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

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January 2002

Grant me justice! Terry Mincey and the parable of the persistent widow

By Tamara Puffer

Four years ago, I began visiting Terry Mincey on death row at Jackson, Georgia. I was a bit nervous the first time I met him. I thought, *What will we talk about?* Perhaps we would just sit there staring at each other. I had never visited anyone in prison before, let alone someone on death row.

That first day I went to visit, other Open Door people were visiting prisoners in the same room; Gladys Rustay was visiting Exzavious Gibson and Elizabeth Dede was visiting Jack Alderman. They did not seem at all concerned to be locked up with condemned killers. I thought, "I can do this!" But I did look at the window to make sure the guard was watching. I did not want anyone to know what I felt inside. After all, I had been volunteering at the Open Door for a while and I used to be a minister at a church here in Atlanta. I look back on it now and I chuckle at those first few visits. I am glad I pushed through my fears.

It did not take me very long to discover that Terry and I would have plenty to talk about. He was interested in everything. He had a quick mind and he spoke a mile a minute. He told me about a Scrabble board that he made. One of his prized possessions was a huge dictionary that he kept in his cell. He would flip through its pages and learn new words – and this was a man who did not graduate from high school.

He also worked on his genealogy. He told me how one of his cousins helped him do research on it. He had drawn an elaborate genogram from his notes.

And he showed me how to write certain characters in Japanese. We could not have paper or pencil in the visiting room but he would break off the tab from his soda can and then use it to draw on the counter that was in the room by the window. It could be wiped right off when we were finished.

One of his visitors was Mari Ohta, Ed and Mary Ruth Weir's daughter-in-law. She was from Japan and began visiting Terry in 1989 while in college. Terry became interested in anything Japanese, especially the language. He would sometimes sign his letters in English and in Japanese.

Mincey, continued on page 8

Murphy Davis and Terry Mincey: Hard Ball in the Fast Lane

By Ed Loring

Recently I knelt beside Murphy's bed and held her hand; I helped her breathe, deeply and regularly, as I did 22 years ago when Hannah came reluctantly from womb to world. Five times the needle was plunged deep into her back. Pain and hope battled all over the bed and through our hearts. Strong and faithful, Murphy jerked and cried until the fifth piercing was complete. Finally, the doc had two slivers of hip bone. Time was at hand to take bone to lab. We are thankful, nay joyful, to say the bone marrow biopsy was negative. The death-dealing cancer cells had not found that hiding place. Sweeter than honey is the grace of God.

We're at Grady Hospital again. A Holy Place in the center of our city where the homeless and convicted seek healing and health. Grady is filled with prayer, Bible reading, and work as hard as the Works of Mercy. This teaching hospital, where students learn by practicing under their teachers' watchful eyes, offers a good pedagogy – were you to ask Dorothy Day or Clarence Jordan. (Wonder if it would work in a discipleship school?)

Before we enter the hospital, we are wrapped up in love and support by beggars and street women who know us because we eat together. They welcome Murphy into this sacred and hope-filled space. When we push through the revolving doors – a good metaphor for health care for the poor – we are met by security guards and receptionists who see us often around the pharmacy. Smiles flash. They know we are not here today to visit or monitor the pharmacy.

As we reach the 5th or 10th or 12th floors – surgery, oncology ward, oncology clinic – we are greeted with welcome and warmth by the type of folk Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. died for: makers of beds, toters of ice and towels, nurses, a fair number of students, and an occasional long white coat doctor. Murphy is loved inside this hospital.

Murphy has Burkitt's lymphoma – though we all thought she would never face that demonic beast again. The long haul has become short again. Advent has brought us through Mary's pregnancy and into the rebirth of Jesus. Will there be room for him this year? Will there be room for his healing grace to be made manifest in Murphy's body? Jesus, the Human One, says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

Murphy concluded her public witness for the year 2001 in the visiting room at Death Row. Murphy and I joined many of Terry's friends as we sat with him, for his last visit before the state executed him. He was the first human being – created in the image of God, and loved by an ever-growing group of us – to be murdered by lethal injection in the state of Georgia. Electricians used to perform these most premeditated of murders, now it is medical folk.

I wonder: Did any of these lost and forlorn killers get their training at Grady? Emory? Morehouse School of Medicine?

We had a good day together. The body was chips and crackers; the blood was soda. Love was the measure of the day. The Christ was Terry Mincey. The charge was to love one another and never, never give in to the will of the numb ones, the violence of the American way of life, the politics of revenge among prosecutors and fallen powers. We

Hard Ball, continued on page 4



ARTIST UNKNOWN

The Presidential Triumphal Entry

By Nate Mathews

The president came to town on November 8, making his triumphal, authoritative entry into Atlanta to help calm a nation in upheaval. Open Door Community partner Ralph Dukes and I were driving back from a dental appointment that had run late, and as we drove down Ponce de Leon Avenue, the sides of the road became thicker and thicker with police cars. They were swarming like ants over seemingly every inch of unused space – at intersections, on sidewalks, in parking lots of gas stations. Ralph and I speculated on what the police officers' presence meant. "Maybe it was a hit-and-run," said Ralph.

When we reached the Open Door, I consulted with some of the folks who sleep in our front yard. John Gilkey informed me that George W. Bush was due to drive down this very street on his way to address the nation. Police had blocked off all six lanes of Ponce de Leon Avenue, and their black and white motorcycles cruised up and down its empty length, clearing out the remaining cars and people. The patrons and proprietors of Fellini's Pizza stood across the street, gawking at the scene. This made a fine contrast – a well-dressed, well-fed crowd of restaurant customers facing the starving, the dirty, the sick, and the weak. But the mood on our side seemed much lighter.

Randolph Johnson sat on the steps and joked, "Let's give a hearty 910 welcome to our president." Someone else was laughing at a flier of George Bush with the caption: *Wanted For Murder*. There was a steady stream of conversation on why this man was important enough to hold up traffic.

"I know those people who gotta wait now to get home are pissed!"

"We need to hold up a sign or something."

"I'll bet he ain't even in this procession."

The crowd was bubbling with anticipation when Open Door resident volunteer Alan Jenkins appeared on the front sidewalk with a "Stop The Death Penalty" banner and a picket sign that read "God Loves The Poor." Alan carried the sign, while a

few of our friends from the yard unfurled the banner and stood on the curb, waiting in the gathering dusk. The police officer standing in the street ordered us to move back to the sidewalk, which we did. But the banner could not be properly seen from that vantage point, so we moved down to the space where the Open Door driveway meets the sidewalk. This seemed to satisfy the cop.

For a few minutes everything was silent and we strained our eyes for a glimpse of the oncoming motorcade. "It's coming!" someone shouted and, sure enough, the gleam of headlights came over the hill. It was a veritable platoon of police motorcycles in close orderly rows. Following them were two squad cars, a highway patrol officer, and the state police. A helicopter droned overhead. Then came the limousines with dark windows and sleek black tires.

As the limos passed, I thought of something I had read or heard about how important such displays of power are, both for the bystanders and those in authority. We all share responsibility for supporting such demonstrations of force. Their ultimate significance is to intimidate and awe, and something in each of us wants to be awed by something. Each of us in positions of power projects that aura of invulnerability in order to keep from changing or being changed. The motorcycles, guns, and bulletproof glass were an impressive but thin veneer preserving that power for our president.

Somewhere behind that veneer, George W. Bush was preparing to give a speech to the nation. This was a man who claimed to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and so I wondered what he thought of the guns and cars and uniforms and pageantry that accompanied his "triumphal entry" into Atlanta. Did he know the same Jesus I do, who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? Jesus was greeted with cries of "Hosanna, Son of David," while the folks in our yard made it clear from their booing what they thought of George. The people spread palm branches before the donkey's hooves; George had only empty pavement to greet him. And then he passed on, his authority and presence rippling outward into the

Atlanta night. Jesus had gone on to be crucified, willingly losing all his power. I doubted whether Bush or any of us would have the courage to do the same.

On the street, a single Atlanta police cruiser ended the procession, the car's occupants oblivious to Bear, Stickman, Ronnie, Jimmy, John, Darryl, and the other men and women of 910 Ponce de Leon who had begun to take up their cardboard and walk to a cold, hard bed.

Nate Mathews is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Groups to make sandwiches for Soup Kitchen
- People to cook or bring supper for the Community on occasional Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays
- People to answer the phone and door various mornings or afternoons during the week (9 a.m.-noon, 2-6 p.m., training provided)

For more information, call Phil Leonard at 404-874-4906 or e-mail him at pleon2000@mindspring.com

HOSPITALITY

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

Phil Leonard: Volunteer Coordinator, Hardwick Prison Trip

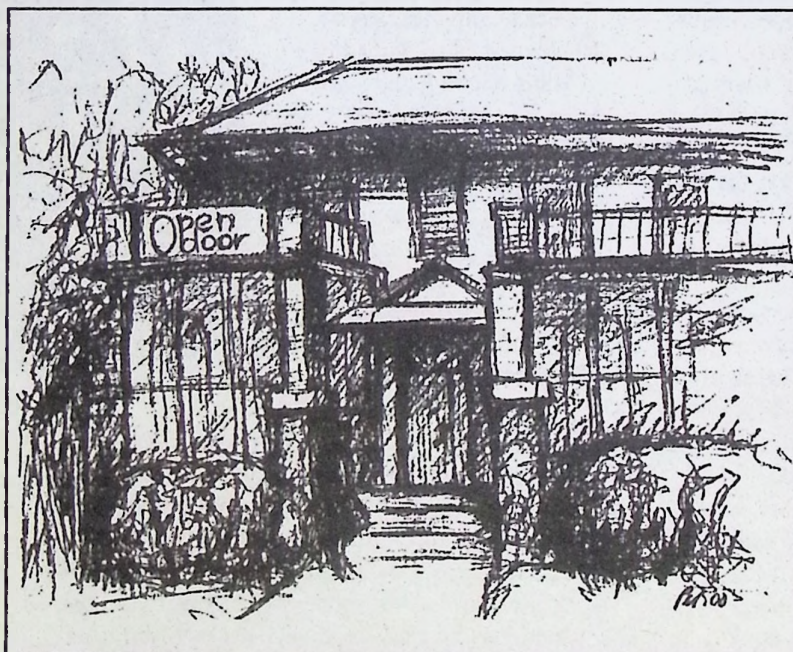
Tonnie King: Guest Ministry, Food Coordinator, and Hardwick Prison Trip

Gladys Rustay: Treasurer, Jackson Prison Trip, and Food Coordinator

Ed Loring: Correspondence; Resident Volunteer Coordinator

Murphy Davis: Southern Prison Ministry, Worship and Music Coordinator

Dick Rustay: Dayspring Farm Coordinator



HANA PERNOVA

Newspaper

Editor: Murphy Davis
Acting Editors: Hannah Loring-Davis, Mary Byrne
Layout Editor: Mary Byrne
Associate Editors: Ed Loring, Gladys Rustay, and Tonnie King
Copy Editing: Alice Alexander, Julie Martin, Tamara Puffer, Gladys Rustay, Charlotta Norby, and Michael Galovic
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Open Door Community
 910 Ponce de Leon Ave NE
 Atlanta, GA 30306
www.opendoorcommunity.org
 (404) 874-9652; 874-7964 fax

Protest and Procession at the School of the Americas, 2001

By Toni Flynn

(Editor's note: Toni Flynn is the founder of the High Desert Catholic Worker in Valermo, CA. She spends her days protesting war, working for justice, writing poetry, praying for peace, and working with the Benedictine monks at a Monastery down the road from her house. The following is an email written just before Toni left for the SOA demonstration.)

I leave tomorrow for the L.A. Catholic Worker house. Thursday morning one of their Community members will drive me to the Los Angeles Airport, where I will board a plane bound for the School of the Americas protest at Fort Benning, GA. On Sunday I will be joining others in a procession where we risk arrest. It may be that we will be ignored, or arrested by the Columbus city police with only a couple of days in jail, or we may be arrested by the military on the base (if we make it that far), whereupon I and others face the possibility of six months in prison because we have a "Ban and Bar" notice from last year. I will be in the company of many good people, including priests, nuns, and Catholic Workers so I expect to be okay, though I have to admit it is much easier to talk about peace activism than it is to act on it.

I am nervous. But I am a pacifist, sincerely, and a Catholic one at that. I must therefore behave and act from that center or it means nothing. The cause to close down the School of the Americas is not a popular cause outside of the circle of Catholic Social Justice, especially this year while the U.S. is waging a well-supported war. It is not a popular cause with the U.S. government, the military, nor with the everyday citizen. But as an American Catholic, I cannot stand by while a U.S. Military Base sponsors a school, with American tax dollars, that trains military officers from South and Central America and Mexico to go back home and kill their own with tactics akin to the terrorism we have just condemned on September 11th.

Among the victims of SOA trained military forces are Archbishop Oscar Romero, the Jesuits slain in El Salvador, and the church women, also slain. And of course the countless, nameless poor. According to the faith I cling to, these people lived and died as part of the mystical Body of Christ -- the same Body that invites us all to live lives of mercy and justice. So this "cause" is much more a spiritual endeavor for me than it is a political one. And yes, from my viewpoint, it is also a way to remember all people who have suffered and died through violent means, including those who died on September 11th of this sad year, those who die now in Afghanistan, and those young soldiers -- our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, who, as in times past, are now being sent to kill and be killed in a far away place because we have not yet figured out Christ's alternative "Way."

I swear, I have spent hours this week studying the crucifix -- the cross of Christ -- that hangs on my

wall, and I can't find anything there that leads me to conclude that we are supposed to live any way other than non-violently. In the face of great suffering, injustice, and a violent death, Christ did not incite violence nor armies nor revenge. He went all the way through a grieving process -- so far through that it led to Resurrection. To me, the image of the crucified Christ is saying, "Okay. I am not hanging here so that the violence goes on. I am hanging here to restore humanity to wholeness. I am absorbing the entire range of suffering and violence that humans, from

their beginning to the present and beyond, inflict upon their earth and against each other. I am doing this so that no one ever again has to strike out against anyone else. I am doing away with 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth.' Everyone can now try something new. Something that restores and sustains justice without harm. Disarm. Love one another. Forgive one another. The violence stops at this Cross forever." At any rate, that's what my

crucifix seems to be crying out for my ears to hear. Otherwise, the image is just too awful and disheartening to bear, isn't it?

I feel we have not yet integrated the message of Christ, not even those of us who claim to be "Christians." We remain, most of us, in the Dark Ages, or worse, in a state of primal, instinctive immaturity. I really believe that if we collectively refused to resort to war and violence, if we disarmed the earth and began to place human rights and the care of the earth before our desires for power, dominance, control, and self-serving lifestyles (always at the expense of other, poorer ones), we would create a space wherein a new wisdom would develop. We would see new and peaceful visions, create alternative ways to resolve conflict short of torturing, bombing, and killing each other. When wronged or harmed, we would see how to restore justice mercifully, without becoming what we most oppose, without further destroying lands, without violent retaliation against other human beings, without arming the world and space with more weapons of mass destruction, without losing a single son or daughter.

Until everyone begins to believe in that possibility rather than insist on war, people like me and the others who will gather at the School of the Americas this weekend will look very foolish indeed. We will be dismissed as naive, unpatriotic, or crazy. Well, I say this: if I'm going to remain a Catholic, I must then keep trying to make sense of the Cross by praying, practicing non-violence, and yes, by looking foolish. This may mean processing to a jail term. If Christ is anywhere, it will be in that procession.

I am asking my friends and family to pray for me. Pray for the others who will be gathering for the event. Pray for the SOA Watch organizers, pray for all of the victims we will be remembering. Pray for peace on earth, good will toward all.



ALAN JENKINS

Colors, marching, and pageantry unfolded at this year's weekend of actions at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, GA.

Open Door a Witness to SOA Actions

By Alan Jenkins

Along with other members of the Open Door Community, I went to protest the School of the Americas on November 18, and saw how surprising and refreshing is God's work in the world.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois, founder of SOA Watch, proclaimed, "We are touching the sacred." Reflecting on the events in the days preceding and following the actions at the SOA, I began to see how God was using this sacredness.

First, in the weeks before the protests, the City of Columbus sought an injunction forbidding the protesters to process up to the gate of Ft. Benning. Then, just two days before the action was to take place, Federal Judge G. Mallon Faircloth denied the City's request. Despite his ruling to imprison over twenty SOA demonstrators earlier in the year, and despite Ft. Benning's being on high alert status, Faircloth ruled that forbidding the protests was a denial of first amendment rights.

Second, in the week following Sunday's arrest of eighty non-violent demonstrators, Judge Haywood Turner released everyone -- including Toni Flynn of the High Desert Catholic Worker. Turner dropped the charge of unlawful assembly and noted the non-violent character of their actions in response to the charge of "obstructing an officer." Upon releasing them from jail, Turner spoke on the tradition of non-violence embodied by Dr. King and Gandhi, and pledged to write each released prisoner personally.

Third, Bill HR 1810, proposed by six U.S. Representatives, calls for the closing of The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (the SOA's new name) and for the establishment of a joint congressional task force to assess U.S. training of Latin American military personnel. As of November 30, 2001, eighty-two Representatives have signed on as co-sponsors.

Fourteen people arrested at the School of the Americas still face federal charges, which may carry six months to a year in prison.

In solidarity with these faithful, we can contact our Representatives. If they are already listed as co-sponsor of Bill HR 1810, thank them and ask them to actively work for its passage. If not, urge them to call Cindy Buhl in Rep. McGovern's office or John Hendricks in Rep. Scarborough's office to sign on as co-sponsor.

We can also visit

www.soaw.org

for information and steps to take.

Alan Jenkins is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

Hard Ball, continued from page 1

said the benediction together, to remember and grieve for the pained and broken victims who need love and healing: Grace and Peace to you.

When Terry Mincey walked from the deathwatch cell toward the visiting room, he was the enemy of the guards and staff; he was a death row inmate, the monster who must, at all costs, be controlled and belittled. There are guards who act humanly in light of the fall of humankind. But rarely does a simple long-timer like her or his work or those who make them do what they have to do. The cry for death and domination kills the crier and the human sacrifice.

Just out of the cell block, Terry, who needed no biopsy, dropped his drawers and a guard poked and pulled at every crevice looking for drugs that the prison staff might have snuck into death row. Then this dead man walking, was led to the visiting room as the mystery of Matthew 25:36, "I was in prison and you visited me," moved from words to love-in-action. Even Mary Sinclair noted the crucifix and then an empty cross that appeared occasionally on the concrete wall facing steel bars and wire mesh.

At three in the afternoon the guards came for Terry, just as their forebears had come for Jesus outside the Garden of Gethsamene. Temple guards; death squads in Jackson, Georgia; off duty police, guns loaded, moonlighting in the sunshine to protect the confessors of the cosmic Christ from the synoptic Jesus. They are of the same ilk. They only do what they are told to do. Who tells them?

So Terry turned from friends and family toward the hungry death machine, wheels rolling, lips smacking, needles pointed, like bombs aimed and butchering our sisters and brothers in Afghanistan.

Four hours later, Terry was dead.

Over the years of visitation and resistance with our brothers under death sentence, we have always gone to a nearby road restaurant to wait for life to dance its final pirouette. At the truck stop, John Hanusz wept, Randy Loney could not sit still. While the victim ate his Last Supper, we too, picked at a plate of greasy food – less than a mile away. Thus we share, as best we can, another sacramental moment. The food is heavy. The table talk is love, hope and recommitment. Why not join us? We got lots more state murders a-comin' our way.

We are apart and we will never see Terry on earth again. He sits at the welcome table in the Beloved Community. His first supper was great: a triple cheeseburger, no onions, extra tomatoes and mushrooms, and two plates of French fries with spicy ketchup and a chef's salad with no ham.

During our shared meal, Murphy became ill again. We left the table and headed for New Hope House so she could rest. She could not return for the vigil at the prison at 6:30 p.m.

Two days later Hannah and I, led by Marilyn Washburn, rushed Murphy to the emergency room at Grady where needles did a different kind of work. Needles can induce death; needles can preserve life. Murphy got a life needle; Terry a death needle.

While kneeling beside Murphy a week after Terry's murder, with Murphy "sprawling on a pin, ... pinned and wriggling on the bed" suddenly I saw Terry. Murphy's bed became a gurney. We were holding him down. He jerked and cried. The doctor's needle slipped several times, then back again, back again. The needle whirled and sunk deep into his flesh. Terry looked up at me. "Do something. Do something," he screamed. I tried to say something,

Hard Ball, continued on page 10

Candles in Cobb County for Fred Gilreath

By Debby and Brian Freel

Three years ago, we sat in a circle in the yard behind 910 Ponce de Leon, discussing how to correspond with prisoners on death row. Soon we began writing; then Brian visited. We have been surprised and blessed by our friendship with people on the row. Last year we invited other people in our church to start writing; by this year, we have twenty-three people writing to prisoners on death row.

When Georgia resumed its rapid schedule of executions in October, we knew we had to do something. We had been to vigils at the capital building in Atlanta with our brothers and sisters from the Open Door, but we wanted to do something in our area – Cobb County, about fifteen miles from Atlanta. We wanted more people to be able to make a stand for life. So we called a few friends, some local churches, and the local newspaper. Before we knew it, we had assembled a group of prayerful people.

We were just the seeds for something bigger.

In different versions of the Bible, the words "justice" and "righteousness" are used similarly. One translation may say "righteousness," while another version may use the word "justice" in the same place. This is understandable in that one way of describing "justice" is "to make things right." For example, if someone steals money from you, even if that person apologizes and you forgive the person, it doesn't "make things right." Justice demands that he or she somehow make recompense to you.

While executions are never really "justice," the case of Fred Gilreath clearly shows the utter contradiction of the death penalty: *two wrongs don't make a right.*

About twenty years ago, in the heat of passion and a cloud of drunkenness, Fred Gilreath killed his wife and father-in-law, leaving

his son and daughter effectively orphaned. Mr. Gilreath's children were truly victims of this terrible crime, suffering things that no child should ever have to face.

However, these same victims came to forgive their father and were reconciled with him. They visited him and brought their children to spend time with their "Poppy." The execution of Mr. Gilreath certainly did not "make things right" with

his family. His execution has only increased the pain and suffering of his four young grandchildren who will miss their "Poppy."

As on the night Jose High was executed, we stood near the Cobb County Courthouse in Marietta, holding candles. We read from the Bible, we proclaimed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words of nonviolence, we sang songs of peace, and we stood in silent prayer for the victims of murder and of execution. It was a simple gesture, but it was beautiful to experience the power of prayer. None of us had met Fred Gilreath or any members of his family, but, in prayer



ARTIST UNKNOWN

to our God, we felt as one family mourning the death of one of our members. We felt a glimmer of hope when we heard that Fred had been given a stay until 3 p.m. the next day. Tragically, time ran out, and Fred Gilreath was executed.

In the face of violence and death, we made a stand for peace and life. We will continue to vigil as long as necessary and as long as the Lord allows. Please join us by making a stand for life in your church, where you work, in your city, somewhere, anywhere. One little candle can dispel much darkness, especially when things seem so bleak. Ending the death penalty in our state is not an impossible dream. You can make a difference.

(Debby and Brian Freel are members of the Pax Christi Group of Transfiguration Catholic Church in Marietta, GA. For information on their actions and witness against the death penalty in Cobb County, write papaharb@bellsouth.net, or call (770) 977-1442, x149. For information on Georgians For Alternatives to the Death Penalty, go to www.geocities.com/gfadp.)

Inch by Inch: Down the Road to Healing

by guest columnist Hannah Loring-Davis

It has taken me years to understand why my mother, Murphy Davis, named her regular column *Inch by Inch*. Nothing about her life has ever seemed to me to be measured in inches – surely the piles on her desk could be measured in feet; her ever-growing “To Do” list could be measured by the reams of the paper consumed in the process of writing them; the daily stacks of mail and memos that both enter and leave her office could certainly be calculated in pounds, even hundreds of pounds.

Murphy writes and visits prisoners, raises money for the ministries of The Open Door Community and Southern Prison Ministry, plans worship services, edits *Hospitality*, and does a lot of preaching and teaching. She is a patient and powerful presence, both in the community and to whom she meets through her prison ministry and teaching engagements.

But it's not just the piles in her office and her hectic schedule that have me confused about this *Inch by Inch* name. During the years that I have lived away from home, I have often had to resort to telling her stories and asking questions about her life through her voicemail system. She is one busy woman, and there is often no way to both maintain any level of sanity for myself, and keep a firm grip on her schedule!

Alas, so much to do and so little time.

Six years ago, in 1995, Murphy was diagnosed with a very serious and fast-growing cancer called Burkitt's lymphoma. Doctors told us that she would die and that there was a slim-to-none chance of

recovery – but she triumphed. After a long and arduous chemotherapy treatment, no trace of the cancer could be found. When three years of complete remission had passed, she was declared cured.

Life in its fullness has been a sweet gift since that time. We have all worked hard to be healthy and to strive even more diligently for justice and peace, for housing for the homeless, freedom for prisoners, and healing and comfort for the broken. That sweetness lives on in each of us!

Five months ago, Murphy began to experience some unusual intestinal problems. She dealt with pain and discomfort – never letting anyone know how much she was actually hurting. Finally, a CAT scan showed a mass; further testing indicated malignancy.

Murphy has been re-diagnosed with Burkitt's lymphoma. Though she is ill and weakened by the chemotherapy regimen that has been prescribed, her body is strong and her spirits ready for the fight. The doctors feel confident that we have caught the cancer early, and that the chance for life is a strong one.

Yet the Grace of God moves slowly. There is no way to know at the beginning of this journey we are asked to walk this road. Each day we learn anew the radical nature of the love of God as we are comforted by the Holy Spirit made manifest through our supporters, friends, and family. But we must continue to work, and work hard, to find healing, in order that we may continue to create a vision of the Beloved Community.

But choosing life is not easy! W.H. Auden

wrote, “To choose what is difficult, all one's days, as though it were easy; that is faith.” Murphy is choosing what is difficult, but her faith, and the outpouring of support make the road smoother.

When I was a child, Murphy would often sing to me David Mallett's song: *Inch by inch, Row by row, Gonna make this garden grow, Gonna mulch it deep and low, Gonna make it Fertile ground.* Now is the time to move toward healing and wholeness; the row is long, and we must inch our way toward the fertile ground called life. There is no other way than to do it inch by inch.

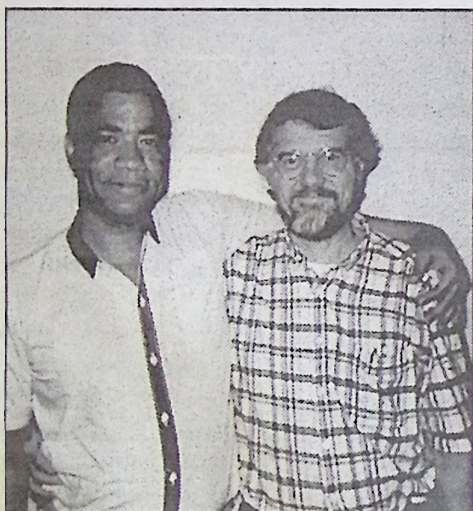
I am finally understanding her reasoning. To move along, inch by inch, we are able to move closer to the Beloved Community; we are able to walk closer to Christ – who died that we may live.

Inch by inch, we are moving through the pain and disappointment of this recurrence of cancer. Inch by inch we stand with Murphy as she bears a load we cannot carry for her. Inch by inch, we remember that God has called us to an abundant life as members of the Beloved Community – but as we choose to walk toward that life, we must also choose the hard road. No easy short cuts along this way.

The covenant that God has promised makes the load lighter and easier to bear. And we walk on, one inch at a time. Inch by inch by inch.

Hannah Loring-Davis is on staff at The Other Side magazine. She is working from Atlanta so she can help care for Murphy during her chemotherapy.

Jose High was executed by the state of Georgia on November 6, 2001. He was a friend of the Community through his relationship with Ed Loring, who visited Jose regularly for 23 years. He wrote the following letter to Ed just before he died.



Dear Rev. Loring,

I sincerely hope and pray that Murphy is doing better. She is a strong woman. I received a visit from Rachael this morning and she informed me on what's going on with your special lady. Please know that my prayers are with you and Murphy, my friend. I love her too.

...I'll be all right. They want to kill me but they can't, my brother. For I live in others. We know this but they don't.

Mail has just been run and I have mail from you. Brother Loring, I know this is a tough time for you, but you must be strong. The stronger you are, the stronger Murphy will become. Believe.

Thanks for everything, my friend. I really appreciate your kindness. Well, I'll sign off for now, but know my prayers are with you and Murphy.

With love,
Jose

Dear Ed,

We join a prayer watch with you in Murphy's behalf. By the time you get this, the surgery will be past. And our hopes and prayers that the tumor was benign, or if not, that the surgery cleansed the malignancy.

You've got hosts of friends sweating out Murphy's illness. She and you have given so much to others – now it's time you reap a return.

Another sweat you and I have is this cursed war, which may boomerang as the biggest swindle in history. It's really about South Asian oil. Bush and the strategists used the dead of 9/11 to secure public support. In war the first casualty is truth.

Please let me know about Murphy. Sending you and herself much love, many thanks, Christ's peace.

Phil Berrigan
FCI Elkton
Lisbon, OH

(Phil Berrigan is a political prisoner. He is serving a sentence for his participation in a Plowshares action. Not only is Phil a committed activist, but his second claim to fame is that he is a regular voice on the letters page of Hospitality. We pray that Phil will soon be released from prison, but we are also thankful for the witness that he makes while behind bars.)

Dear Ed,

It's been a hard couple of weeks here. We've been praying for Murphy. I hope with all my heart that she is okay.

I was shocked that they'd resume executing people before the courts ruled on lethal injection in Georgia. No one's yet been able to tell me when the state will be sated, how much killing is enough for Georgia.

I finished my most recent college course. I didn't do very well on the final but am still hoping for an “A” in the course. These days it just doesn't seem all that important.

A friend in prison

O Lord, What Was Wrong With Our Nonviolence?

A New York Catholic Worker Witnesses September 11

By Felton Davis

(Editor's note: Felton Davis is a member of the New York Catholic Worker.)

Greetings from Maryhouse in New York City, where we wake up in the morning several times a week to the persistent smell of burning metal. This is our life now, to live in a fear-and-grief-filled city. Several times during the past two months, when the government has issued further threat warnings, I have slept with my shoes on, to be ready to jump up and evacuate the house and run.

This summer I worked with Voices-in-the-Wilderness on a forty-day fast and vigil against the sanctions on Iraq, across the street from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations on 45th Street. Every day starting on August 6th (the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and also the anniversary of the initiation of the sanctions in 1990) we kept vigil opposite the U.S. Mission and passed out leaflets, and took only water or juice. The first week was the hardest, because the temperature was over 90 degrees every day for six days running.

On August 15th, the tenth day of the fast, we brought a small plate of beans and rice to the steps of the U.S. Mission, equivalent to what would be available to an ordinary person under the oil-for-food program, and offered to break our fast if someone from the mission would come out and share it with us, discussing the consequences of sanctions for the people of Iraq. They refused to meet with us, ordered us to leave the steps, and sent for the city police to arrest us.

On August 22nd, the seventeenth day of the fast, we returned to the steps of the U.S. Mission with another small plate of food, and again offered to break the fast if the necessary discussion could begin, if someone from the mission would just come out and meet with us. The only acknowledgement of our presence was that we were ordered to leave, and again the city police were called in, and we were all arrested.

On August 29th, the twenty-fourth day of the fast, we returned to the steps of the U.S. Mission for a third time and offered to break the fast if someone would meet with us to discuss the sanctions, and for a third time the only acknowledgement of our presence was that we were ordered to leave and the city police were called in to arrest us.

On September 4th, the thirtieth day of the fast (I know this is starting to sound like a broken record), we returned to the steps of the U.S. Mission for a fourth time, and offered to break the fast if someone would meet with us to discuss the sanctions, and for a fourth time the only

acknowledgement of our presence was that we were ordered to leave and the city police were called in to arrest us.

By this time in the fast, many of us were having some difficulties; we had lost a lot of weight in the summer heat, and were walking around in a strange state of low blood pressure. That little plate of beans and rice on the steps of the Mission began to take on extraordinary perceptual significance. How can I describe it for regular eating people? How can I make it real, the gnawing hunger of an entire nation of twenty million people who have been pushed to the edge by a decade of punishing sanctions and continuous bombing? Estimates of the dead are staggering, in excess of a million, especially the sick, the elderly, and infants. And it all comes down to a plate of food on the Mission steps, and our offer to talk. Four times the offer was made, and four times the answer came back: "You're under arrest."

A fifth attempt to bring a plate of food was planned for Wednesday, September 12th, but was never carried out, because on September 11th, the thirty-seventh day of the fast, the campaign came to an abrupt halt. People woke up to the sound of collisions in the air, and we looked out the window to see that only a mile and a half from Maryhouse, the Trade Center towers were in flames, and collapsed an hour and a half later, killing several thousand people and spreading smoke and ash all over lower Manhattan, the harbor, and Brooklyn.

Whole areas of the city were immediately blocked off by the authorities, including the United Nations; we were not allowed to return to the vigil site. We sat for most of that week in a state of shock, gradually returning to our normal diets and wondering what it all meant. For myself I have to confess that I had already begun to compromise after the thirtieth day, taking in increasingly thicker and vegetable-laden juices, as well as vitamins and minerals.

I have no regrets about participating in this excruciating and strenuous fast, not to mention sitting in the precinct holding cells with the prisoners from time to time, but I want to know what it means, why it doesn't seem to communicate much, except to other peace activists, and whether in fact we live in nothing but a dream world, imagining that voluntary and nonviolent witness has just as much chance at changing the course of history as do guns and bombs and planes turned into bombs.

I want to know so that time we get it together for such a fast and vigil, we can do whatever it is that God expects of us. After all, we are now barraged with stories of what a month of bombing will mean for hungry people in Afghanistan.

Secretary General Kofi Annan and Refugees' Commissioner Mary Robinson have called this "a crisis of stunning proportions," and have asserted that several million people will be at risk of starvation this winter unless the bombing is immediately called off. But does anyone suppose, in the present climate of public opinion, with smoke still rising from the ruins of the World Trade Center (perhaps the smoke will rise forever, inviting allusions to Revelation 19:3), and posters on all the stores boasting "UNITED WE STAND," that these calls for compassion will be heeded, that the hunger of all those people will be any more real than the longstanding hunger of people in Iraq?

I remember a different climate of public opinion, during the 1980s, when it seemed like people of all walks of life were clamoring for an end to the arms race, for an end to U.S. military intervention in other countries, and for all the billions of dollars wasted on these things to be spent on housing, jobs, the environment, real human and social needs. I remember the minister of our church coming to visit me in jail, with an extensive study document prepared by the Presbyterian Church, in which they actually declared that if the United States government completely subverts the divine purposes of justice and peace, then it "forfeits the presumption of legitimacy and its claim on the obedience of citizens, including Christians." (*Presbyterians and Peacemaking*, p. 1)

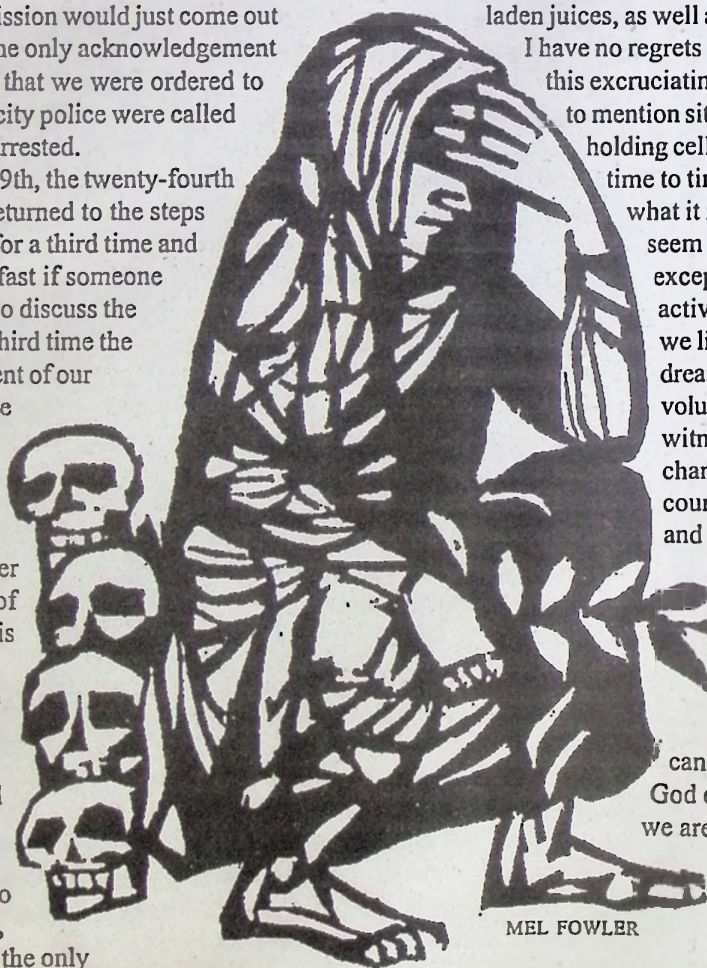
What does it mean to live under a government whose legitimacy has already been open to question, while levels of violence both incoming and outgoing are escalating tremendously, and the courts and legislature rush to support whatever harsh measures the executive wishes to impose on a still largely unsuspecting public? I wish that I had the answer to that question in a form that I could summarize in one paragraph, or even one page. I don't have the answer.

For my part, I am grateful to live in a Catholic Worker house, where we are in the business of setting modest, nonviolent example and living a life that makes room for those who have fallen through the cracks, and where we at least have the opportunity to stand before those judges from time to time and speak truth to power. When it comes to condemning terror, I believe that our first obligation is to condemn the terror performed by our own government, for which we pay taxes. (Except that at the Worker, none of us make enough money to owe any taxes.)

And if this is indeed a sign of the end, and our days are numbered in few digits, then at least, when the sky falls — or as the Bible puts it, when the heavens are "rolled up like a scroll" (Isaiah 34:4, Revelation 6:14) — let us be found continuing our mission, continuing to focus on the principles that were elucidated by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, continuing to fast and pray in patient hopefulness for another world to replace this hopeless morass of violence and oppression and death. Let us not eschew nonviolent action just because of the inevitable exchange on the day of judgment:

Mortals: O Lord, what was wrong with our nonviolence?

Creator: It arrived too little and too late.



The Sovereignty of Hope and Justice

By Mark Gray

(Editor's note: Mark and his wife Betsy are former volunteers at the Open Door. Since their move to Ireland, they have continued to support our work in many ways. Mark delivered the following as a sermon on September 16, 2001, in Carnone and Convoy Presbyterian Churches, Co. Donegal, Ireland.)

...We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population...In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction...We should cease to talk about vague – and for the Far East – unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.

– George Kennan, head of the State Department planning staff, in a 1948 internal document concerning the global shape of the post-World War II era. Kennan was regarded as a dove at the time and stepped down from his position shortly after because he was thought to be too liberal in a cutthroat world. (Quoted in Noam Chomsky, *Turning the Tide: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace*, Boston: South End Press, 1985, p. 48.)

You do not need a prophet to tell you that what has happened this last week has been terrible; it has been horrific; it has been a tragedy.

New York, the Big Apple, an international city of finance and entertainment, an area of which – Times Square – is known as the crossroads of the world because of its cosmopolitan buzz of activity and life, has been devastated. As one New Yorker put it, before September 11th, New York was a city of arrogance and ego and vitality. Now it has been left maimed.

In an eerie echo of the prophecy of Isaiah, from what we can see, all the gaiety of the city has been stilled, the noise of revellers has been stopped, joyful music is silent, days of wine and song, if not completely over, are on hold for a long time, and it may well be that the beer tastes bitter to its drinkers, perhaps especially to members of the rescue services grabbing some refreshment after a long and traumatic shift. The ruined city lies desolate, all joy has been in this case literally turned to the gloom of smoke and

dust billowing through the streets; all gaiety has been banished; the city is left in ruins, battered to pieces.

Something of this sense of profound trauma is captured in the words and phrases people have used to describe what happened, and in their comments about the significance of the event: Apocalypse; the world will never be the same again; it's the end of American self-confidence; the end of U.S. omnipotence in the world.

The late Laurens van der Post, a South African writer, tells of how he remembers as a young boy the newspaper arriving at their isolated home in the bush carrying the story of the launching of the Titanic and the claim that the ship was unsinkable. He says he remembers his grandfather, a hoary old Dutch Calvinist, shaking his head and muttering that no good

would come of such human claims, which in his estimation reflected excessive human pride and an exaggerated confidence in what human beings could achieve. The next paper that arrived

carried the terrible, horrific, tragic news of the sinking of the Titanic, with all that loss of life.

In a sort of parallel to that, it seems that there really was a school of thought in the U.S. to which large numbers of people subscribed, that said that the U.S. was so all powerful that it was totally secure. It could not be violated because of the omniscience of its intelligence agencies, the might of its military machine, and the pre-eminence of its economic influence in the world. These factors among others really did lead vast sections of that nation to a deep sense of pride in what they thought they could do to guarantee their own security.

That has now been shattered. It was a myth, blown apart in the twisted carnage of the twin towers and the Pentagon. The intelligence services were not as all seeing as they would have led us to believe. That was more Hollywood than hard reality, and when those

hijacked jets turned towards their targets, there was no Harrison Ford to put things right.

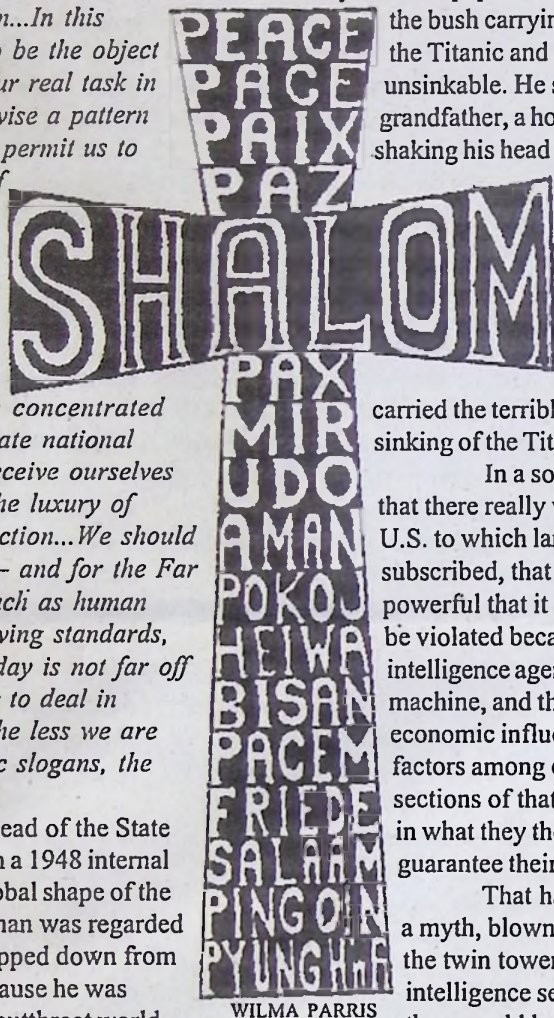
With the myth gone, what are we left with? In the midst of the trauma and brokenness and pain and grief, I just about dare to suggest that there is the possibility of hope; hope because while human beings, despite delusions to the contrary, are not sovereign, God is; and above all else, God is a sovereign of compassion, so God, in God's own way, is in the midst of all that suffering bringing comfort through the commitment, care, and self-sacrifice of ordinary people in the swirl of extraordinary circumstances.

There is also hope because at the deepest level, as reflected in our readings from Revelation, the promise of the biblical witness is that humanity will be the dwelling place of God, not only to bring comfort and compassion in the midst of hurt and dreadful harm, but in the end to bring about transformation, to inaugurate the New Heavens and the New Earth, in which there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the old order of things as represented by the logic of the likes of George Kennan will have passed away. So hope is sovereign.

Today my hope and prayer is that a new world can be forged and can begin to rise from the rubble of these dreadful past days. To do this, however, we have to take seriously the observation that the attacks this past week were very symbolic. The attack on the World Trade Center was an attack on one of the temples of world economic control; the attack on the Pentagon was an attack on one of the temples of military domination in the world. In the midst of genuine and sincere grief and shock we do have to acknowledge that these institutions historically have much blood on their hands, for the policies they have been party to producing and implementing have caused vast suffering in the world.

A long time ago now, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania asked, "Must we watch our children die in order to pay off our foreign debt?" Frankly the answer of those who control the international economic order was a blunt "Yes." As a result of policies concerning world trade developed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, key

Justice, continued on page 8



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Mincey, cont'd from page 1

I thought he was only signing my letters this way. At the Board of Pardons meeting the day before he was killed, I found out that he often signed his name this way on others' letters as well.

As I reflect back on my visits with Terry, I turn to the Gospels:

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to God's chosen ones who cry out day and night? Will God delay long in helping them? I tell you, God will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of humanity comes,

will he find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:1-8 NRSV adapted)

This parable is found only in Luke. At the beginning of the parable is an introductory sentence where Jesus tells the crowd a parable about their need to pray always and not lose heart. With that, one may think this parable is only about prayer. But a closer look allows one to see it is about more than a persistent prayer life.

Luke's audience had been taught to pray what we call the Lord's Prayer. But they experienced persecution and hardship and as a result began to "lose heart." By Luke's day, several generations had passed since Jesus taught his disciples to pray. They were becoming impatient and prayer was difficult. Should they keep praying for Jesus to come back when he did not seem to be coming?

A widow was one of the most vulnerable members of that society. She had lost the protection and economic support of her husband – and in those days a husband's support was very important for women. Without it, she was likely to be poor and vulnerable to exploitation. The Hebrew scriptures often insist that justice should not be

denied to a widow.

The judge here did not care about the teachings of the Hebrew scriptures. He was not afraid of God and he did not care what people thought. When the widow asked for justice, her case looked hopeless. But she kept bothering him over and over again. "Grant me justice! Grant me justice! I'll keep coming back and bothering you unless you grant me justice!"

So the judge thought, "She's going to wear me out by coming all the time!" The words "wear me out," translated, literally mean "to give a black eye" to someone. It is a term applied to boxers, not one that would normally be applied to a widow. This story would probably be seen as comic – a little like "Laurel and Hardy." Here we have a woman who was probably poor and exploited with no power at all – giving this powerful judge a black eye. She kept coming back, over and over and over and over and over again. So this parable is not only about prayer; it's about justice and persistence.

In fact, when Jesus introduced the story he said, "Don't lose heart." The words translated "don't lose heart"

can also be translated as "don't despair." Its opposite is not only "persistence," but also "boldness" or "courage." This woman was bold and brash and she would not give up. She's a bit like the man in the gospel story who got his neighbor out of bed for bread. He just would not give up until his neighbor gave him some bread.

We need to be just like that widow who wore the judge out with her persistence. However, God and the judge are distinct. This parable does not present God as uncaring. We do not have to badger God to grant us justice. But God has given us free choice. And right now in this country, vengeance prevails.

States with the death penalty have higher civilian murder rates than those who do not. Yet vengeance prevails. Polls conducted in 1997 suggest that if given alternatives, those favoring the death penalty are actually in the minority – yet vengeance prevails. Nearly 90% of all those executed are convicted of killing white people although people of color make up over half of all homicide victims.

Mincey, cont'd on page 9**Justice, continued from page 7**

institutions supporting the type of world constructed at the end of World War II, hundreds of thousands of children have died around the world.

Likewise, remember that in the interests of what it saw as its own security, U.S. policies originating in agencies housed in the Pentagon have created and supported a long and bloody list of truly monstrous dictators

and genuinely brutal regimes which have terrorized whole populations, causing death to thousands upon thousands. In the process the wealth of nations has been plundered and ordinary people have suffered terribly. In this roll call think of El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua, Zaire, Indonesia, and on and on and on. This is what George Kennan's "straight power concepts" have meant for the world's poor:

violence and oppression in order to maintain the wealth and opulence of the West, and of the U.S. in particular.

This reality, rooted in these facts, needs to be honestly and squarely faced, not, let me stress this, to in any way at all justify what has happened, for it is indefensible, nor to in any way engender guilt as if the U.S. got what it deserved. We face this reality in order to help us focus clearly on this truth: the world we seek to reconstruct out of the wreckage of the past week must have a genuinely just foundation and must make meaningful moves toward a better world for all. The perverse ideology of George Kennan, which so neatly and accurately encapsulates the thinking that has deformed our world since 1945, must be repudiated in order for the

sovereignty of justice to be affirmed.

It has been said more than once in the last week that Tuesday 11th September, 2001, was the day that changed the world, and in a sense I can understand that perspective. For we who call ourselves Christians, however, I thought the day that changed the world was that first Easter morning when Jesus rose from the clutches of the grave, symbolizing that life is stronger than death, hope more enduring than despair, and self-sacrificing love more powerful than violence and vengeance, no matter how attractive and apparently justified they might appear to be. When all of the dust of destruction has settled, it is through following Jesus, the Prince of Peace, that we are empowered and enlivened to play our part in building a world – to reclaim the term for justice, a new world order – in which the tear will be wiped from every eye, and in which there will no longer be any curse: no longer the curse of shameful infant mortality rates around the world, no longer the curse of oppression, and injustice, and starvation, and war, and violence, and homelessness. As Revelation puts it, "The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

To help us on our way, from beyond the grave, Martin Luther King, Jr. speaks as a prophet to his nation and to the world at this time: "The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish

the truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate... Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

What has happened this week has been terrible, horrific, a tragedy; but these events have taken place in a world of routine tragedy, a world of regular horror, a world scarred by commonplace terrible happenings. I invite you now to stand for a time of prayerful silence:

To remember those who have died, been injured or bereaved in this week's events, the poignant stories of so many of whom have touched and moved us so much;

To remember all those who die because of the way the world has been organized – all those children and women and men who are born in poverty and obscurity and who die without having an opportunity to tell their story because they are pushed to the margins of our world and our minds;

And in our silence to pledge ourselves afresh to Jesus and his ways of peace, and reconciliation, and justice, and mercy, which are the cornerstones of the Reign of God and the new world we seek to build.

"The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." The sovereignty of hope gives us light for the journey we need to be on and that of justice defines the contours of the world we need to be building.

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Mincey, cont'd from page 8

Racism and vengeance prevail.

In order for God to overturn the death penalty here in the U.S., in order for God to prevail and not vengeance, all of us are needed. God needs people like Ed Loring who speak out with loud voices against the death penalty. God needs people like Mary Ruth Weir who provide meals for those visiting in Jackson. She also took care of her grandchild so her daughter-in-law could testify at the Board of Pardons for Terry Mincey's life. God needs people like Jim Powers, who prays every day for an hour, and those on death row are always in his prayers. God needs people like Lora Shain, who no longer lives in Jackson but attends all the vigils at the prison when someone is murdered.

In order for God to prevail and not vengeance, we need to visit and write the men and woman on Death Row. Even though I have always been opposed to the death penalty, it was not until I actually knew someone on death row that it stopped being simply an intellectual exercise. I had always been in my head; when I began visiting Terry, I got out of my head and into my heart. A real person sat in front of me and he introduced me to other real people. While at first I was nervous about being locked up in the visiting room, over time I got to know some of the men there.

When I first met Terry, I thought we needed to talk about God. For the first year or so, I was a bit discouraged, for we rarely did. What I began to realize slowly but surely was that Terry needed to share some of his own experiences and also he wanted to hear about my life. He was trapped in his little cell and he wanted to hear about the outside world.

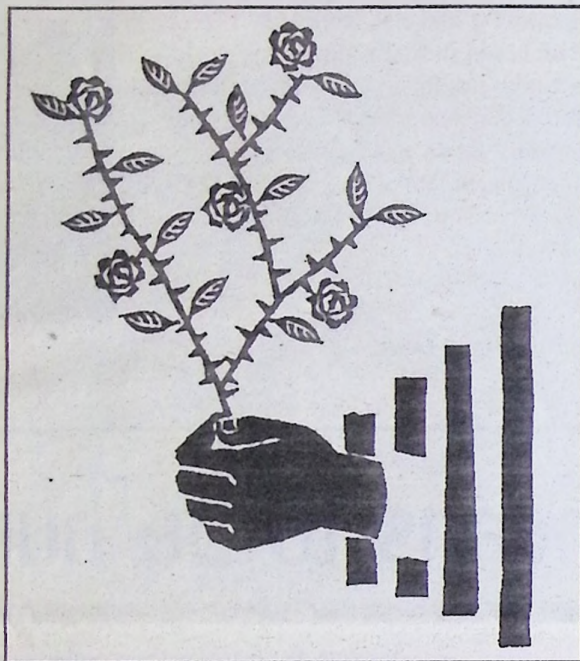
During that last week, I got to meet all the people Terry had been talking about during our visits. I remembered that Terry had said months ago, before his death warrant was signed, that he did not want a funeral. Instead he wanted all of his friends to get together and meet one another. On December 1, we did this. The whole group of us met at Randy Loney's farm and shared our memories.

In order for God to prevail and not vengeance, we need our community. We need places like the Open Door where we don't have to argue about capital punishment. I had a phone conversation with someone right after Terry's murder. She tried to be supportive of my feelings but I could tell

she thought Terry did not deserve to live. I just wasn't in a place where I wanted to argue about the death penalty.

At the beginning of the week before Terry was murdered, I was staying at Elizabeth Dede's home in Americus and I read one of her books on capital punishment. In this book there was a blurb about the vigils at Jackson, and I read about the Ku Klux

It didn't take me very long to discover that Terry and I would have plenty to talk about. He was interested in everything.



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Klan showing up and cheering when the hearse went by. I did not think I could handle that. Elizabeth assured me that this probably would not happen at Terry's murder.

As is always the case before an execution, there was a vigil at the prison. Two areas were roped off: one for supporters of the murder and one for those in opposition. We arrived fairly early and I saw quite a few video cameras. I thought I was going to be okay, but when I got out of the car, I realized I was feeling weepy. My husband Michael and I walked to the other side, away from the video cameras. We stood there until I regained my composure and then we joined the group.

Because this was the first execution by lethal injection, Terry's murder received quite a lot of attention. On that night we formed our circle and a few of us who knew Terry shared with the group some of our experiences with him. We then each took a candle and lit it as we stayed in our circle. The flashes on the cameras kept blinding me and I was getting a bit frustrated.

There was one more flash in my direction and I lost it. "Don't take my picture!" I shouted and then fell into Michael's arms. Following my outburst, a group of people stood in front of me

to block the cameras. My community.

Since that night, I have thought about the camera flashes. Even though I was mad at the photographer when that picture was snapped, he caught on film my sorrow at the murder. The Jackson edition of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran a picture of the vigil that was held in Atlanta in front of the capital. I was pretty angry at that. After all, they had taken so many pictures at our vigil – why didn't they use one of them?

As it turned out, the Atlanta edition of the *Journal-Constitution* did. Maybe the editors of the Jackson edition were trying to cover up that something like that was going on at the prison right in their backyard. Perhaps the newspaper deadline prevented it; I don't know. I do know that in spite of my fears of what picture would be run of me in the newspaper, God used this picture as a witness to Terry and to the others on death row of the sorry for the loss of life during an execution.

On October 25, 2001 Terry Mincey was killed by the state of Georgia. In the years Mari visited Terry, she sparked his interest in all things Japanese. On October 25, 1955 Sadako Sasaki was killed by the effects of an atomic bomb that Americans dropped on Hiroshima.

If you do not know the story, Sadako was two years old when the atomic bomb was dropped. Ten years later Sadako fell ill with atomic poisoning or leukemia as a result of the radiation stored in her body from the fallout.

One day, her best friend came to the hospital with a paper crane. "It is said that the crane lives for a thousand years, and any sick person who folds a thousand cranes will get well," she said. So Sadako got busy. One hundred, two hundred, three hundred... six hundred... She got slower and slower. Six-fifteen, six-twenty. One night Sadako's strength gave out. She died short of her goal.

Her classmates folded the remaining paper cranes and threaded them into a wreath that was placed over her body. She died the same day as Terry Mincey, forty-six years earlier. There is a monument in Japan as a reminder of what happened to the children there.

There is no monument for those who have died by hand of the state of Georgia. There is no monument when members of a family and a murderer are reconciled. There is no monument recognizing the harsh circumstances of someone on death row.

We need to keep folding our paper cranes over and over and over. As the widow went to the judge again and again and again, we need to keep working. We need to keep fighting. We need to keep praying for the day that God will overturn the death penalty in the United States.

Tamara Puffer is a Presbyterian minister and a regular at the Open Door Sunday evening worship. Tamara preached this sermon at the Open Door on November 11, 2001, seventeen days after Terry Mincey was executed.

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Hard Ball, continued from page 4

but only a guttural grunt gurgled from my throat. I was afraid!

What have we done? What can we do? Murphy has Burkitt's lymphoma again. A medical impossibility, so the doctors say. Textbooks must be rewritten. She will be in chemotherapy treatment until the end of May, 2002. Please pray and beg for her healing. Please write her a letter or send her a card. She loves flowers and music. Please visit a prisoner or drive a family member to visit a loved one in prison. Please support a public hospital.

What have we done? What can we do? Terry Mincey is dead. But thousands are stuffed behind bars waiting to be killed. George W. Bush demonstrates, every hour, the connection between state sanctioned murder by gas, electricity or needle and the Empire murder by bombing and ravaging Afghanistan. Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong? Exactly like hunger and homelessness, we can stop the death penalty. Death as punishment does not exist in the civilized world. Terry cried out from Murphy's hospital bed, asking that we help him. Let's stop the death penalty. Together we can do it.

Ed Loring is a partner at the Open Door Community.



By Tonnie King

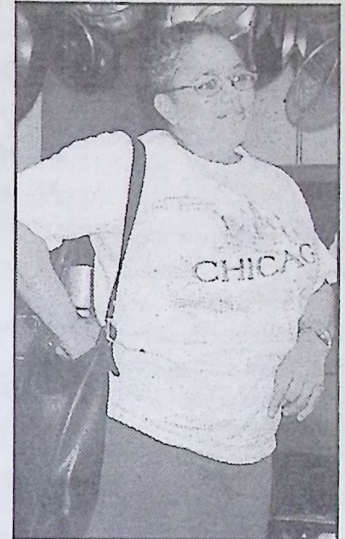
Hello everyone! I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

God continues to bless us here at the Open Door in many wonderful ways. Theresa Jordan-Hamilton came to us at a time when we desperately needed a cook for our Thursday soup kitchen. But little did we know at that time that she was a Godsend to us from heaven above. She likes to be called "Lady T." Theresa runs a catering business and also works for Clairemont Presbyterian Church, and she is an "out of this world" cook to boot. Our homeless friends just fell in love with her and her cooking – the food served in our soup kitchen is of the same quality as any restaurant in town. Not only is Theresa a good cook, she also spreads an abundant amount of love with her high-spirited personality. We all have been uplifted by her love for cooking and for all people as well.

Thank you, God, for "Lady T"!

Tonnie King is a partner at the Open Door.

Welcome to the Spotlight



What do you think it means to be human?

By John Ehlers

What do you think it means to be human?

It means we are self-aware.

We are conscious of being.

We are capable of having imagination.

projecting ourselves into the future.

anticipating our own death.

putting ourselves in another person's shoes.

changing our perceptions and concepts.

appreciating beauty.

making things of beauty.

making choices.

contemplating the meaning of life.

seeking justice.

forming communities.

speech and sophisticated communication.

organizing things of great complexity.

love.

hearing God in a sound.

seeing God in a face.

believing that we are made in the image of God.

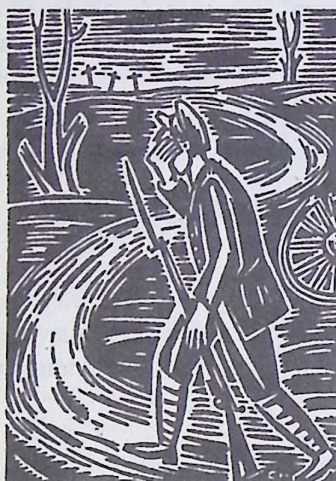
knowing that we live in an infinite universe where the

planet on which we live is but a speck of dust floating in an ocean of space.

knowing that what goes on inside of us is no less miraculous than the rising of the sun or the twinkling of the stars.

finding God at Auschwitz and Buchenwald amid the stench of the gas and the ashes.

weeping for people we have never met and who had nothing in common with us except that they were human beings too. It means we are self-aware, and yet we often lack self-respect.



CLIFFORD HARPER

We are conscious of being, and yet we do not appreciate how precious our lives are.

We are capable of having imagination, and yet cannot imagine a world without violence.

We are capable of projecting ourselves into the future, and yet we keep making the same mistakes that we made in the past.

anticipating our own death, and yet do not live our lives as if we could die tomorrow.

putting ourselves in another person's shoes, but are unwilling to walk a mile in their moccasins.

changing our perceptions and concepts, but we cling to ways of

thinking that caused the very problems we are trying to solve. appreciating beauty, and yet we create ugliness almost everywhere we go.

making choices, but too often make poor choices.

contemplating the meaning of life, but too often make death our goal.

seeking justice, but instead are prone to injustice, inequality, and degradation.

forming communities, but too often banish people who are not like us.

speech and sophisticated communication, but too often use them to hurt others.

organizing things of great complexity, but we don't seem to be able to organize our society in a way that helps everyone reach a level of respectable existence.

love, but practice hating so much that we are better at it than at loving.

hearing God in a sound, and yet we tell a friend to go to hell.

seeing God in a face, but not if that face doesn't look like ours.

believing that we are made in the image of God, but instead create God in our image.

knowing that we live in an infinite universe where the planet on which we live is but a speck of dust floating in an ocean of space, but do not discipline ourselves to appreciate the vastness of the power and the consciousness that permeate that universe.

knowing that what goes on inside of us is no less miraculous than the rising of the sun or the twinkling of the stars, and yet we do self-destructive things that destroy the one of a kind that we are.

finding God at Auschwitz and Buchenwald amid the stench of the gas and the ashes, but cannot seem to find a way to think about the grace of God while driving in rush hour traffic.

weeping for people we have never met and who had nothing in common with us except that they were human beings too. And, when we weep for them, we begin to learn what it means to be human.

When we go beyond weeping to doing something that takes us away from our self-centered selfishness, we demonstrate that perhaps we do understand something about what it means to be human.

We are capable of being so much more than we think we can be and are too often willing to settle for being so much less than we really are.

John Ehlers lives in Marietta, GA, and helps to lead Monday morning breakfast at the Open Door.

Prison Phone Rates Spark Outrage

Dear Murphy,

Thanks for another great issue of *Hospitality*! I was especially grateful for Mike Casey's article ("Want to talk to a friend in prison? Check your wallet first," vol. 20 no. 10, November 2001) regarding the Georgia Department of Corrections' new contract with MCI Worldcom.

Like myself, many other inmates can no longer afford to call our friends and loved ones due to the prohibitive cost of placing a call, which has more than doubled under this new contract with MCI Worldcom. Unfortunately, all of my family reside out of state and I haven't received any visits from any of them in four years. Thus, calling is our only means of speaking with each other. Now that my collect calls have more than doubled, however, my folks have asked me not to call unless it's absolutely necessary. I can't blame them, and I hate to see them get ripped off anyway, so I've promised to limit my calls.

At any rate, it was nice to see that you exposed this highway robbery in your newsletter. My folks intend to complain about this extortion to the Georgia Public Service Commission and to MCI Worldcom. We all need to do what we can to change this exploitation and I am grateful you are doing your part.

Blessed be,
A friend in prison
Calhoun State Prison
Morgan, GA

Pastor Loring,

I sent letters to [officials regarding prison phone rates, including] the Public Service Commissioner in Atlanta, Lauren McDonald, Chairperson, phone number (404) 463-6745. Pastor Loring we need help to have these rates lowered.

I have to pay \$4.65 for the first minute, then \$.69 thereafter plus another charge when I call out of state. What else can we do? Let me know, please. It cost less than \$5.00 to call Atlanta before. Now it costs over \$17.00 for the same call.

A friend in prison
Valdosta State Prison

Dear Subscription Department:

I would very much like to receive a copy of the November 2001 issue of *Hospitality* because of the article about the new phone system in the Georgia prisons. There are several of us here at Pulaski that are trying to gather information in hopes of getting these outrageous rates lowered. I for one do not know anyone who can afford a \$17 or \$18 cost per phone call from me. Even if my family (what few members I have left) were millionaires, they could not afford to pay this amount.

Thank you.

A friend in prison
Pulaski State Prison
Hawkinsville, GA

Pastor Loring,

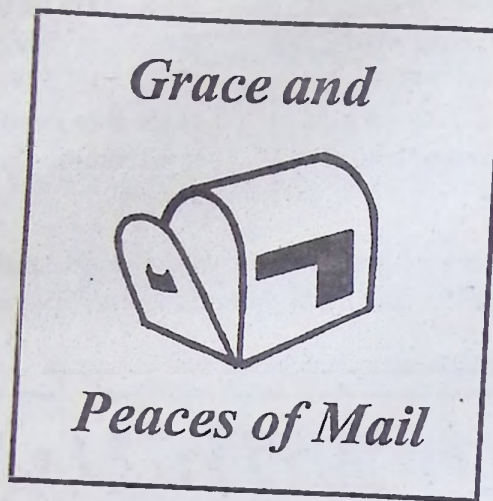
We, or our families, are receiving phone bills for the new system. It is worse than the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* or *Hospitality* reported. My phone costs to Atlanta were approximately \$6. Now it is \$17 and some change. \$51 for one phone call to California. \$14.15 to Macon, GA, was the cost to another inmate's relatives while the cost (to call) right here in Valdosta was \$17 and some change. I saw the phone bills from the month of August, and compared them to September's bill. Everybody wants to beat up on the poor. Good thing you are around to help us. Maybe when the state begins to go broke or when the state budget gets into the negative range and more than just 100 teacher positions at one of the state supported colleges are vacant, money for prisons will be used for other state expenses and the gates may finally open for some. Will continue to pray for you and yours.

A friend in prison

Dear Folks at the Open Door,

It's a blessing to receive and read *Hospitality* every month and to remember you all. It's especially encouraging to me to think of all the people who are fed daily because of your service, since that's the line of work I find myself in currently. The good meals I've enjoyed at the Open Door keep reminding me that food served without love is pretty tasteless (and less nourishing)!

God bless you,
Elaine Shank
Seattle, WA



Readers Respond to "Attica is America"

Hello,

The "Attica is America" (vol. 20, no. 9, October 2001) story could relate to anywhere, including Georgia. I wish all prisoners could speak out with impunity, but to do so would cause a blood bath at the hands of prison administrations across the land.

I tried to complain about torments and abuses in these places on three occasions. The first time I complained, I was herded in shackles to the hole (isolation), the guards stripped me of my clothing and personal items, and locked me naked in a cold cell for three days and three nights with no mattress, no blanket, no nothing.

The second time, instead of complaining to the prison administration, I wrote to an outside agency telling them of the abuses. When the outside agency contacted the prison administration about my claims of abuse, they again came and put me in shackles, took my belongings and locked me in the hole for seven days. I was then designated a mental health case and had to report to a prison mental health doctor for two years.

The third time, I again wrote to an outside agency, and again, when the agency contacted the prison authorities, I was again shackled, dragged into the mental health department and forced to take psychotropic drugs. The drugs affected my equilibrium, and after a few nasty falls, they took me off it, but I remained in mental health for nearly a year. I have since given up on trying to get the public to see how these places are destructive to the mind, body, emotions, and spirit.

The Attica story was raw truth, and if the raw truth could be printed in the nation's newspapers and reported daily on major news stations across America, the chances of real change would improve in prisons all over the United States. The public would be shocked over and over again by reading and seeing the horrors and tortures perpetrated in its name, splattered across the TV screen and front pages. It would hopefully cause an outcry and reforms would quickly be under way. The best scenario would be for all prisons to become rehabilitation centers, but don't hold your breath for that to happen...the apathy of the public is killing everyone. Just look at your struggles with the homeless, public restrooms and hunger. Why are these vital issues a constant battle to overcome? Public apathy.

A friend in prison
Hardwick, GA

Dear Hannah, Murphy, and Ed:

I just returned from a several day stay in Salinas in Monterey County, California. We have a case from there and are working on behalf of a Pomo Native American whose family lives there. It's a valley known for the food it provides the nation. From top to bottom and side to side, the fields are worked by Latinos, mostly Mexican and Mexican American. It has been the scene of many, many struggles by agricultural workers for decent pay and humane working conditions. Cesar Chavez and the UFW are very present. I thought of you all as I drove up and down dusty roads past miles of fields. Workers were scattered across the fields, bent at the back as they tended crops. Their cars, busses and bikes were parked along side the field. GUESS WHAT ELSE WAS PARKED ALONG SIDE THE FIELDS — TOILETS. I immediately thought of how hard you have all struggled to bring public toilets and decency to our friends who don't have toilets. I laughed out loud with glee just thinking about how toilets are such a simple and powerful statement of dignity. How I love you... and toilets.

Scharlette Holdman
San Francisco, CA

Dear Ed,

Hello from Delaware! I haven't had any grits since leaving Atlanta. Hello to all. I hold you and the Open Door Community in my prayers as well as our world. Take care...

Peace, grace, and love,
Jane Ritterson
Dorothy Day Class, July 2001
Wilmington, DE

Dear Gladys and Dick,

I finally got around to reading the October issue of *Hospitality* and I was blown away! The article on Attica really said it all — we are on the wrong road going in the wrong direction. Thank Murphy for doing all the research and putting the facts out. I read every issue from cover to cover and always learn something new. And then on page seven there you all were at Kim's wedding — and on your birthday, Gladys! What a beautiful family — you can be proud indeed. I am so grateful that you all are still a part of my life — even though just by mail. I admire you guys still hanging in there after all these years — making a difference one person at a time. I'm so thankful for all of you.

Love,
June and John Totin
Newton, NJ

Greetings Murphy Davis,

We appreciate *Hospitality* and the way the Open Door struggles to help the unfortunate, the disenfranchised. Especially important were your articles on Attica and a previous article on Bush's attempt to get churches involved in welfare. Ever since Bruce Bishop spent some time at the Open Door we have had great respect for the work you are doing. May God give you strength to keep up the struggle.

Prayers,
Moses and Ada Beachy
Goshen, IN

Dear Murphy,

You and I have never met in person, but I feel as though I know you through your writings. I was so gripped by your article about the FBI (actually, here, I mean Faith-Based Initiatives). And now, you write about Attica (thirty years later) and we wonder why the terrorists struck the US at its commerce center and military center?! My present question to you — what response to Attica can I, as an activist in a very conservative Florida community, make? I have been in letter correspondence, over the last three years, with a prisoner in Arizona and a prisoner on Ohio's death row. Death row in Florida is in Starke, four hours from our home.

In gratitude for your work and your writings,
Shalom,
Tom Washburn
Bradenton, FL

Open Door Community Ministries

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

Weekday Breakfast: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m.

Showers: Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

Use of Phone: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,

Wednesday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and Soul Foot Care

Clinic: Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

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

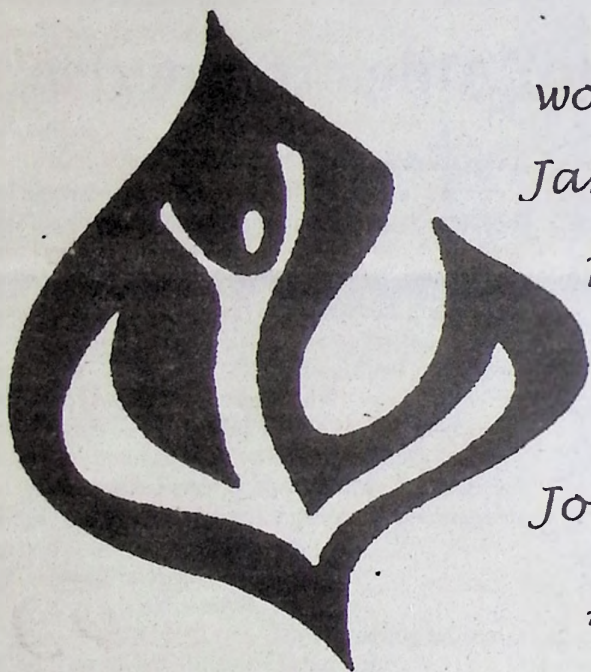
Weekend Retreats: Four times each year (for our household, volunteers and supporters)

We are open...

Monday through Saturday: We answer telephones from 9:00 a.m. until noon, from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. The building is open from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. those days. (We do not answer phone and door during our noon prayers and lunch break from 12:30 until 2:00). Please call in advance if you need to arrange to come at other times. **On Sunday** we invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m. and join us, following worship, for a delicious supper.

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

Come Worship With Us!



*We will gather for
worship and Eucharist
every Sunday in
January and February
at 5 p.m.,
followed by supper
together.*

*Join us in February as
we celebrate
African American
History Month.*

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

Plan to join us on selected Tuesday evenings for presentations and discussions of topics relevant to the justice struggle. Call us for dates and times.
404-874-9652

Medical Supplies

(for our Thursday Evening Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic)

**Can you help with the
medicine cabinet?**

aspirin
Tylenol
bandages and band-aids
antibiotic cream or ointment
Ibuprofen
antifungal cream
cold medicine (alcohol free)
cough drops
foot powder

Open Door Community Needs

JEANS
T-Shirts
Men's Work Shirts
Quick Grits
Cheese
Coffee
Multi-Vitamins
MARTA Tokens
Postage Stamps
Underwear for Men
Men's Shoes (all sizes)

Meat for the soup in our Soup Kitchen

Sandwiches
Table Lamps
Floor Lamps
Vacuum Cleaners
Twin Beds
Alarm Clocks
BLANKETS
Eye Glasses

Box Spring and Mattress for Double Bed

Disposable Razors Women's Underwear

Toothbrushes
Deodorant
Vaseline
Towels
Socks
Shampoo
Men's Belts
Washcloths

Our sisters and brothers are cold and hungry. Can you help us with blankets and socks to give out and turkeys for the stew pot?



LEO MCGUIRE

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