to schedule our departure from the Valley for 11pm tonight...arriving back in Georgia Sunday morning. Thus we have extra time today.

For thirty minutes Robbie, Bruce, Jennifer, and I join the others in a quick glimpse at the reception area of the prison. I experience some of the same feelings that come when I visit our state prison back in Jackson, Georgia. Both are relatively new structures out in the middle of nowhere. The buildings are identified with huge numbers. One is 435--odd given that there are only about ten buildings! Prisoners here wear bright orange jump suits. Unlike Jackson, I am able to carry in a camera and actually take a discrete picture of prisoners coming out to an exercise yard. As I tuck the camera away, though, I can overhear an intercom somewhere nearby mentioning that "One of them has a camera..." Just as we are about to leave a teenage girl in orange is led into the interview room. If her deportation is carried out, she will be put on a plane in Houston, Dallas, or Los Angeles and flown back to her native country. Our taxes will pay for the trip...as they pay for her incarceration...as they indirectly may pay for her torture or death. No wonder her face reveals a broken spirit.

Back home, those of us who visit in the prisons often talk about the way we literally carry the oppressive air out of those ugly places. I always feel like yelling, running, eating, and bathing (in that order). Today a quick trip to the beach for even 45 minutes is absolutely wonderful!

Oh boy! And then we all head across the border for a few hours of exploitative shopping in the American tourist trap of Matamoros. We deliberately walk a mile into a particular part of town known for its street markets--places where merchants and customers love to barter. I brace myself for a battle of wits, eager to get some souvenirs to take home to Hannah and Christina. Heh, heh! I emerge victorious, the proud holder of two colorful clown Pinatas. I get them for half their listed price! And as the others return, they have comparably stories of conquest. Ay carumba!! On further gloating the next day I suddenly realize that I had read the price tag in American dollars (\$9.00) rather than in its actual Mexican Pesos (\$900) rate. At the 198 Pesos-to-the-Dollar exchange rate, I blew it! Instead of getting two for about the price of one, I gave the animated merchant a 10% markup when I negotiated the ten-buck-deal! No wonder the look of astonishment on his face at my offer, the pause, the grin, the warm pat on my back, before saying, "Si, for my American friend, I will give two for ten dollars!"

Late Friday - Ryan is discovering, as he puts it, that this will be one of those trips where all the "ifs" about potential refugee travelers come out negative. All those with last-minute problems turn out unable to return to Georgia--at least this trip. We wait to the last minute to see if a family of a man already in Canada will show up at Casa Oscar Romero. He had written to them in their hiding place in Mexico, encouraging them to try to make it to south Texas. For two weeks Stacy and Jack had been looking for them to show up at their door...but no word. So at 11pm we leave with three men. All had been staying at a small Catholic center in Donna, Texas. How very humbling to share in a final celebrative supper for those three at the center with remaining refugees and staff. (While most worship after supper, we bus drivers return to the Friesen's for a nap before the all-night trip to Houston).

And then came the checkpoint. It's about an hour north. Here, on every road leading out of the Valley, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has its web to keep aliens from reaching the more industrialized North. So far in 10 prior trips, the Jubilee bus has had no problems getting through. Every traveler has a file full of forms indicating his/her status in the Canadian assylum process; nevertheless, some are further along in the process than others. Most are still only being considered for entry into Canada. Legally, the U.S. has no obligation to allow them to travel within the country. A delicate "gentlemen's agreement" between INS, Canada, and Jubilee is all that protects these refugees from deportation. So every check point passage is an adrenalin-charged test of America's tolerance.

Tonight the check point is closed! But when two flashing INS patrol cars speed up behind us a few miles later, our stomachs sink...but they pass us and literally pull over another car just in front of us. "Thank you, Jesus," I pray out loud.

#### Saturday and Sunday

Back in Houston we pick up another 15 people, including the adorable children shown in the picture just outside the bus. They all rendezvous at Casa Juan Diego. Again, there are several men in detention centers in this city whose bail could not be processed in time; the final group is smaller than wished. But as Ryan continually reminds us, everyone on these trips the remainder of the year is a extra blessing, thanks to the enlarged quota.

One overwhelming impression captivates my trip back to Georgia with these visually un-unique Salvadorans. Because of the language barrier, our communications are mostly smiles, touching, pointing, and even occasional frisbee playing. I find myself regularly looking into the faces of these folk searching for something unique. After a while, I become aware that I'm searching for visible signs of the terror, suffering, and struggle that all of them have been through. Perhaps it's because I've recently begun the book, *Suffering* by Dorothy Soelle. I have wondered in these days how I will bear up under the inevitable suffering that following Christ's foot-steps will bring. What can I learn from these simple southern hemisphere sisters and brother?

Far from their home, in a land whose language they barely understand, headed for a strange, cold, distant new home in Canada, these peoples' faces are prophetically calm. The eyes are amazingly trusting. The bodies move incredibly efficiently. These are people who must know



hope. These are eyes that are not lingering on the searing violence of the near past, nor on the frigid emptiness of the near future. These are people who must have faith.

Most of them are sleeping soundly when the Jubilee bus pulls into the U-Haul driveway across the street from the Open Door in Atlanta. At 6 in the morning I hug my more-deeply-known friends, Robbie and Ryan, and wish them well on the last two hours to Comer. As I walk to our door, I think of John's disciples question to Jesus about his identity. "Are you the one?" And Jesus simply but revelationally responds:

Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind can see and the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean, the deaf can hear the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. How happy are those who have no doubts about me.

Luke 7:22-23

Who can doubt God's saving grace in the lives of these people from Central America? Who can doubt the need to welcome more of these people into our country? Who can doubt the Gospel call to end the violence in their homelands? Only those who doubt Him. \*

# Volunteer Recognition

by Carolyn Johnson

This month we want to say a very special thank you to our friends from Emory Presbyterian Church. Several years ago the Seekers Class at Emory Presbyterian had just finished reading Harry Emerson Fosdick's Meaning of Service. Many of the members of this class felt a need to actually serve--to put into action what they had studied. As a result they began volunteering at our Sunday soup kitchen and have come twice monthly for almost 2 1/2 years. We appreciate all the pots of soup they have fixed and served, all the sandwiches they have made, the vegetables they have chopped, dishes and pots they have washed! Their joy, enthusiasm and faithfulness have encouraged us greatly. Their hard work and support enables us to serve many of the hungry and homeless in Atlanta. We also appreciate Sarah Dodson who co-ordinates all these Emory volunteers as well as working in the soup kitchen herself.

Currently the volunteers from Emory include:

MARJA BARRON	WENDELL BAUGH
JEAN BURKE	LILABET CHOATE
BILL CHOATE	BETH CHRISTIE
BOB CHRISTIE	RACHEL CHRISTIE
CARL CHRISTIE	ALICE CLEVELAND
CLIFF CLEVELAND	CLAIRE CLEVELAND
TESS CORNETT	GEORGE DODSON
SARAH DODSON	CHARLOTTE FIELD
CAROL GILBERT	ROS HARDEN
BILL HARRELL	KIM HARRELL
ELIZABETH HARRELL	MARIANNE HAWKINS
JOHN HAWKINS	NANCY HERSH
DAVID HERSH	CAROLYN HOWARD
STEWARD HOWARD	BETTE JENSEN
DAVIS KIGHT	

THANK YOU EVERYONE

This month we also want to recognize the folks who work regularly in the **TUESDAY SOUP KITCHEN**. They are Sarah Floyd, Elizabeth Eve, Thea Jarvis, and Horace Tribble.

**SARAH FLOYD** is a member of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church where she co-ordinates the local outreach ministries. She is a weaver and has made two beautiful rugs for one of our guests' bedrooms. Sarah has been coming to the Open Door for almost three years--since February 1982, and she comments that coming here helps her stay "in touch" with the issues of homelessness and hunger. And she says she enjoys the fellowship, too!

**ELIZABETH EVE** also has been volunteering at the Open Door since February 1982. In addition to volunteer work, Elizabeth is the staff person for the Task Force on Homelessness. In this position she serves as an invaluable resource to all of us who work with homeless and hungry folks in Atlanta. Elizabeth is a member of Central Presbyterian Church who comes to the Open Door because, as she says, she loves the work, it feels like home, and it helps her keep in touch with folks.

**THEA JARVIS** has volunteered here since February 1984. She is a wife and mother of four children. She writes for the Catholic newspaper of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and is a member of Holy Cross Catholic Church in Chamblee. At her church she is active with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Thea continues to work at the Open Door because she finds "the presence of God here."

**HORACE H. TRIBBLE** has been volunteering with us for almost a year. He is a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church where he serves on Usher Board #1, is assistant Adult Sunday School teacher, and participates in Lincoln Love, a missionary group. Horace is also active in Operation P.U.S.H. and is a deputy Registrar for Fulton County. He belongs to St. James # 4 Masonic Order, Prince Hall (32nd degree, Nabbar 128) and is the chaplain in his Neighborhood Planning Unit #M. Horrace believes that our lives must be lived in accordance with Christ's commandments and that we find God and become closer to God by serving humanity.

Thea, Sarah, and Elizabeth have all brought their children from time to time to work with them in the Soup Kitchen. What a joy its been to have Katie Floyd, Mary Hart and Bess Bryant, and Jay, Monica & Dorothea Jarvis with us.

We appreciate all the hard work these friends continue to do for us and we thank them for their joyous and loving spirits.



# Putting the "Plug in the Jug"

by Jim Carter

9

We are very structured. We begin always with the serenity prayer: "God grant me the power to accept the things I cannot change, power to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." We always close our meetings with the Lord's prayer. In between these two, we talk about our lives.

The other day when I was standing on the sidewalk in front of our house, I realized that the building where our group to combat alcoholism meets once a week and the nearest liquor store are almost equi-distant from the Open Door in opposite directions. Our meeting space is away from the city and the alcohol source is toward the city. The fantasy came to me as I stood there that if I could only move our homeless friends away from the harsh streets of Atlanta, that the bondage to the bottle would disappear. Fantasies are many times idealized visions of reality, and I believe this one came to me because of the truth that lies cloaked in it. We are finding out that living without shelter or any sense of permanence causes people to become slaves of alcohol--people who would not have become enslaved had they had a place to call home. This is one of the most frightening insights that have come out of our time together.

Ours is a traditional group that meets every Tuesday night and we have just recently celebrated our sixth-month anniversary. As far as I know, we are the only group in the city that has been formed just on the basis of a perceived need for the homeless and the poor. The success we are having in dealing with the problem of drinking would not be considered very good, perhaps, by those that judge on a criteria of years of sobriety. But reality has caused us to change our focus. Without attempting in any way to minimize the effort some of our friends are making, I was struck by the statement by one of our women friends that when "you have to sleep in a cat-hole, you need to be unconscious to get over the fear that violence will be done to you while you sleep."

But I don't mean to be only negative, because I do not view our group in that way. It is one of the most positive experiences I have had in my time at the Open Door. We are getting to know each other in a deeper sense that comes out of sharing our hurts and our loneliness. We are seeing each other not just as people who can be divided into two groups, the homeless and those that have shelter, but rather as a community of God's children whose circumstances are different but whose hearts are alike. I do not mean to gloss over this difference, because it exists. What I mean to say is that we are learning to love each other in spite of this gap. The ability to cross that barrier is one of the strongest ties that makes our group viable.

Our greatest strength lies in the knowledge that we cannot combat alcoholism by ourselves; we must have God's intervention and help. The unique feature of this is that we do not put God in a box. How I see God and how you see God may be poles apart. The power of this lies in the freedom I have to seek God as "I understand God to be," and not out of some ritualized and rigid church dogma. This was the vision given to the folks that came before us, and is probably the single most important aspect of the whole program.

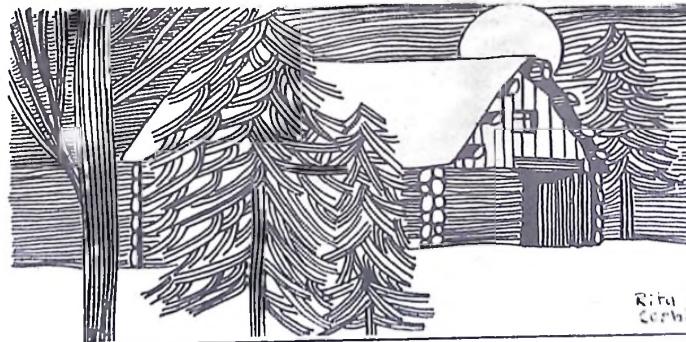
It has been said over and over that a person begins to stop drinking when they "hit bottom," which is probably entirely different for you and me. It is also an axiom that folks begin to sober up when they "get sick and tired of being sick and tired." Through our group five men who have reached this point have been taken to the Potter's House, a Christian home for alcoholics in North Georgia, where they are helped on the road to recovery. With only one exception that we know of, it seems almost a requirement that a person leave the streets before there is a chance they may stop drinking for good.



Rita Corbin

We invite others who are addicted, either to alcohol or drugs, to join with us. We have a lot of love to offer (which is our only prescription), and we need the love of our new friends that we have yet to meet. Dr. Harry Tiebout, one of the pioneers in efforts to combat alcoholism, observed that, "Seldom need a heart be lonely if it seek one lonelier still."

Jim Carter is a Novice (exploring long-term membership, or "Partnership") in the Open Door Community. One of the gifts he has brought to us in the past year has been his discernment and leadership around the prevalent issues of alcoholism in our ministry. \*



Rita Corbin

## Open Door Schedule

### WE ARE OPEN....

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 7:30a.m. until 6:30 p.m. and from 7:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The building is open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. those days. Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are closed until 5:15 p.m. Then our phones and door are answered from 5:15 until 8:30 p.m.

### OUR MINISTRY....

SOUP KITCHEN - Mon.-Sat. 11-12 noon; Sunday 5:15-5:30pm. BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST Mon-Fri. 8-8:30am  
SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHING - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 9:00am-11:00am.  
USE OF PHONE - Mon.-Sat. 9:00a.m.-4p.m. SHELTER REQUESTS - Mon.-Sat. 9:00a.m. - Noon  
SUNDAY WORSHIP - 7:30p.m. BIBLE STUDY - Wednesday 7:30 - 9:30p.m. (Currently on Luke)

# NINE-TEN

by Murphy Davis

Maybe there's something in me that always wanted to write a gossip column. I grew up on small-town newspapers and giggled as early as I can remember over the passion for detail represented in such literary masterpieces as "In, Out, and Around Chinquapin" of the weekly tabloid of Duplin County, North Carolina; who spent the holidays with whom; whose long-lost Aunt Minnie came for a visit; who entertained the latest Bride-elect; and what sumptuous goodies were spread on Grandmother's lace ecrù tablecloth at the "appointed table."

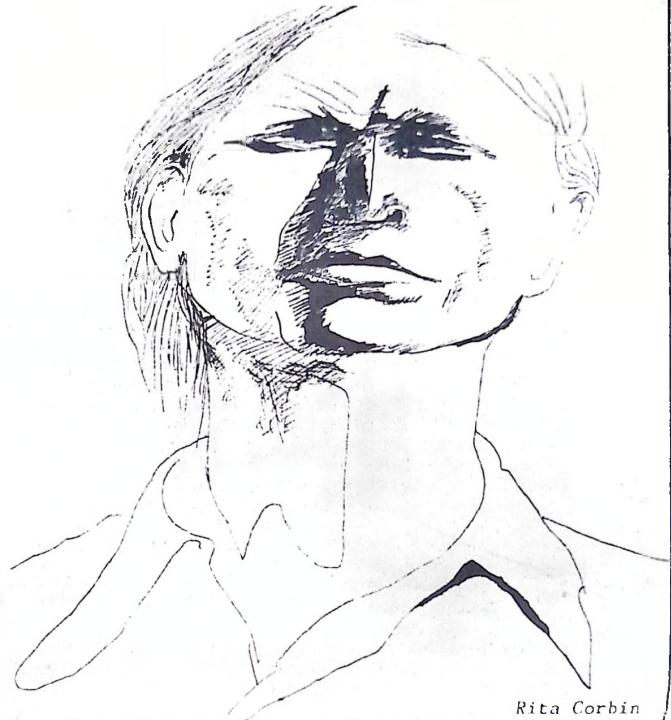
Of course to rate attention in the Society column, you had to be Somebody (with all the indigenous social, racial, and economic connotations therein implied!). But if you "rated," your comings and goings were surely to be carefully noted and your accomplishments applauded.

Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker often wrote of the importance of personalism in the work of hospitality. I like to think that the notion of personalism takes what is best about the graciousness and welcome and attention to detail that lives at the heart of Southern hospitality and applies it upside-down: hospitality is particularly--especially--for the least among us. An interest in detail of life leads us to open our eyes to the physical and spiritual detail of the lives of the poor and oppressed, and there to see the sufferings of the Christ among us. Thus a passion for detail that dares to cross well-fortified social, economic and racial barriers can move us toward a passion for justice. Each person who comes is for us the living Christ. Our love for Jesus makes us restless to see the burden of oppression lifted. The unfortunate irony of the cult of Southern hospitality is that part of its intent is to keep people in various isolated spheres and never bring up "unpleasant" subjects. It takes the power of the gospel to jolt us out of our appointed spheres.

Life at 910 Ponce de Leon is an adventure. Each month brings literally thousands of people through the door. Many come for the basic necessities that sustain life: food, shelter, clothes, a bath, a listening ear, medical attention, legal assistance, etc. Many come bringing gifts to share with those who come in need: they bring food, clothes, supplies, money, friendship, encouragement. Many come bringing hands to work and hearts to love: they scrub floors, cook soup, wash feet, reach out, listen, clean bathrooms, empty trash, share themselves. Many who cannot come through the door come through the mail and by phone: they come from other towns and cities; they come from prisons and jails; they too share the gift of support and encouragement for our work together.



Rita Corbin



Rita Corbin

Many come from other communities: Jubilee and Koinonia here in Georgia, the Catholic Workers around the country, Sojourners and the wider family of the Community of Communities--from as far away as Melbourne, Australia. Many come to share in the work on behalf of prisoners and against the death penalty: lawyers, church and community leaders.

Many come to live with us as resident volunteers (for three months or forever), sharing fully in the life and work of the Open Door Community. These folks, from 17 to 59 and from every sort of background, are the backbone of the workforce at the Open Door. Both Barbara Gifford and Jim Carter, who have been with us for a year, have become novices and are exploring a long-term commitment to the community.

"Nine-Ten" will be around in HOSPITALITY as an effort to share more personally about our life at the Open Door. We will tell you of our life together: those who come to us from the streets, the churches, the prisons, and from other cities and countries. And we will share our musings--at least a few of them--about life in this lively, people-filled home.

\* \* \* \* \*

This past year has brought a most-interesting procession of visitors from the streets of Atlanta and from around the world: Anita Kromberg who works with the Fellowship of Reconciliation in South Africa; Shelley Douglas of the Ground Zero community in Washington; Henri Nouwen, a Dutch pastor and theologian whose writings have been shared here; Frei Jose Alamiro of the Service for Peace and Non-Violence in Sao Paulo, Brazil; Jurgen Moltmann and Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendel of Tubingen Germany; Joyce Hollyday and Millie Bender of the Sojourners Community, Athol and Judith Gill of the House of Gentle Bunyip Community in Australia...family, friends, and co-workers enrich our life here with a sense of being bound to those who love God's kingdom around the world.

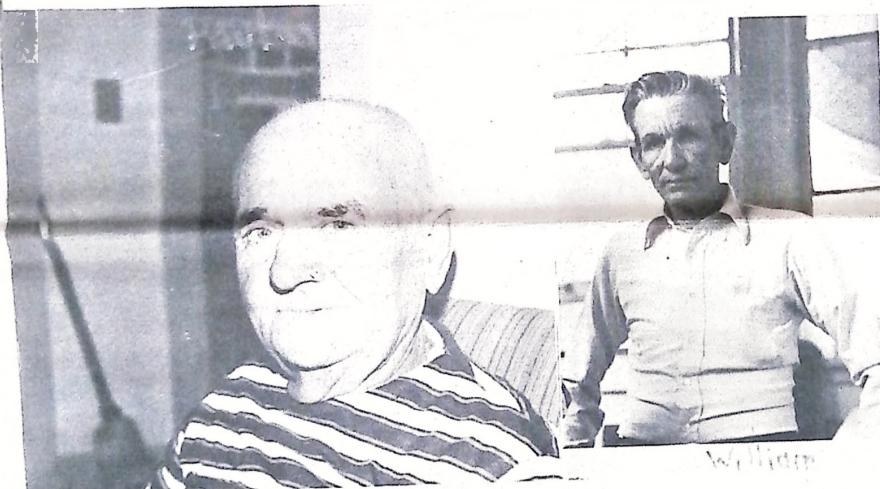
(Cont. on page 11 - NINE-TEN)

We are sad to note the recent deaths of four of our former house guests. Flo Rayburn lived with us on several occasions. She loved to preside over the daily soup serving and often filled the house with music as her fingers covered the piano keyboard in the liveliest renditions of favorite hymns. Flo died of cancer and we will miss her very much.

Roosevelt Richardson was our friend who lost both of his legs above the knees to frostbite in March of '83. He lived at the Open Door in his wheelchair for some months until he was able to receive disability assistance and moved into his own apartment in Techwood Homes. Roosevelt died of kidney failure. We will long remember him and what we learned from his tragedy about the need for warm, dry shelter the year around.

William Green was known to many of our volunteers from his time in our home and in the home of John and Donna Pickens. His "William Trees" which he eagerly and lovingly painted in Donna's art classes adorn the walls here and other places as a reminder of the desire in the human heart to create and share beauty.

Finally, Paul Turner was struck by a car and killed instantly as he tried to cross Ponce de Leon one night recently. We knew Paul as a kindly old man who loved to pick a good guitar tune and could always share a friendly greeting from the wall where he sat for so many years on Frederica Street. In a society that seems to value automobiles and speed more than human life, we grieve the loss of our friend Paul.



### Coming Soon

Vincent and Rosemarie Harding  
Keynote Address - Friday Nov. 23  
7:30 pm at Mt. Zion 2nd Baptist Church  
137 Boulevard NE  
Reception following at Open Door



Thanksgiving Weekend  
\* \* 1984 \* \*  
Distinguished Discipleship  
Series



### Volunteers needed

SOUP KITCHEN Each Wed. & 3rd Thurs. morning  
9:30am - 1:00pm

### Turkeys

Again this year we will be serving a special meal on Christmas Day for our homeless sisters and brothers. We need your help. We are looking for folk who will donate a cooked TURKEY and/or a pan of DRESSING. Please call Carolyn Johnson, 874-9652 if you can help.

Newspaper Requests If you or a friend would like to receive HOSPITALITY, please fill in this form and mail to Ed Loring.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

¡Basta!



**RIO GRANDE DEFENSE FUND**

¡BASTA! 5/95

MARY LYNN SHEETZ

★ "Enough"