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910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 • 404/874-9652

vol. 12, no. 1

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

January 1993

Women's Prison Abuse

Tantamount To Torture

by Murphy Davis

The long days and endless nights of prison life piled up on her shoulders like a dead weight. The noise seemed never to stop and a minute of privacy was an almost impossible pleasure. The depression of remembering the endless terror of her life and now the separation from her three small children pulled at her in the meaningless idle hours that stacked themselves like a brick wall around her. Suicide--once only a fleeting thought that she could chase like a cat out the kitchen door--settled in and took the shape of a reasonable option.

"Oh?" said the psychiatrist. And nothing more. She was led from his office and down the hall. The guards pulled mechanically at her clothes until they lay in a crumpled heap around her and she shrank in her nakedness. The cold metal of handcuffs snapped her arms behind her back. Shackles gathered her ankles and metal to metal the chain connected and snapped behind her. Then came the football helmet. "This way, you see, you can't bang your head. . . We don't want you to hurt yourself. . ."

The heavy metal door slammed behind them and her mental health treatment began. Only mealtime broke the cold concrete and steel isolation. The tray arrived. One time the guard unlocked her handcuffs long enough for her to eat. The next time the tray was simply left on the floor. If she wanted to eat she did it by shoving her face into the food, gobbling like a dog and salting it with her tears.

Then it stopped. How many days and nights? Who knows? God knows, there was no sun, moon, or stars--only a fluorescent sky. But she was better, they declared. Back down the hall she shuffled. Back to the dormitory with 49 other women. And this time if she had any thoughts plodding through her numbed brain she kept them to herself.

Since last spring the news has trickled out of the Georgia women's prison: sometimes one allegation at a time; sometimes a

flood. It has been a seemingly endless horror story of sexual assault of prisoners by prison staff, coerced abortion, forced prostitution, and mental health "treatment" tantamount to torture.

The light is shining on these allegations thanks to a suit filed against the women's prison by the Georgia Legal Services in 1984. The allegations over the past year have kicked the suit into high gear.

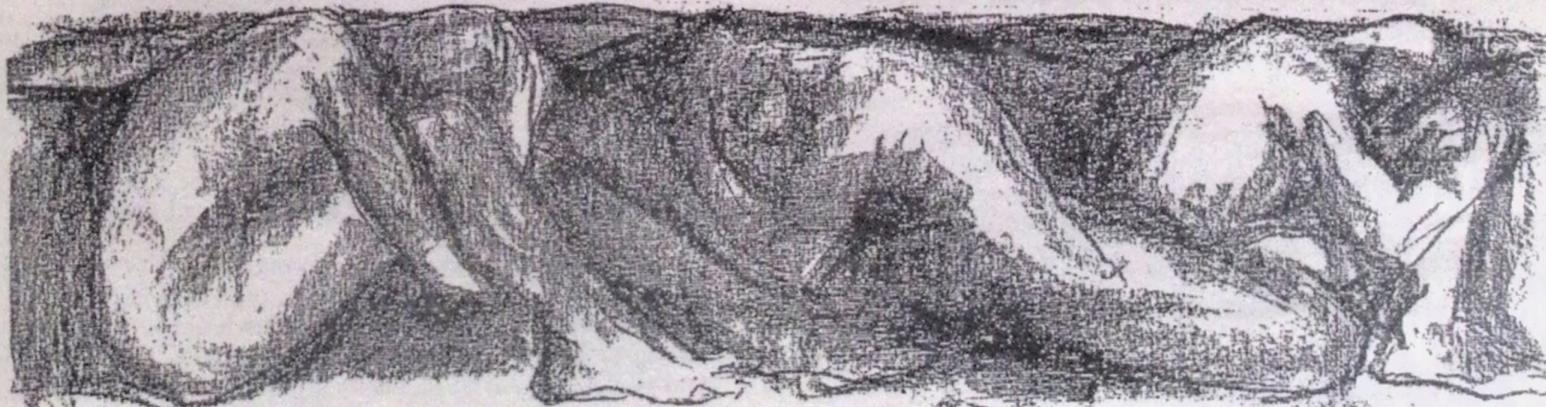
I often quote Dan Berrigan who said years ago that trying to tell people about prisons is like trying to hand them a bag of snakes. Nobody wants it and we'll do anything to avoid it. But this time the snakes are in our face. The well-concealed world of the prison system is being trotted out and we have to look, like it or not.

The silent screams and muffled suffering of captive women have come uninvited into our living rooms and it's time to hear what they are saying to us.

As of late 1992, well over 100 women in the Georgia prison system have come forward to tell of the treatment they have received in the system. Most of these have been at the Georgia Women's Correctional Institution at Hardwick; but others have been at the prison in Milan, Georgia, and allegations are already coming from the just-opened women's prison in Washington, Georgia.

It is acknowledged even by prison staff that a large majority of the women who go to prison in Georgia arrive in need of serious counseling for the physical, emotional and sexual abuse they have already received in their lives. It would be bad enough to realize that the prison system does not give, and never has provided, this needed help. It is nearly incomprehensible that what large numbers of women have received instead is added abuse of every kind and description.

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Becca Conrad

HOSPITALITY



910 Ponce de Leon

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

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Dee Cole Vodicka--Hardwick Prison Trip
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Circulation--Phillip Williams and a multitude of earthly hosts and guests
Subscriptions or change of address--Gladys Rustay

Drinking Fountain Fund

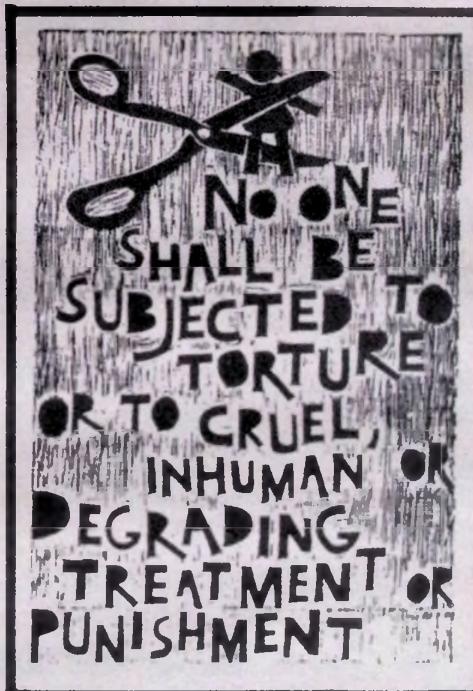
Several months ago we printed an announcement about our need for a drinking fountain outside for our homeless friends. Some of you responded very generously. Since then we have discovered that the water fountain will cost an additional \$500 if we are going to be able to install a durable, outdoor fountain. Please help. Give a drink to the thirsty!

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What we are hearing from hundreds of women prisoners is that large numbers of women have been raped by prison staff; that prison employees have offered special favors and even favorable parole recommendations in exchange for sexual contact; that some women who have refused sexual contact have been punished; that mental health "treatment" has regularly included stripping, hog-tying, chaining and isolating mentally ill and suicidal prisoners; that drug and prostitution rings have been operated to the benefit of prison staff. On one occasion we hear that when the warden learned of a prisoner being impregnated by a staff member he forced her to have an abortion. And we must remember that these reports come only from women currently in prison; they don't count the women who have been released from prison, those who have not been able to summon the courage to tell, and the women who, because of abuse and torture, are unable to speak out.

It would be reasonable to assume that these overwhelming allegations would be taken with utmost seriousness by our state's elected officials. We would like to think that every elected official and state worker in a position to do anything would be at work to ensure that anyone and everyone who participated in, had knowledge of, or tolerated such despicable behavior would be fired from their jobs immediately. And we would want to think that we would all work to make sure that such a thing never happens here again.

Instead, for months on end, the Governor and Department of Corrections staff have shuffled, covered for each other and over all, denied the seriousness of the situation. One warden has been replaced; some guards and maintenance workers have been fired. One worker, who had spoken with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation about his own misdeeds, and is said to have promised to return to give testimony about involvements of other prison staff, was found dead in his truck--poisoned. The Department of Corrections has hired Allen Ault, former commissioner of the Department to come back to the tune of \$75,000 a year to "handle the scandal."



When it became clear that a Deputy Commissioner knew about, but did not stop, the stripping and hog-tying of mental health patient prisoners, the Department spokesperson shrugged: "We didn't feel it was inappropriate because it was in line with standard operating procedures of the [prison] system."

Then, as if to add insult to injury, Terry Coleman, Chair of the Appropriations Committee of the Georgia House of Representatives, said that the women who have taken the risk of telling of their victimization should themselves be investigated and punished. All of this is to say that it is clear that our elected

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Angola Bound

by Ed Loring

*Too many mornings gonna wake up soon
Oh, Lordy eat my breakfast by the light of the moon
Oh Lord by the light of the moon
If you see my momma
Tell her this for me
Oh, I got a mighty long time
Lord knows I'll never go free
Oh Lord I'll never be free*

*Angola Bound now
Angola Bound
Angola Bound now
Angola Bound.*

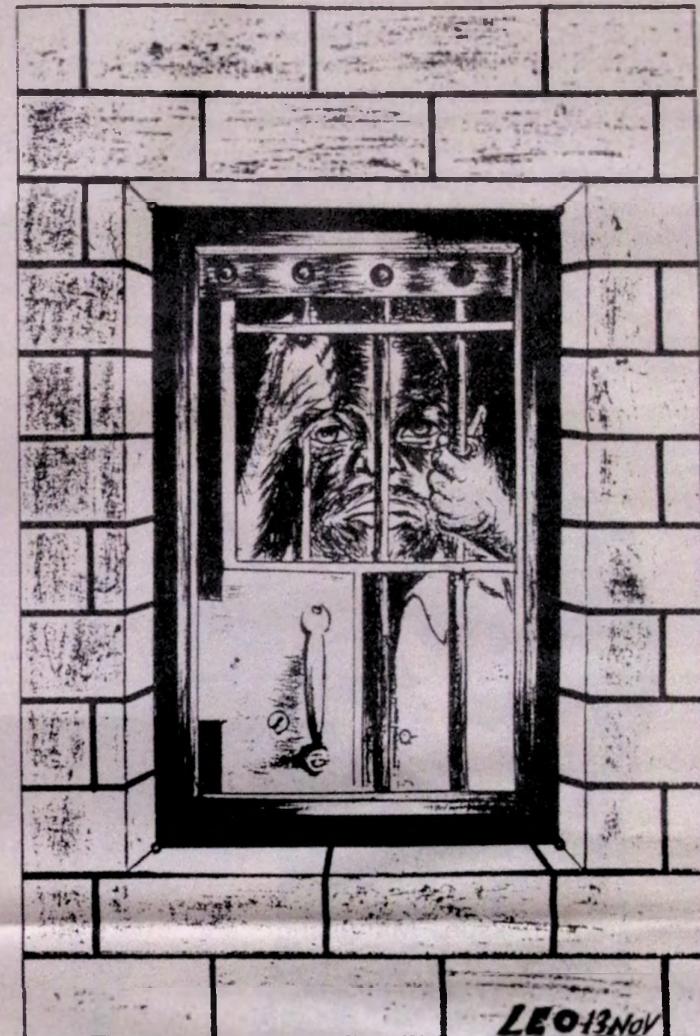
102340. Thony Lee Green is black. So is the sky. A nimbus of orange dances to the bumblebee buzz of the insecurity lights as I load my black boom box singing black man's blues into the back seat. Nibs hits the starter. We roll into the blue-black soft morning even before Mara Lyason begins to describe the damage done during the darkness.

102340. What would Thomas Merton think? A man has become a number by no will of his own, but at least his manhood is eroding in the flood waters of hell where survival is resistance. Death is the program. Death is white. I wonder in the parking lot if computers and numbers are used among the Trappists. I'll ask Father Tom Francis in October gold. Penitentiary.

102340. Rev. Stroupe lowers the steering wheel so that he may peer above his meaty hands as we turn onto Airline Highway. Baton Rouge is asleep except for the very poor and devout who, bent, pray for bread. We swing silently on to the white concrete of I-10 as signs sing of Natchez and we dream of Huck Finn, Sal Paradise and Jack Burden. Flames jump and dance from garbage gases along the Mississippi River. One must tour Cancer Alley when Angola Bound.

102340. June 1982. 5:30am: Thony got his beautiful black body out of bed. Ambled to the kitchen to fix coffee. (This was in the mornings before Ralph Dukes was the high priest of Java at 910.) 6:00am: Thony mopped the hall, dining room and living room floors. 9:00am: He spritely climbed the stairs to the Loring-Davis apartment where Mama Murphy handed Thony our 2 1/2 year-old bundle of love. We were off to a meeting in downtown Atlanta. An hour later (and three diaper changes!) Carolyn brought Christina to Thony while she finished the soup and sandwiches. At 10:45 Thony put our girls down for a nap and sped to the soup kitchen to ladle life to the starving ghosts and spooks of the kudzu patches and cathole cages along Ponce de Leon Avenue, NE. Suddenly, horribly deformed looking white men burst down the porch door. Yelling like injured weasles, guns aloft like Salvadoran death squads. They race through the dining room to the kitchen. Throw Thony to the floor. One actor in this nightmare puts his pistol to Thony's neck hollering that he will blow his head to pieces if he moves. Another man bends and beats Thony's arms behind his back while a third cuffs his gentle wrists with steel. Carolyn shouts, "Who the hell are you?" "None of your business, lady," snarls a snake who boa-like is hugging Thony to his feet. Another member of the posse flashes a Georgia Bureau of Investigation picture ID (I wonder if his number was 102340). They drag Thony out the front door, through the line of hungry humans whose hope is hopeless and throw him in the back of their car. His sentence: 102340, 482 years, Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola, Louisiana.

*I got lucky last summer when I got my time
Angola Bound
Oh my fally got a hundred
I got ninety-nine
Angola Bound*



Leo McGuire

*You've been a long time comin' but
you're welcome home
Angola Bound
Angola Louisiana get your burden on
Angola Bound.*

102340. Nibs swings onto Highway 61. We speak of Bob Dylan's "Revisitation" and the mass migration of Blacks and blues up this highway--North, North, North, North--yearning, seeking, fleeing, dreaming, traveling for justice in a white man's land. Muddy Waters. Malcolm X's dad, perhaps. Fannie Lou Hamer remained, we recall, as conversation rolls toward Ruleville, Mississippi and the weeds of Sunflower County. Catholic ghosts peer at us. We hit all three traffic lights in St. Francisville. *I dream: When was it that the Vatican agreed that one baptized Christian could own another baptized Christian? Do white men make black decisions? Is my visit to Thony a continuation of the Christian Theology that built and maintains St. Francisville? Do I really hear hope banging at my back door when I step over African American men curled together on my back porch? They used to sleep on the Druid Hills Presbyterian Church steps. Nibs nods. National Public Radio bellows at us: Clinton on a bus tour. Bush begging. Children in Somalia starving. Giant oaks dressed in gray moss wave good-bye. We reach Louisiana Highway 66. Turn left. Sign says: Angola 20 miles. (600 miles east of this Mississippi River, Hannah is leaving 910 Ponce de Leon for Inman Middle School. She skips across my heart).*

102340. The sky is black and begins to bleed as the shortest Presbyterian minister in America steers us onto the brown gravel parking lot in front of the steel gate and concrete guard house of the Louisiana State Prison. Twenty-thousand

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Angola Bound

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acres of rich farm land stretch and groan before us. An Old South plantation, really. Five-thousand, two-hundred (5,200) men are slaves here. 4,300 are people of color, 4,160 are African Americans. 900 are European Americans. Everyone is poor. Unlike our Georgia Prison/Plantation system, the slaves at Angola are paid for their labor. Thony receives four cents per hour. Two cents goes into his savings account and is his upon release; two cents goes into his draw at the prison commissary. After 3,723 days and nights at Angola, Thony has accumulated less than \$200.00. His primary job during these past 10 years has been cutting brush along the many ditches that lace this land in the Mississippi delta.

*Oh captain, Oh captain, don't you be so cruel
Angola Bound
Oh, you work me harder than you work that mule
Angola Bound.*



I step toward the metal detector which shrieks at me. Strip off my boots. Unstrap my belt buckle. Leave my glasses on the counter. Ah, finally the machine is silent. I can now redress. Nibs takes my notebook, 3 by 5 cards and pen which were not approved for the visit and turns toward the pouring rain. He is not allowed to visit. Angola allows no "special visits" whatsoever. What would Tertullian think? Moving westward, Nibs spends the next five hours listening to the Mississippi River moan and grieve. He drank from this river every day of his life for eighteen years. I sit beside some man's mother. We wait for the bus which will take us deep into the belly of this beast. Suddenly, roaring like a mad lion, the bus crawls up to us. After we are seated the driver closes the metal cage door and loops but does not fasten the pad lock. We are ready to roll.

102340. Maybe John Brown was right as he sat polishing his rifle before riding into Harper's Ferry. Blood must be shed for redemption. An idea expressed by Yahweh in the days before Mr. Brown saw red. The sky continues to bleed and weep as we visitors are carried toward the ones we love. The land is rain water wet and wonderful for weary workers. The big boss man,

as Jimmy Reed would sing, has called the slaves in from the fields. Sabbath Rest in cells and dorms. I peer out the filigree and filthy window and see my South. Surely the year is 1845; two men, one white, one black, on horseback with rifles. 40 convicts in two parallel rows marching with hoes on their right shoulders. In front of the men is another overseer riding with rifle ready. The horses skitter as the bus roars past. Again and again we come upon this configuration of brothers walking away from their ruined fields. I recall that in the American mythology of meaning we have not yet decided just why we fought the Civil War. John Brown was certainly clear.

*Oh, they always talkin' 'bout dangerous Blue
Angola Bound
If I had my shank
I'd be dangerous, too
Angola Bound
Oh, the captain says, "Walk,"
and the boss say, "Run."
Angola Bound
If I had my pistol I'd do 'nary one
Angola Bound.*

102340. Camp D. I enter the visiting area alone. All the other visitors tumbled out of the bus at the main prison. The guard at the front desk is a large African American woman. She is reading her Bible as I approach; she welcomes me. I sit alone at a small table for 50 minutes waiting, waiting, waiting for Thony. In front of me a man and a woman make love with their eyes. I try to stare out the window but the chain-link fence and concertina wire frighten me. I dream of Murphy Davis and wish I was home: "Christ if my love was in my arms and I in my bed again."

Finally Thony bounces into the room from a secret passageway beside the coca-cola machine. He is 6'1", 200 lbs., Black as an African King, shaved head. He is beautiful! We embrace. We are the only mixed couple in the room. Glances glance off my arms and the side of my head. I am the child of that MAN who rides the horse with rifle ready to kill. I am white.

"No, no, no! It's not cancer. I have arthritis in my back."

"How great! God, I've been worried. Thank God for arthritis!"

"Little Bobby came to see me in March. He is six feet tall. Gone man. The streets are hell. When I was out there we only did beer and whiskey. Not these damn drugs. Oh, God. My boy, my boy. This country's coming apart, man. Dead. White."

"Yeah, 2 bleeds = one case of Bugler. Four bleeds = 1 carton cigarettes."

"What!"

"Yeah. We have a plasma bank right here at the prison. Course you gotta be tested first. But if you can bleed, you can make \$8.00 to \$10.00 per week."

"Damn. I can't believe this!"

"Yep. 2 bleeds or 4 bleeds. But you gotta keep coming or they'll drop your butt fast."

We feast. Our cups runneth over. Cokes, french fries, hamburgers, fish sandwiches, coffee, candy bars. . . We are free and joyful. We are not even at Angola State Penitentiary at all. We are almost home.

*Thou preparest a table before
me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall*

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*follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the
LORD forever.*

(*Psalm 23, KJV*)

"Here, Thony," my mind plays games with me. "This french fry is the Body of Christ broken for you." He munches away. "Thony," my heart murmurs to my bowels and my guts grieve, "This cherry coke is the blood of the New Covenant, shed for the remission of sins." "Sure wish I had a woman," he slurps. I'm not yet quite ready for reality so bound by truth am I.

"Christ has died
Christ is risen
Christ will come again." (Damm).

102340. The gift of the clock is complete. The bus is waiting in the lot. The guard informs us. I go. Thony stays. But. . . we embrace. We kiss. "I love you, Ed." "I love you, too, Thony." "Good-bye." "See you in February." "Yeah, I hope so." The iron door closes behind me and in front of Thony. On the bus is a man angry at George Bush but who proclaims that he will never vote for a Democrat. He tells us of the problems in Israel. "We need to kill either all the Jews or all of the Arabs," he pontificates. "Those people have never been able to get along. I think if we kill all the Jews then the Arabs would fight among themselves, so it would only work if we kill all the Arabs." John Brown's body must have tossed a turn or two.

If it wasn't for the captain
Oh, Lord, and shaggy hounds
I'd be with my woman, yeah
before the sun goes down
They come up here skippin' and a jumpin'
Oh, Lord, they won't last long
Gonna wish they was a baby boy
In their mother's arms.

*Angola Bound now
Angola Bound
Angola Bound now
Angola Bound.*

102340.102340.102340.102340.102340.102340.102340.102340.
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Editor's note: The song, "Angola Bound," is from Aaron Neville's "Warm Your Heart," A & M Records, 1991.

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community.



Tantamount To Torture

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and appointed officials are unable to respond to this situation in an appropriate manner.

What we seem to have here is a group of men in charge who are simply incapable of understanding what is going on. They scramble to rearrange the same old pieces and hope the publicity will cease, without acknowledging that the conditions in our women's prisons are major violations of basic human rights and human dignity and will require a housecleaning, top to bottom.

A similar but quieter scandal occurred in the women's prison some 10 years ago when five men were fired, or "allowed to retire," for sexually violating the women. They included the head counsellor, the chaplain, the assistant warden for Security and two other staff. The Department of Corrections rearranged things a bit and went on. Obviously, the problem was not addressed.

We need to understand when an institution exists in which men hold keys and power and women are completely without power, there will be abuse. A women's prison is simply an exaggerated expression of our society and its values. Sexism is violent and deadly and cannot be addressed by firing some "bad" guards and hiring a fresh batch. The system must be overhauled

and must include stringent safeguards that guarantee the safety and dignity of women prisoners. The problem will never be adequately addressed by a group of white male political appointees who do not view the sexual abuse and violent domination of women as a problem to begin with.

The suffering inflicted on women in the Georgia prison system has gone on far too long. May we join our voices to demand a change of heart, mind, and practice that will guarantee health, safety and dignity for each of our sisters in prison. If we keep at it, the walls will tumble.

Murphy Davis is a partner at the Open Door Community and the director of Southern Prison Ministry in Georgia.

We built a wall
To separate dangerous from dangered
Like in from out
With a one-way door
Like life to death
With two sides
Like left to right
One with guards, the other guarded
Like good to bad
If we're so organized
Where did we go wrong?

ong.
Jonathan Lacey



STOP THE ABUSE IN THE WOMEN'S PRISON

Throughout history, women confined in Georgia's jails and prisons have suffered many abuses--physical, psychological, sexual. Some women have even died because of their captor's neglect and inhumanity. Because Georgia's prisons and jails are predominantly staffed by men, and because women prisoners are continually shortchanged by those who control the pursestrings, women inmates are largely ignored while incarcerated and often treated merely as objects to be abused and mistreated.

Perhaps nowhere is this abuse more currently widespread than at the Georgia Women's Prison at Hardwick, near Milledgeville, where 900 women are locked up. The past months have brought forth one frightening, sickening allegation after another--allegations that paint a harrowing picture of abuse that is extensive and out of control. Over 100 women have made allegations of physical and sexual abuse; as many as 50 prison employees are said to be involved in the abuse. High-ranking Department of Corrections officials have had knowledge of some of the abuses and in some instances have tolerated them.

In litigation filed against the Georgia Department of Corrections, women prisoners at Hardwick insist they have been:

- subjected to sexual assault by prison employees on a regular basis;
- raped by staff;
- coerced into sexual activity by both female and male staff;
- subjected to various other forms of sexual abuse by prison guards and counsellors;
- retaliated against for refusing to perform sexual acts with staff;
- abused physically and ignored medically;
- forced into prison staff-operated drug and prostitution rings.

Among the more specific allegations of abuse are:

- In a two year period at the Hardwick prison at least 64 women, many of them mentally ill or suicidal, have been routinely stripped, hog-tied, chained, handcuffed and made to wear a helmet while isolated in solitary cells. For some women, this practice has continued for up to 20 days! The Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Corrections admits to having known of this practice.

- One woman, impregnated by a prison guard during a sexual assault, was forced to have an abortion in an attempt to cover up the incident.
- There are 200 potential counts of rape against one former male prison employee.
- Women have been promised favorable parole reviews in exchange for sex.
- A number of women were taken off prison property and forced to act as prostitutes. Staff members took the profits.
- Women prisoners were photographed by staff for pornographic purposes.

The abuse is not only sexual. Medical care is sporadic at best. Counselling programs are largely ineffective, if such programs exist at all. Ironically, the vast majority of the 900 women confined at Hardwick are in need of intense therapy because of long histories, prior to incarceration, of having been sexually and physically abused. They receive no counselling at the prison; indeed, for many, the abuses continue while they are imprisoned!

THIS HOUSE NEEDS TO BE CLEANED!

Gov. Zell Miller and the Department of Corrections Commissioner Bobby Whitworth cannot be allowed to claim ignorance about what has gone on at the women's prison. There appears to be an attempt on the part of state officials to isolate several incidents, terminate a handful of prison employees, and hope that the bad publicity will go away.

Gov. Miller, Commissioner Whitworth, and other high-ranking Department of Corrections officials need to be held accountable for all that has happened at the Georgia Women's Prison. They need to hear from us now--to understand that such terrible abuse that goes on at the prison is not acceptable, that immediate reform is imperative.

Please call or write to Gov. Miller now! Let him know of your concern for the welfare of women who are confined in Georgia's prisons.

Demand an end to the Georgia Department of Corrections' mistreatment of imprisoned women!



Contact:
Gov. Zell Miller
State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30303
404/261-1776

Please send copies of your correspondence to the Governor to Southern Prison Ministry.
For more information on what you can do to help, contact Southern Prison Ministry 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306; 404/874-9652.

The Hardwick Trip: Keeping Hope Alive

by Dee Cole Vodicka

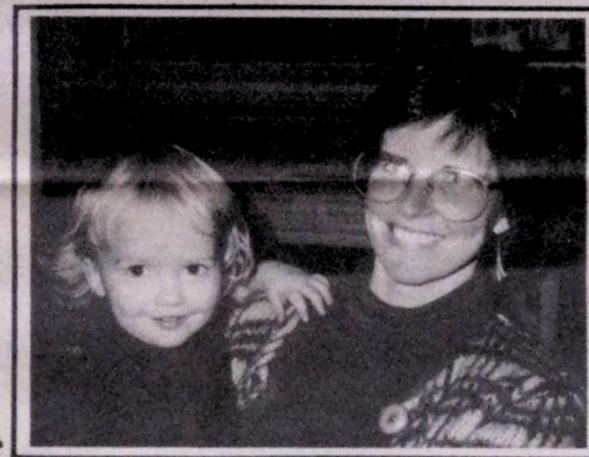
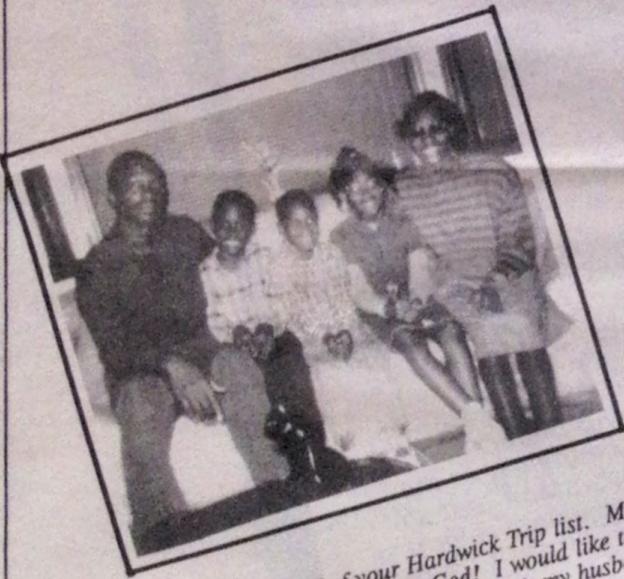
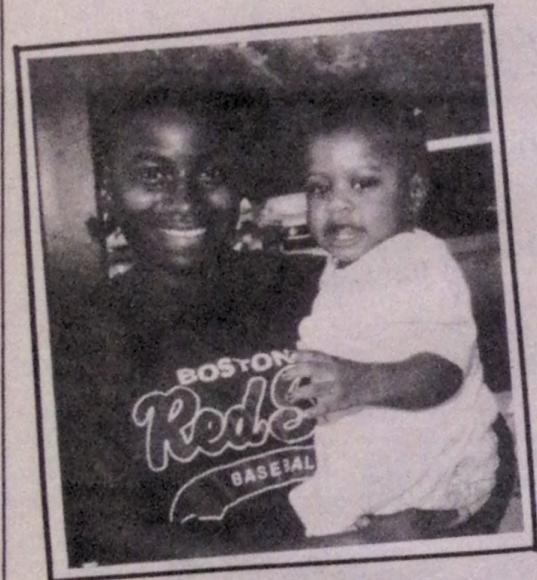
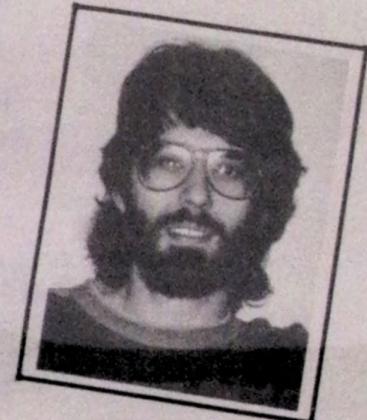
For over 10 years the Open Door Community and Southern Prison Ministry have been providing a vital service to Atlanta-area families who have loved ones incarcerated at the Hardwick prisons near Milledgeville, Georgia. On one Saturday each month 60-80 people, including many children, are given transportation to visit at one of the prisons.

We celebrate the strong commitments of all who help to make this trip happen: the faithful pool of volunteers who drive vans and cars filled with passengers; the local churches which supply a van each month--Central Presbyterian, Riverdale Presbyterian, and Central Congregational; and Milledgeville Presbyterian Church which hosts the group for the lunch meal each trip--a real act of love!

We celebrate the faithfulness and strength of the many family members who visit their loved ones and do all they can to keep their family together.

We are in need of new drivers for the trip, and are hoping to have more churches join us by providing vans. If you can help out, please call Dee Cole Vodicka at 874-9652.

Dee Cole Vodicka is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community and co-ordinates the monthly Hardwick Trip.



You may take me off of your Hardwick Trip list. My husband is home now, Thanks Be To God! I would like to thank Open Door volunteers for transportation to visit my husband this year. May you all continue to do a good work in every way. If it were not for the volunteers I wouldn't have been able to see my husband. Thank you so much!

Carla Weaver

I would like to thank the Open Door Community for providing a way for my children and their mother to visit me. Without the Open Door Community it would have been very difficult for them to visit me. It certainly helps being able to see them sometimes. I have been away from them for sixteen months and sometimes it feels like it's never going to end.

I'd like to ask the Open Door Community to pray for me and with me in asking God to give me a chance to be a part of my children's lives. I love them and I wish there was some way I could help provide for them. Once again I'd like to thank you on behalf of my children, their mother and myself.

Carleton Smith and family

Andrew Harvill: A Stronger Faith

Who am I? I am a child of God. That about says it all, but biographies would sure be short if that's all people wrote. Let's see, I was born in Decatur, Georgia in 1970. The first twelve years of my life were spent in typical middle class suburbs around Atlanta. I've always been a bit of a trouble maker, so most of my memories are of being in trouble: like the time I left my younger sister tied up in her closet for over an hour.

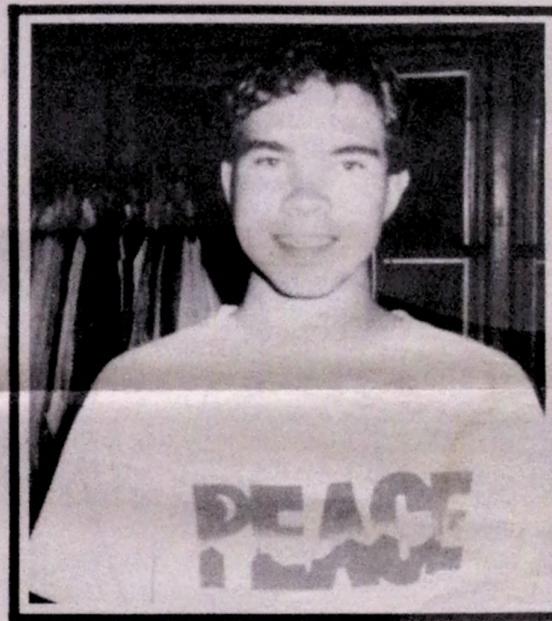
In 1982 my family and I moved to Australia. This was a big step in my dad's career with the Coca-Cola company. We lived there four years. During that time I had the opportunity to visit many countries all over the world. When we returned to Georgia my family lived significantly better than before, but I remained a typical teenager. I went to high-school, joined the wrestling team, and got a girlfriend. At that stage I was completely clueless as to what I wanted to do with my life. Because I had no goal, classes did not constitute a means to anything. Still, I managed to make good enough grades to go to college.

By the time I hit the Clemson campus in 1988 I was clearly in search of some knowledge of myself and the world that would give my life some meaning. I began to experiment with marijuana and LSD in the hopes of finding some hidden knowledge that could only be known with these mind altering drugs. A few weeks before the end of my freshmen year it was obvious that I was destroying my life. I was about to fail out of school, surrounded by shallow friendships, and really whacked out on drugs. I had completely forgotten the vague God I had occasionally prayed to, but apparently God had not forgotten me. I'm not going to go into any sordid details, but God and I had a real heart to heart talk that left me humbled.

In the summer of 1989 I was baptized and joined a church for the first time. As testament to the power of evil and my own weakness it was only a few months before I began to turn away from God. I had (like so many Christians) become comfortable in my faith. It's easy to believe you're following God when you do all the "right" things. I went to church, Bible study, service projects, and even prayed, but I was not following God. I was following a moral exercise program. I knew that if I wanted to get stronger I had to do these things. Alas, I never did get a stronger faith.

As graduation neared I once again began the

search for some knowledge of myself and the world to give my life meaning. I had now worked a year with emotionally disturbed teenagers at a residential treatment center, and had almost completed my degree in sociology. I figured I'd be well suited for graduate school in philosophy or sociology, a career in law enforcement, or even seminary. I might well have been successful in any of these endeavors, but something was lacking in all of these. Then one day while reflecting on nothing special it began to occur to me that there was something very strange with the notion that one gets what they deserve. There was something odd about the logic that justifies a rich person's wealth and a poor person's poverty. It was this little curiosity that eventually led me to the Open Door Community. Truly, I must have been guided here because these people too see this notion as being very odd. Every day it becomes more evident to me just how wrong it is to believe that any person is more or



Andrew Harvill

less entitled than another to God's houses, food, clothes, and love. Simply put, we are all children of God, and thus equally deserving. There really isn't much more to say about myself and the world than this.

JOIN THE OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY

A North American Base Community



SPEND TWELVE MONTHS
AS A RESIDENT VOLUNTEER



Live in a residential Christian community. Serve Jesus Christ and the hungry, the homeless and prisoners. Bible study and theological reflections from the Base. Street actions and peaceful demonstrations. Regular retreats and meditation time at Dayspring Farm.

Contact: Ed Loring, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212 * 404/874-9652 or 876-6977.

by Kathy Lancaster

Editor's note: Kathy Lancaster is a Presbyterian minister who staffs the denomination's Criminal Justice Program and is a friend of the Open Door.

Restorative justice has been a focus of the work of the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Program since 1989. We define restorative justice this way: addressing the hurts and the needs of the victim and of the offender in such a way that they and the community might be healed.

This double "triangulation"--some might say trinity--of attention is new to some people, and to the present realities of the criminal justice system. Attending to victim and offender, and the community as well, isn't the way it always works. And addressing hurts and needs and healing--holding them all in tension and working toward resolution--can be new news, too.

This concept--this vision, really--is receiving wider discussion in many places, and is already being lived in some outposts. (You're reading *Hospitality*, you know about the Open Door, so you know this to be true!) And many people and groups are contributing to the discussion of the vision, and its implementation.

Restorative Justice: Toward Nonviolence is one of the resources for this vision work. It is a discussion paper on crime and justice written by Virginia Mackey (United Church of Christ minister who lives in Rochester, NY). It has six chapters followed by questions for discussion. There's also a list of resources, information about organizations and models, and suggestions for putting it all to work.

It was published by the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Program, part of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry Unit of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The book is available, at no charge, in either single or multiple copies, from the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Program, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY, 40202-1396; (502) 569-5803.

The book includes the restorative justice hymn, "Reach Out With Justice, O People Of God," written by Brian Dill for this vision (to the tune--no accident!--of "Be Thou My Vision"). Sing, envision, and rejoice!

Restorative Justice



Reach Out with Justice, O People of God
SLANE 10.10.9.10

Harm. David Evans, 1927
Irish ballad

Brian Dill, 1991

1. Reach out with jus - tice, O peo - ple of God. 2. Reach out with jus - tice, let the heal - ing be - gin. 3. Reach out with jus - tice, de - chal - lenge goes on. 4. Reach out with jus - tice, clare what is right.

On wings of Go Help turn life's Why turn back

Reach Out with Justice, O People of God

mer - long - cy - now - re - of - the - store what was flawed. hearts sel - dom win - dawn. goal is in sight?

play - long - cy - now - re - of - the - store what was flawed. hearts sel - dom win - dawn. goal is in sight?

Reach out to je - sus come The count - ed. The to prison - er. to joie - ing. Fling

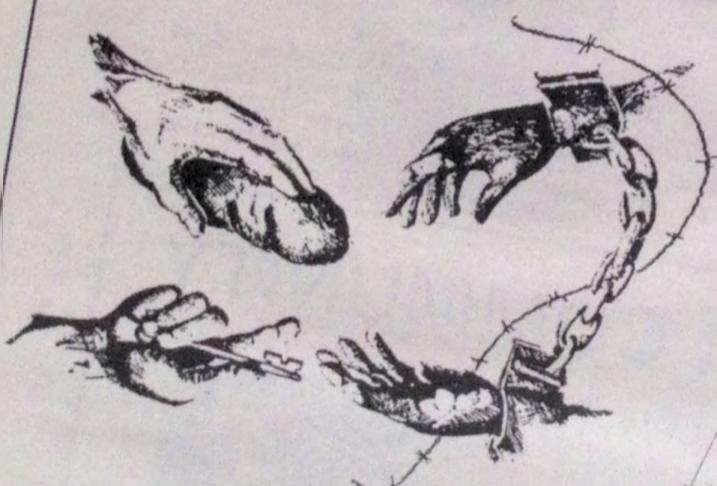
Reach out to be - re - count - ed. The to prison - er. to joie - ing. Fling

Reach out to be - re - count - ed. The to prison - er. to joie - ing. Fling

Reach out to be - re - count - ed. The to prison - er. to joie - ing. Fling

down from the Lord is your vic - tim, in wide hea - ven's cross: guide, love, door. who bet - ter Love can do Sure - ly such Ours is the un - der - stands the mean - ing of loss? an - y - thing with hope at its side, bro - ken - ness has bonds with a - bove, pri - vi - lege to find and re - store.

Words: Brian Dill for the Presbyterian Criminal Justice Program, 1991.
Music: SLANE Harmonization David Evans from the Revised Church Hymnary 1927. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.



Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Sisters and Brothers at the Open Door,

Hello! How are you? I miss all my sisters and brothers at the Open Door. Every month when I receive an issue of Hospitality I eagerly read it to find out what has been happening to you all in Atlanta. Actually, when I get a copy of Hospitality it feels like I am receiving a letter from home. Whenever I turn to the second page and see our family picture, I can feel a warm spot in my heart.

Life in Recife, Brazil has been good to me so far. For the first three months, I have been going to a tutor to study. Also, I have been living with a Brazilian host family in order to learn the language and culture. There are nine of us living in a small house. Thus, I don't have any personal space. But, they are friendly people and have a lot of patience with me when I stumble through my sentences. Currently, I live in a lower-middle class neighborhood and about a five minute walk from the *favela* (a word in Portuguese that describes the poorest of neighborhoods that contain the shacks) where I will work.

I have enjoyed visiting museums and historic buildings, going to the beach, and becoming familiar with the city. Also I have seen performances of traditional Brazilian dances like the Mara Katu, Frevo, Rumba, etc.

My work assignment consists of trying to form small groups to work on community development projects. With some groups, we will raise guinea pigs and grow vegetables in organic gardens as a means to provide a food source. I will be working with a group of folk who are trying to form a health clinic in the neighborhood to deal with some of the health care issues. Many people have told me that as interests and opportunities come and go, the projects I am working on will change. Also, I will be relating to a local chapter in Recife of a national movement that is trying to ensure that people who live in favelas receive their rights as citizens. This seems like a good balance between dealing with the pragmatic every-day issues and addressing some of the structural issues of oppression.

During the week that you observed the Festival of Shelters, I decided that I would have a special week of spiritual reflection as an act of solidarity with you all. My spiritual reflection focused on what I have forgotten and what I need to remember in life.

I thought I would share some of my thoughts with you. For me, the significance of the Festival of Shelters in my life has its roots in a story that has been passed down through several generations of my family. It is a story of how my own ancestors were homeless and wandered in the wilderness. In 1850, my great-great-grandparents took a boat from Germany to New Orleans. As they walked North following the Mississippi River, they had no money and few possessions. In order to eat, my ancestors had to go up to houses and beg for food. They felt terrible when their stomachs were empty and people would say, "No." Sometimes they would have to ask at three different houses before they would be able to get something to eat. They told their kids that they should never refuse people who ask for food because they just don't know how terrible it feels to be told "no" on an empty stomach.

Eventually, my ancestors arrived in the "Promised Land" of Central Illinois where they established a farm--the same one on which I grew up. Once my family had established a cow herd, they gave a milk cow to every new family in the community so that they could have fresh milk. This was my family's act of Festival of Shelters, or the act of remembering their experience in the wilderness. My family did not prosper due to self-sufficiency or by pulling themselves up by their own boot straps. All they received was a gift from God.

I have thought about the Bible study about the Festival of Shelters we had with Walter Brueggemann two years ago. My thoughts reminded me that I am a white, middle-class male from the oppressor class who grew up in Pharaoh's Temple. I have never experienced the wilderness. However, I need to remember that my own ancestors did and that many people in this world are still there. We don't have to return or regress to the wilderness. Rather, we are called to stay in the promised land and seek the cross which is the alternative way in the promised land shown by Jesus.

By remembering the poverty of my ancestors and of the people in this world, I need to become more compassionate and share what God has given me with those who need it. When I give someone a bowl of soup in Atlanta, or when I help someone grow an organic garden to help empower them to eat in Vila dos Milagres in Brazil, I am not just feeding a hungry person, I am also giving food to my ancestors.

The life and work of the community continues to be in my thoughts and reflections. Thank you all for being such wonderful and powerful influences in my life. I love you all.

May the love of God, the memory of Jesus Christ, and the renewing strength of the Holy Spirit be with us all as we struggle against the powers and principalities in this world.

Peace be with you,

Tim "Zig" Nafziger
Recife, Brazil

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Hi again from the hot but very dry Southwest. Watched a little of the Pittsburgh-Atlanta playoffs last night and it was remarked that it was pretty darn cool at the game, so y'all know another tough winter is on the way.

Big demonstration was held here on October 12 to protest the 500th Anniversary of Columbus' so-called discovery of America. He did not discover. He invaded and murdered and enslaved thousands of Native Americans. The protest also was against the University of Arizona and the Vatican building a giant telescope on Mt. Graham--a sacred place of the Apaches.

In solidarity and love--

Jerry Robinett
Tucson, AZ

□□□□□□□

Dear members of the Open Door Community,

I have been receiving Hospitality for about three years, since I heard Murphy and Ed speak at Seattle University on communities as ministry.

Each time I decide to write, I read a copy of Hospitality and am deeply moved by what I read, but also frustrated because I don't know how to share it with anyone. I guess I would like to try using Hospitality for my morning meditation once a month.

I work with newly arrived Mexican farmworker immigrants who also live way below the skewed poverty line.

You do witness to "Love One Another."

Thank you!

Sister Mary Ellen Robinson
Oroville, WA

□□□□□□□

Dear Open Door Friends,

I want to thank you for your hard work and spiritual help in the Atlanta area. Thank you for letting me as a new concerned person reach out to you one day in downtown Atlanta a couple of months ago.

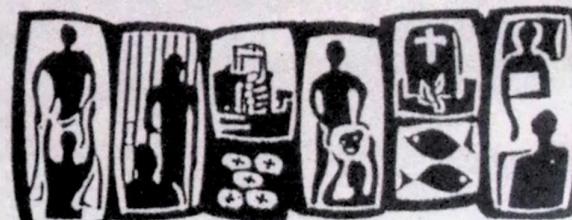
Atlanta needs to use its "urban housing zones" to help the working poor. Let us give a tax break to those families who go to work and make the effort, but are always left out of assistance by earning a very small amount of money!

I would like to see urban housing zones in my part of Atlanta, Ormewood Park, Benteen and Federal Heights. Small clusters would fit in and if well designed would be a plus--a wonderful opportunity!

I'm still fighting to rename Confederate Avenue to Veterans Avenue or some other name. The same people who want the negative name Confederate don't want to help the working poor! Please help us change a negative. Call and write City Hall. Contact council members Bill Campbell, Debbie McCarty, Myrtle Davis, and others. Send them a letter, or call and leave a message at 330-6030.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Petersen
Atlanta, GA



WE ARE OPEN...

Monday through Saturday, telephones are answered from 9:00am until noon, from 1:30 until 6:00pm, and from 7:00 until 8:30pm. The building is open from 9:00am until 8:30pm those days. (Both phone and door are not answered during our lunch break from noon until 1:30.) Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. On Sunday we are open from 7:00am until noon. Sunday afternoon our door is answered until 5:00pm.

OUR MINISTRY...

SOUP KITCHEN--Wednesday-Saturday, 11am-12 noon
SUNDAY BREAKFAST--Sunday morning at 910, 7:15am
BUTLER ST. CME BREAKFAST--Monday-Friday, 7:15am
SHOWERS & CHANGE OF CLOTHES--Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 2-4pm (Be sure to call; schedule varies)
USE OF PHONE--Monday-Saturday, 9am-noon, 1:30pm-5pm
SHELTER REQUESTS--Wednesday-Friday, 9am-noon
BIBLE STUDY--Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30-9pm.
WEEKEND RETREATS--Four times each year (for our household and volunteers/supporters), April 23, 24, 25.

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

Open Door Community Worship

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

Join us!

January 3	Worship at 910
January 10	Worship at 910
January 17	Worship at 910
January 24	Worship at 910
January 31	Worship at 910



We Welcome Students

In January, the Open Door Community will host ten to twenty students from Warren Wilson College, who will come to share in the life and work of the Open Door. Their time at the Open Door will fulfill requirements for a service commitment as part of the college curriculum.

At the end of January, Chaplain Greg Henley and Professor Charles McKelvey will bring a class of Presbyterian College students to the Open Door Community. They will be preparing for a trip to Honduras and an encounter with Third World poverty and the justice struggle.

NEEDS

JEANS

Men's Work Shirts
Men's Underwear
Quick Grits
Cheese
Mayonnaise
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Postage Stamps

Men's Large Shoes (12-14)
Coffee

Non-Aerosol Deodorant
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Disposable Razors
Shampoo

WINTER COATS

SWEATERS

HATS
GLOVES

*Soup Kitchen Volunteers
BABY CAR SEATS
Dressers*

From 11am til 1:30pm, Monday through Saturday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11:00 or after 1:30, it would be helpful.

A Note On Donations

We appreciate all your donations that keep us going. Please help us by bringing them only to our front door. We suggest you park in our side driveway, lock your car and come ring our doorbell. We will get folks inside to help you bring your gifts in.

Donations left at our back door usually do not get to us. Folks in our front yard may offer to help, but this causes problems for us, so we ask you to ring the bell and let us help instead.

Many thanks!

Newspaper Requests If you or a friend would like to receive HOSPITALITY, please fill in this form and return to Gladys Rustay at the Open Door Community, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____